



Strategic Approaches of Local Government in Improving Reading Interest in West Bandung Regency

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Abstract

Reading interest reflects the quality of human resources and the progress of a region's civilization. West Bandung Regency faces the challenge of low reading interest despite a high literacy rate. This study aims to analyze the local government's strategy in increasing public reading interest in 2024–2025. The method used is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach and Koteen's strategy theory including Corporate Strategy, Program Strategy, Resource Support Strategy, and Institutional Strategy. The results of the study indicate the existence of literacy strengthening policies, implementation of mobile and digital libraries, cooperation with the private sector, and increasing the capacity of librarians. However, obstacles such as limited budget, infrastructure, and community participation are still obstacles. The conclusion of this study is that the implementation of strategies needs to be strengthened through cross-sector coordination, library service innovation, and the development of a technology-based literacy ecosystem.

INTRODUCTION

The level of reading interest acts as a significant measure in determining the quality of the human resources in any given region since it determines how willing the people are to be exposed with knowledge and information in the fast-changing world. When the interest in reading among the community is high, greater intellectual development, social integration, as well as economic development are available because individuals are able to have access to new ideas, they are able to think critically and develop problem solving skills. Within the wider context of regional development, literacy is not a simple advantage of education, but a structural base of creating robust and responsive societies towards technological and informational changes (Hai et al., 2021; Carayannis & Morawska, 2023; Wahyuningtyas et al., 2023). Nevertheless, Indonesia still has a major problem in this regard. A 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) by OECD indicated that Indonesia was ranked 70 of 80 countries that participated in the reading literacy assessment with a score of 359. Though a small increase was observed in this score compared to the earlier examination, it is highly worrying in terms of the global standards and a clear indication of the chronic inefficiency in the development of a powerful reading culture among the Indonesians (Puspitasari, 2020; Hasan, 2013). These results reinstate the urgent need of implementing holistic literacy development

measures that are not only academic but cultural and structural in nature and also a collaboration between the school, family, community, and the local government (Harefa, 2024; Torres, 2022; da Silva et al., 2024; Banwo et al., 2022).

Nationally, Indonesia's literacy rate reached 96.67% in 2024, but reading interest is still very low. According to UNESCO, Indonesia is ranked second from the bottom in the global reading interest index. At the local level, West Bandung Regency (KBB) faces similar challenges. Based on data from the West Bandung Regency Archives and Library Service in 2024, the level of public visits to libraries was only 17.16% of the total population, with the majority of visitors being students. Meanwhile, visits from the general public only reached 1.8%. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure for literacy, limited librarians, and low community participation in literacy programs. The value of the Community Literacy Development Index (IPLM) of West Bandung Regency in 2024 was 60.30 and was categorized as moderate.

The urgency of this activity lies in the importance of the role of libraries as a center for community literacy that has not been optimal in West Bandung Regency. The existence of 973 libraries recorded has not fully provided equal access, especially in rural areas. The library service equity index (UPLM1) is only 0.4410, indicating that there is still a gap in the provision of literacy services. Of the total ideal book collection requirement of 3.7 million, only around 429 thousand titles or 11.56% are available. This shows the need for more effective and integrated strategic steps to address the problem of low reading interest in the West Bandung Regency community.

The literature review in this study includes theories of government strategy and community literacy. Koteen (in Salusu, 1996) put forward four types of strategies that are used as the basis for the analysis of this study, namely Corporate Strategy, Program Strategy, Resource Support Strategy, and Institutional Strategy. This study also refers to the results of previous studies, such as research by Panjaitan et al. (2023) which highlights the strategy of the West Bandung Regency Archives and Library Service in developing a reading culture, Vestikowati & Nurwanda (2020) regarding digital libraries, and research by West & Ei (2014) and Marwan et al. (2024) which examines literacy strategies based on mobile services and the role of local government in developing reading interest.

As a form of problem-solving plan, this study was conducted to identify the strategy of the West Bandung Regency Government in increasing public interest in reading through four main strategic approaches from Koteen. Each strategy is analyzed based on policy implementation, program effectiveness, resource support, and available institutional capacity. This study is expected to comprehensively reveal the efforts of the local government in building an inclusive and sustainable literacy culture.

The purpose of this activity is to analyze in depth the strategy of the West Bandung Regency Government in increasing public interest in reading in 2024–2025. This study targets four main aspects, namely organizational strategy, program strategy, supporting resource strategy, and institutional strategy. Through this analysis, it is hoped that the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in implementing literacy strategies in West Bandung Regency can be identified.

Based on the framework of thought and the results of the literature review, the hypothesis developed in this study is that the implementation of the West Bandung Regency Government strategy through the Koteen strategy approach is able to provide a significant contribution to increasing public reading interest if supported by integrated policies, institutional strengthening, innovative literacy programs, and

optimal utilization of resources. This hypothesis will be tested through a qualitative descriptive approach with case studies as the main method.

METHODS

This study was designed to assess the strategies of the West Bandung Regency Government in improving public reading interest during the 2024–2025 period, with a focus on the Archives and Library Service. By employing a descriptive qualitative research design and a case study approach, the study aimed to provide a detailed understanding of the policy processes, program implementation, and the factors that either support or hinder the success of local literacy initiatives. The case study approach was particularly suitable because it allows the researcher to explore the strategies in depth, examining both the successes and challenges faced by the local government in promoting literacy.

Research Design

The qualitative approach was chosen for its ability to capture the complex, nuanced aspects of the West Bandung Regency Government's literacy strategies, which quantitative methods would not fully illuminate. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is particularly valuable in contexts where the researcher aims to understand the "how" and "why" of a phenomenon, rather than just the "what" or "how much." This approach is appropriate for examining the interactions between various stakeholders involved in literacy promotion, as well as understanding the local government's strategies in designing, implementing, and adjusting programs to increase reading interest. By focusing on in-depth analysis, this study can provide rich insights into the policy mechanisms and the institutional dynamics that shape literacy outcomes at the regional level.

The descriptive aspect of the methodology enables the research to offer a comprehensive narrative of the literacy strategies in West Bandung, emphasizing both the intended objectives and the real-world challenges faced during implementation. The case study design also allows the researcher to investigate the strategies in a specific context, making the findings directly applicable to the study area and useful for stakeholders interested in the region's literacy policies. This design is particularly helpful for policy evaluation, as it can highlight effective strategies while revealing areas that need further attention.

Research Location and Period

The research was conducted in West Bandung Regency, with a particular focus on the Archives and Library Service, the primary institution responsible for literacy development programs in the region. The location was purposively selected due to the central role that this agency plays in shaping and implementing literacy strategies. According to Koteen (2009), purposive sampling is an effective strategy when researchers seek to gather data from individuals or institutions with specific knowledge or experience related to the research objectives. By selecting West Bandung Regency, this study ensured that the findings would be directly relevant to the region's literacy efforts, offering a clear snapshot of how government agencies approach literacy enhancement in local contexts.

The research period covered the year 2024, encompassing various stages of the research process, including preparation, data collection, analysis, and reporting. The timeframe was carefully chosen to coincide with the active implementation of literacy programs by the Archives and Library Service. This period enabled the researcher to observe the progression of these programs and assess their impact on the community. By focusing on this time frame, the study is able to provide real-time insights into the effectiveness of the region's literacy strategies and the role of governmental institutions in supporting these initiatives.

Data Sources and Informants

The data for this study were collected from informants directly involved in the literacy programs in West Bandung. Purposive sampling was employed to select key informants with direct knowledge of and experience in regional literacy policy and practice. The selection of informants is crucial in qualitative research, as it ensures that the data collected is rich, relevant, and focused on the research objectives (McKenna & Main, 2013). The key informants included the Head of the Archives and Library Service, officials responsible for library development, heads of library service units, as well as community leaders and representatives from literacy communities. These informants were chosen for their firsthand experience and their roles in shaping or implementing literacy programs, which ensured that the data collected would be both accurate and comprehensive.

The involvement of multiple stakeholders, including government officials, librarians, and members of the community, allowed the researcher to gather diverse perspectives on the effectiveness of literacy strategies. By including both institutional and community-level informants, the study was able to capture a wide range of insights into the challenges and successes of literacy promotion programs. This approach also ensured that the findings were not limited to one perspective but instead reflected the broader dynamics at play in the region's literacy efforts.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using three complementary techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The combination of these techniques is essential for triangulating data and ensuring the validity of the findings (Pool et al., 2010). Each technique contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the literacy programs and the factors influencing their success or failure.

In-depth interviews were conducted with government officials, librarians, program partners, and library users. The interviews provided valuable insights into the design, implementation, and outcomes of literacy programs, as well as the challenges faced by those involved in the process. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in the conversation while ensuring that key topics related to the research objectives were covered.

Observation was another key data collection method used in this study. The researcher conducted direct observations of mobile libraries, digital libraries, and physical libraries in various areas of West Bandung. This provided an opportunity to examine how literacy programs were being implemented on the ground and allowed for a firsthand assessment of the challenges and successes of these programs in real-time. By observing the operations of these libraries, the researcher was able to identify key factors that facilitated or hindered the delivery of literacy services to the community.

Documentation was the third data collection method, which involved reviewing planning documents, agency performance reports, statistical data, and official government publications. This documentation provided essential background information on the policy framework and the objectives of the literacy programs. It also served to contextualize the interviews and observations, allowing for a deeper understanding of the strategies employed by the local government.

Research Instruments

The research instruments used in this study included interview guidelines, observation sheets, and document review checklists. These instruments were designed to ensure that data collection was systematic, focused, and aligned with the research objectives. The interview guidelines were structured to cover key themes

such as the planning and implementation of literacy programs, challenges faced, and the roles of different stakeholders in promoting literacy. The observation sheets allowed the researcher to record detailed notes on the operation of literacy programs, including the functioning of mobile and digital libraries and the engagement of community members with these services. The document review checklists ensured that the researcher systematically analyzed relevant government publications and reports, providing a solid foundation for understanding the institutional context of the literacy initiatives.

These instruments were grounded in Koteen's strategic framework, which includes corporate strategy, program strategy, resource support strategy, and institutional strategy. By using Koteen's framework as a basis for the instruments, the study ensured that the data collected would be focused on the key strategic elements that influence the success of literacy programs. This theoretical framework guided both the design of the instruments and the analysis of the data, ensuring that the findings would be framed within the broader context of policy and strategic planning.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study followed the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The first stage, data reduction, involved condensing the raw data from interviews, observations, and documents into more manageable and focused summaries. This step was crucial for ensuring that only the most relevant information was included in the analysis, thereby improving the clarity and focus of the findings.

In the second stage, the reduced data were displayed in narrative descriptions and tables. This stage allowed the researcher to organize the data in a way that highlighted patterns, relationships, and key themes related to the literacy programs. The data display facilitated the identification of emerging trends and provided a visual representation of the findings, making it easier to interpret the results.

The final stage, conclusion drawing or verification, involved interpreting the data in relation to Koteen's strategic framework and the research objectives. This stage allowed the researcher to formulate conclusions about the effectiveness of the literacy programs and to verify these conclusions against the data collected. The iterative nature of this process ensured that the conclusions were well-supported by the data and aligned with the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigates the strategies employed by the West Bandung Regency Government to increase public interest in reading for the period 2024-2025. The study is rooted in Koteen's strategic framework (Salusu, 1996), focusing on four key aspects: Corporate Strategy, Program Strategy, Resource Support Strategy, and Institutional Strategy (Rehbein & Schuler, 2015). These four strategies were explored in the context of the local government's efforts to enhance public literacy, and the findings provide a comprehensive understanding of how these strategies interact and contribute to the region's literacy policies. The results reveal both successes and challenges in the implementation of these strategies, with important implications for future policy development and the management of literacy initiatives.

Corporate Strategy: Organizational Strategy in Enhancing Public Reading Interest

The West Bandung Regency Government's approach to increasing public reading interest reflects the type of organizational strategy described by Grant (2003). Corporate strategies are broad, long-term plans that help guide an organization's

overall direction, and they play a crucial role in setting the tone for how resources are allocated and policies are formulated. In this study, the corporate strategy of the West Bandung Regency Government has focused primarily on strengthening policies and regulations related to libraries. The government's strategic targets aim to bolster public literacy by improving the role of libraries, with a strong emphasis on community-based libraries and the provision of wider access to reading materials.

The policy direction has led to the development of community-based libraries, which are designed to bring literacy services closer to the people, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Additionally, supporting regulations have been enacted to improve library services, making them more accessible to a larger portion of the population. However, the implementation of these strategies has been met with several challenges. One of the most significant obstacles has been the limited resources available to fully execute the strategic goals. Moreover, there are concerns regarding the unequal participation of different communities in literacy activities. While some urban areas have seen significant benefits from these policies, rural areas continue to face substantial barriers to accessing library services. This disparity in literacy access highlights the need for a more inclusive strategy that addresses the geographic and socio-economic divides within the region.

The corporate strategy's top-down approach has not been entirely effective in addressing the diverse needs of the community. As Çakmak (2023) emphasizes, organizational strategies must be flexible and adaptive to the changing dynamics of the environment. The West Bandung Regency Government's strategy, although well-intentioned, still requires strengthening, particularly in terms of community involvement. The study suggests that local literacy initiatives must move beyond the traditional top-down approach and incorporate collaborative principles that engage local stakeholders in decision-making. In this regard, local governments should treat literacy development as a cross-sectoral issue, not just a library-centered matter. Collaborating with educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector can help create a more inclusive and sustainable organizational strategy that will better serve the entire population. By encouraging collaboration and shared responsibility, the corporate strategy can be enhanced to meet the diverse needs of all communities within the region (Peloza & Falkenberg, 2009; Warhurst, 2005).

Program Strategy: Literacy Programs and Their Community Impact

The program strategy implemented by the West Bandung Regency Government has focused on direct community engagement through various literacy programs. This approach aligns with Çakmak (2023) idea of program strategy, which involves the specific initiatives and actions taken to achieve the broader organizational goals. The local government has established several programs, including mobile libraries, the development of digital libraries, and literacy promotion activities in schools and communities. These programs were designed to address the diverse needs of the population, adapting the approach to suit the social, cultural, and regional characteristics of different areas.

However, while these programs have been effective in reaching many communities, they face several technical and operational challenges. One of the key issues has been the limited infrastructure available to support the programs. For example, mobile libraries have experienced operational problems due to outdated vehicles or inadequate maintenance, while digital libraries face challenges related to unequal access to information technology in rural areas. Furthermore, not all communities have been able to experience the full benefits of these programs, as the approach taken has not always been participatory or fully contextualized. Some communities

have not been actively involved in the planning and execution of literacy activities, which has limited their engagement with the programs.

The findings suggest that in order to improve the effectiveness of the program strategy, it is essential for the local government to enhance the capacity of program implementers and involve the community from the very beginning of the planning process. By fostering a more participatory approach, the programs can be better aligned with the specific needs and preferences of local populations. De La Paz et al. (2022) highlights the importance of contextualizing program strategies to fit the unique characteristics of each community. This includes designing literacy campaigns that are culturally relevant and tailored to the needs of the local population. By doing so, the government can ensure that literacy initiatives are more effective in building long-term interest in reading and addressing the root causes of low literacy rates.

Resource Support Strategy: Challenges in Resource Allocation

The Resource Support Strategy plays a crucial role in ensuring the success of any literacy initiative. As Anwar & Abdullah (2021) argues, effective resource management is essential for the successful implementation of strategies. In this study, the West Bandung Regency Government has allocated a budget for literacy development and the procurement of reading materials. However, the research found that resource management continues to pose significant challenges. The limited number of book collections and library facilities, as well as the lack of collaboration with the private sector, have hindered the development of a comprehensive literacy infrastructure.

Additionally, the human resources required to support literacy programs are inadequate. Many librarians in the region lack the necessary technical training to manage modern libraries or to organize engaging literacy activities. This shortage of qualified staff has contributed to the inefficiency of the literacy programs. Many libraries are understaffed, with some being managed by a single librarian who is responsible for a wide range of tasks, leading to a decline in the quality of services offered. High workloads, combined with a lack of incentives for librarians, have resulted in low motivation, further exacerbating the challenges in delivering quality literacy services (Rehman et al., 2024).

The findings of the study suggest that in order to address these resource-related challenges, the local government needs to focus on strengthening institutional capacity. This includes investing in the training of librarians and library staff, improving the facilities available, and seeking additional support from the private sector. Rashed & Shah (2021) advocates for collaboration between public and private sectors as a means to enhance the availability of resources. In this case, partnerships with corporate sponsors through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives could provide a valuable source of support for expanding book collections, improving library infrastructure, and funding librarian training programs. Furthermore, information technology should be utilized to enhance library services and broaden access to reading materials, particularly in rural areas where traditional library services are limited (Hoq, 2015; Acheampong & Agyemang, 2021).

Institutional Strategy: Strengthening Library Management and Human Resources

The Institutional Strategy focuses on improving the organizational capacity of libraries and the competence of librarians. According to Adhikari & Shrestha (2023), institutional strategies are critical in ensuring the sustainability of any organizational initiative. The West Bandung Regency Government has taken steps to strengthen library management by providing training for librarians and enhancing

their technical skills. However, the research indicates that the number and competence of librarians are still insufficient, and many librarians have not received regular training to keep up with advances in library science and information technology.

The imbalance between the workload and capacity of librarians has led to a decline in the quality of service provided by the libraries. Some libraries are under-staffed or managed by only one librarian, which limits the effectiveness of literacy programs. The findings suggest that there is a need for better coordination between library staff and other local government units to ensure that literacy programs are implemented efficiently. Weak coordination has led to overlapping programs and unsynchronized activities, further hindering the success of literacy initiatives (Putera & Putri, 2025; Koepf, 2008).

The study recommends that the institutional strategy should focus on strengthening the organizational management of libraries by conducting more accurate planning of librarian needs and improving the monitoring and evaluation of literacy programs. Omachi & Ajewumi (2024) emphasizes the importance of adaptable organizational structures to support long-term program success. The local government needs to create more flexible work systems that can better support the performance of librarians, ensuring that literacy programs are implemented consistently and effectively. By improving institutional management, the government can ensure that literacy programs have a stronger foundation and can be sustained over time.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion on the strategy of the West Bandung Regency Government in increasing public interest in reading in 2024–2025, it can be concluded that the four strategies used, namely organizational strategy, program strategy, resource support strategy, and institutional strategy, have been implemented in accordance with the theoretical framework of Koteen's strategy. The organizational strategy is demonstrated through efforts to strengthen literacy regulations and policies, the program strategy is carried out through the development of services such as mobile and digital libraries, the resource support strategy targets increasing collections and involving non-government partners, while the institutional strategy focuses on fostering librarians and strengthening the library management structure. The four strategies work in a complementary manner in responding to the challenge of low public interest in reading, although they are still faced with various obstacles such as limited budget, infrastructure, and human resources. This study emphasizes that literacy is not only a matter of institutional technicalities, but is an integral part of knowledge-based human resource development, so that the strategy for increasing reading interest must continue to be strengthened through multi-actor collaboration, service innovation, and strengthening adaptive and sustainable institutional governance. The suggestion that can be given from this study is the need for a stronger cross-sectoral approach in developing regional literacy ecosystems, including expanding cooperation with communities, academics, and the private sector so that strengthening reading culture does not only depend on local governments alone. In addition, the findings can be used as a basis for developing government science, especially in understanding literacy-based public policy practices and knowledge resource management at the regional level. The strategic government approach as studied in this study can also be a reference for other regions in formulating contextual, inclusive, and sustainable development-oriented literacy policies.

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