

Development Literacy in Urban Communities

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Abstract

This research discusses development literacy in urban communities, focusing on understanding city infrastructure, environmental issues, technology and the economy. Through a literature study approach and qualitative data analysis, this research reveals the vital role of development literacy in empowering urban communities to actively participate in urban planning and decision-making. The results show that development literacy creates urban citizens who deeply understand rights, obligations and various development issues. In conclusion, development literacy is not only a theoretical instrument but also a practical one in shaping sustainable and inclusive cities.

Keywords: *city infrastructure, technology, education, economy, sustainable development*

INTRODUCTION

Development literacy in urban communities refers to community understanding and involvement in urban development issues (Sarah, 1995, p. 38). It includes an understanding of key aspects of urban development, such as infrastructure, environment, economy, education, health, and government policies (Mhangara et al., 2017). Development literacy gives urban citizens the ability to actively participate in the development process and make better decisions related to the development of their cities (Maruatona, 2005).

Although development literacy in urban communities can provide many benefits, there are several problems or challenges that are often faced, including: (1) Inequality of Access and Information. Not all levels of urban society have equal access to information. Inequalities in internet access, education, and economic opportunity may hinder some groups of people from becoming developmentally literate (Setiawan et al., 2022); (2) Low Level of Education. The level of development literacy is often closely related to the level of education. In some urban societies, low levels of education can be a major obstacle to achieving adequate development literacy (Chowdhury, 1995); (3) Low Level of Consciousness. Some urban residents may be less aware of development issues and their impact on daily life. Low awareness can hinder their participation in development and decision-making processes (Didiharyono & Qur'ani, 2019); (4) Economic Uncertainty. Economic uncertainty can be a barrier for urban communities to focus on development issues. They may focus more on meeting basic daily needs and lack the time or resources to engage in development issues (Moroni & Chiffi, 2022); (5) Rapid Changes in the

Development of Cities. Some cities experience rapid growth and change, which can make it difficult for people to keep up with those developments and adapt to changes in their environment (Bai et al., 2012); (6) Low Participation Rate. Some urban communities may lack interest or feel they lack the confidence to participate in urban planning processes or public policy. This can lead to a lack of voice variation in decision-making (Atchrimi, 2014); (7) Issues of Conflict and Social Tension. Issues of conflict and social tension, such as cultural, economic, or ethnic differences, can affect cooperation and participation in urban development (Bollens, 1998); and (8) Climate Change Uncertainty. In some cases, urban communities may lack understanding of the impact of climate change on their cities or lack knowledge on how to address these challenges (Tyler & Moench, 2012).

To address these issues, there needs to be continuous efforts to improve development literacy levels, including education programs, better access to information, and participatory initiatives involving various community groups. So, urban communities can more effectively contribute to sustainable development and improve the quality of life in their cities. This article is structured to answer these problems.

Literature Review

1. Development Literacy

Development literacy refers to the ability of individuals and communities to understand, access, and use information related to aspects of development within urban communities. Understanding this concept is important to detail how literacy can be a driving force for development in the midst of rapid urban development (Chen et al., 2019).

2. The Role of Education

The role of education in improving the development iterations in the community highlights that literacy skills are not only limited to reading and writing, but also involve understanding essential development concepts. This study explores the role of formal and informal education in improving development literacy, focusing on effective education strategies in urban contexts (Liu & Channell, 2015).

3. Challenges and Opportunities

In urban societies, there are special challenges that affect development literacy, such as inequality of access and socioeconomic change. This study positions that these challenges can be responded to, at least, by exploring opportunities and innovations that can be used to increase development literacy in the midst of urbanization (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

4. Impact of Literacy

The Impact of Development Literacy on the Welfare of Urban Communities as a form of review on the positive impact of development literacy on the welfare of urban communities, is described as a form of increased participation in local development activities, improved quality of life, and positive contribution to economic growth in urban environments (Defit et al., 2019).

Previous Research

Indrawati (Indrawati, 2015) discusses the financial sector dynamics as a medium for improving people's living standards. Jember Regency implements a financial inclusion program, especially financial product literacy, to encourage the growth of the financial sector in urban communities. This research has two main objectives: (1) to prepare a fundamental study on the level and determinants of financial literacy in urban communities in Jember Regency, and (2) to formulate strategies to increase financial literacy in the region. The research method uses quantitative data involving in-depth interviews. The results show that the level of financial literacy in urban communities in Jember Regency is low, both for basic and advanced financial literacy. Income, education, gender, ownership of financial products, and people's behaviour influence financial literacy. Strategies to increase financial literacy include providing formal education, increasing access to information and financial instruments, and encouraging improvements in literacy quality through various programs and assistance.

Hidayat (Hidayat, 2018) reveals that health is vital in life, especially in large urban areas in Indonesia. Numerous issues arise in these urban settings, ranging from inadequate infrastructure to poor quality of life, which poses severe challenges in the present and the future. The youth constitute a crucial demographic among the urban population, encompassing families, children, and adults. Addressing these problems requires practical solutions. This study seeks to investigate the role of youth in identifying and addressing urban issues to develop straightforward solutions for major cities. The author employs a descriptive method, thoroughly examining and analyzing existing literacy to draw conclusions and propose solutions for the revealed problems. The findings indicate that the challenges urban dwellers face stem from the absence of clear and detailed programs, both at the local and central government levels, making it a shared concern rather than isolated to one specific population segment. The youth can contribute solutions by developing comprehensive programs and policies. The proposed program consists of three stages—short, medium, and long-term—tailored to the specific needs of urban dwellers and aligned with government authority. In conclusion, the youth play a pivotal role in evaluating and providing effective solutions for urban health challenges.

Qowim (Qowim, 2020) concludes that endogenous rural development requires such sustainability projections. The leading sustainability indicators are economic growth, happiness index and human development index. This research seeks appropriate planning methods to support endogenous rural development, carries out endogenization, examines the results and identifies several challenges that may hinder the sustainability of endogenous development based on the local livestock industry. This research has surveyed economic potential and shared the results as a crucial issue in Focus Group Discussions with small farmers. Starting from these discussions, this research has implemented an endogenisation plan, including endogenising economic empowerment, endogenising the mass public sphere, and endogenising people's household literacy. Through testicular examination, this research found several indications of disorders that could hamper the sustainability of endogenous rural development. The indications are social jealousy, legal ambiguity, and the domestication of the agricultural and livestock sectors.

Alawiyah & Liata (Alawiyah & Liata, 2020) evaluate people's consumptive behaviour in the mall, a modern shopping place. Currently, malls function as shopping centres and create behaviour that

emphasizes individualism and consumerism without realizing it. This phenomenon results from capitalists' strong influence in shaping people's behaviour to achieve profits. In this article, researchers use a literature study approach by combining theoretical literature related to consumer behaviour and secondary data from electronic media covering the development of malls. Consumer behaviour patterns in malls, initially considered normal, actually contribute to maintaining a capitalist grip, strengthening individualism, and increasing people's consumer behaviour.

Gumilar & Ningsih (Gumilar & Ningsih, 2022) conclude that education is an important element in the national development process, and much research has been carried out to overcome educational problems. The government has attempted to reduce inequality through policies and aid programs, but this problem remains unresolved. Educational inequality is often only assessed in terms of the quality of educational implementation, so a thorough identification of the root of the problem is needed. This research uses qualitative methods with interviews and a case study approach to evaluate educational inequality through an educational management perspective, including planning, organizing, implementing and supervising education. Overall, education management in urban areas, especially in Kota Baru District, Karawang Regency, is running well, supported by the community's relatively high level of education and economics. This creates a mutually supportive relationship between society, government and educational institutions. On the other hand, in rural areas, especially in Banyusari District and Karawang Regency, education management is still considered quite good. However, apart from infrastructure problems, the main factor in educational inequality in this area is the lack of emphasis on conveying information about the importance of education and the existence of educational assistance/scholarship programs for rural communities that still have inadequate literacy levels.

METHOD

This study uses the method of literature research, or often referred to as literature study or literature review (Snyder, 2019). This method is a research approach that focuses on the analysis and synthesis of written works, scientific publications, and other sources of information that already exist and are relevant to a particular research topic (Suri & Clarke, 2009). This research does not involve primary data collection, such as observation or experimentation, but rather focuses on collecting, evaluating, and interpreting already existing information (David & Sutton, 2004, p. 120).

The steps taken are: (1) Analysis and Synthesis. Literature research involves the analysis and synthesis of written works relevant to the research topic. This includes a critical evaluation of the methodologies, findings, and concepts contained in the literature (Denscombe, 2017, p. 151); (2) Bibliography Identification. This research requires the ability to identify and access relevant literature. Libraries may include books, journal articles, research reports, and other sources of information (Denscombe, 2021, p. 7); (3) Defined Purpose and Scope. Literature research usually has a clear purpose and scope, such as providing a theoretical foundation for research, evaluating previous research developments, or compiling a conceptual framework (D'Amour et al., 2005); (4) In-depth Literature Review. Literature research is carried out in a detailed and in-depth manner. Researchers examine the relevant literature carefully to understand existing concepts and how previous research has been conducted (Icarbord et al., 2020, pp. 11–13); (5) Literature

Selection and Inclusion. The literature selection process is an important step. The researcher selects literature that has high relevance to the research topic and then integrates it into his analysis (Glass, 1977); and (6) Critical and Constructive. To providing a summary, literature research also includes a critical assessment of the weaknesses and advantages of the literature reviewed. Researchers can also propose new conceptual concepts or models based on the literature under review (Levy & Ellis, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After searching for sources, at least, this study found that there are eight important aspects in discussing development literacy in urban communities; namely: understanding of urban infrastructure, environmental awareness, participation in urban planning, economy and employment opportunities, health, education, involvement in public policy and technology and innovation. Here's the description:

1. Understanding City Infrastructure

Urban communities need to understand urban infrastructure, including transportation, electricity, clean water, sanitation, and telecommunications (Cui & Sun, 2019). This understanding helps them appreciate the importance of a well-functioning infrastructure for everyday life.

Urban society plays an important role in the growth and development of modern cities. In order to optimally contribute and adapt to these developments, an understanding of city infrastructure is essential. One of the main aspects that must be understood by urban society is the transportation system that involves road networks, public transportation, and traffic arrangement. This understanding helps them to avoid congestion and choose efficient transportation alternatives, not only increasing mobility but also reducing negative impacts on the environment (Hamurcu & Eren, 2020).

For transportation, an understanding of energy infrastructure is also vital. People need to know where their electricity comes from, how the distribution process is carried out, and how to manage energy consumption sustainably. With this understanding, urban communities can participate in energy saving efforts and support environmental sustainability. Awareness about the availability and sustainability of clean water is also crucial. This understanding helps communities to reduce water wastage, maintain cleanliness, and contribute to the preservation of water resources (EL-Nwsany et al., 2019).

Sanitation infrastructure, such as waste management systems, is also important for urban communities to understand. By knowing how waste is treated and disposed of, communities can play an active role in keeping the city clean and involve themselves in sustainable living practices. So far, an understanding of telecommunications infrastructure gives people access to connect with the outside world and participate in the digital age. With information technology that is increasingly developing, urban people can use it to access information, learn, do business, and communicate effectively (Ddiba et al., 2020).

The importance of urban people's understanding of urban infrastructure creates awareness of shared responsibility in maintaining and improving the quality of life. By having this knowledge, people can become agents of change who contribute positively to sustainable development and

create a competitive and comfortable urban environment to live in. This understanding becomes the foundation for urban communities in building better cities for future generations (Mouratidis, 2021).

Overall, urban people's understanding of urban infrastructure is not just about technical knowledge, but also about how they can participate in the formation and maintenance of better cities. By bringing awareness and participation, urban communities have a key role to play in shaping the future of sustainable, inclusive, and innovative cities.

2. Environmental Awareness:

Development literacy is an important key in building a society that cares about urban environmental issues. One crucial aspect of this literacy is awareness of issues such as waste management, tree planting, reforestation, and environmental conservation efforts. In an increasingly urbanized society, this understanding is becoming increasingly important due to the direct influence of daily life on urban ecosystems (Wu et al., 2020).

Environmental conservation efforts are also an integral part of development literacy. People need to know how important it is to maintain the sustainability of natural resources and reduce negative impacts on ecosystems. It involves an understanding of how to sustain water resources, safeguard biodiversity, and support sustainable practices (Ding & Veit, 2016).

In development literacy, the application of environmentally friendly practices in daily life is the main focus. Communities need to understand how their everyday decisions, such as transportation choices or home energy use policies, can affect their ecological footprint (Dubois et al., 2019). This awareness can shape more sustainable behavior and help create a society that cares about the environment.

Development literacy also considers the importance of education and dissemination of information to the community. Education programs on environmental issues, both through formal and informal education, become a means to increase public understanding and awareness (Paradewari et al., 2018). It includes workshops, seminars, and information campaigns aimed at disseminating knowledge and providing practical tools for society to contribute to environmental sustainability.

With increased community understanding and participation through development literacy, cities can thrive as places that are not only economically developed but also sustainable and environmentally friendly. Community awareness and active involvement become a strong foundation to achieve a balance between urban development and environmental sustainability, creating a livable and sustainable environment for future generations.

3. Participation in Urban Planning

Urban citizens who are developmentally literate can participate in the urban planning process. This involves understanding urban spatial plans, development policies, and how they can provide constructive input. They who have good development literacy have a central role in influencing the direction of urban development. Through a deep understanding of the concept of development literacy, they can actively participate in the urban planning process. One of the main things that

people need to understand is the urban spatial plan. This includes an understanding of land zoning, infrastructure development, and public space management. By understanding spatial plans, residents can understand the direction of development and its impact on daily life (Serbulo, 2022).

The participation of urban citizens in the urban planning process is not only in line with democratic principles, but also requires constructive contributions from the community (Jacobs, 2002). Therefore, development literacy also includes the ability to provide constructive input. Development literate citizens can provide their views on local needs, challenges, and aspirations to ensure that policies implemented truly reflect their needs and expectations (Guimaraes, 2019).

The importance of development literacy in citizen participation can also be seen in the implementation of development projects involving public spaces. Development literate citizens can better understand the importance of maintaining open space, environmental sustainability, and safety in the design and implementation of such projects. Through their participation, communities can shape cities that are more inclusive, sustainable, and in line with collective needs and desires. It also can motivate communities to get involved in citizen initiative projects aimed at improving the quality of life in urban areas (Cappa et al., 2022). Such initiatives may include community projects, shared tree planting, or cleaning activities. Through active participation in these initiatives, citizens become not only consumers of development but also of its producers and designers.

Development literacy at the individual and collective level creates an environment in which urban citizens become not only spectators in urban development, but also empowered players. This literacy is the key to building cities that are inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of their communities. With participation grounded in understanding and constructive contribution, urban citizens can together shape a better future for all residents.

4. Economy and Employment Opportunities

Economic literacy has an important role in helping urban residents understand and optimize the economic opportunities that surround them. With a solid understanding of the concept of economic literacy, urban citizens can better manage their financial resources, understand the dynamics of the job market, and even create entrepreneurial opportunities that have the potential to improve personal and community economies. It involves understanding the jobs available in the city (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014).

Economically literate urban citizens can identify rapidly growing sectors of the economy and evaluate employment opportunities in various industries. They can plan career paths that suit their skills and interests, increasing competitiveness in the dynamic urban job market. It includes an understanding of entrepreneurial opportunities. Economically literate urban citizens can identify unmet market needs and develop innovative business ideas. They can understand investment risks and opportunities, manage business finances, and develop effective marketing strategies. This contributes positively not only to the development of their personal business but also to the growth of the local economy (Ayoo, 2022).

With a good understanding of financial management, investment, and long-term financial planning, they can create better financial stability. It involves skills in budgeting, managing debt wisely, and making smart financial decisions, all of which help create economic sustainability at the individual level. With a collective understanding of economic opportunity, communities can work together to develop projects that enhance shared prosperity. Cooperatives, joint ventures, and socioeconomic projects can be the result of economic literacy developing at the community level (Haryono et al., 2021).

5. Health

The importance of access to health services is the main basis for people's welfare (Goddard & Smith, 2001). Understanding the accessibility of health services is key to ensuring that future generations can grow and develop optimally. It covers various aspects, including the availability of adequate health facilities, affordable service costs, and an understanding of the importance of disease prevention. At the community level, this understanding can stimulate healthy behaviors and motivate people to seek health care regularly. By recognizing the importance of children's health from an early age, parents can be more active in ensuring children get full access to necessary health services (Kruk et al., 2018).

People's understanding of healthcare accessibility also includes awareness of their rights and responsibilities in advocating for children's health. Health-literate communities are better able to demand their right to quality health care and respond quickly when there is an urgent medical need. This awareness can also help people understand the importance of active participation in children's health programs, such as immunizations, periodic health checks, and health education (Novello et al., 1992). Public understanding of access to health services can be key to addressing health disparities that may arise due to socio-economic factors (Woolf & Braveman, 2011).

In continuing the community's understanding of the importance of access to health services, the active role of the government and local health institutions is crucial. The government can play a significant role in improving the availability and accessibility of health facilities in different regions. Health subsidy programs and initiatives to expand health insurance coverage can incentivize people to access health services without having to worry about heavy financial burdens (Lagomarsino et al., 2012).

6. Education

The importance of access to educational services is a critical foundation for the welfare and development of society (Tomlinson, 2005, p. 15). The significance forms a major foothold for societies in taking smart decisions affects the well-being and educational growth of their children. The complexity of various variables in the educational process, society can take proactive steps to contribute to shaping a brighter and educated future for future generations (Rieckmann, 2012).

Access to educational services is not only about physical, i.e. the existence of schools and learning facilities, but also involves deeper aspects such as financial accessibility, relevant curriculum, and availability of qualified teachers. This awareness helps people understand that education is a long-term investment that can open doors of opportunity for the children. With this understanding, parents and guardians can better manage their resources, including time and money, to support

their children's education. It gives the access to education services includes an understanding of human rights. Education is recognized as a basic right of every individual, and this awareness can help society to be more active in fighting for the rights of education for all children. People who are aware of education rights are also more likely to participate in decision-making processes related to education policy and monitor that these rights remain protected (Marconi, 2018).

With a deep awareness of the importance of access to education services, communities can become more effective agents of change in improving their education systems. Education is not only a right, but also the key to opening the door to a brighter and more sustainable future for individuals and society as a whole. This awareness is a strong foundation for creating a more educated, empowered society, and contributing to social and economic development.

7. Involvement in Public Policy

Urban communities that are developmentally literate play an important role in the process of democratization and urban development. With a high level of development literacy, they can more effectively participate in government decision-making processes (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Renn et al., 1993). Development literacy here includes an understanding of various aspects of public policy, the rights and obligations of citizens, and skills in voicing their aspirations.

Development literacy includes understanding the rights and obligations of citizens in an urban context. People who are developmentally literate will know more about their basic rights, such as the right to adequate housing, the right to health services, and the right to be involved in decision-making processes that affect their lives. This understanding provides a solid foundation for communities to engage themselves in advocacy and positive change efforts. Developmentally literate societies can craft strong arguments, articulate their views clearly, and participate in constructive dialogue. This ability is important in shaping public opinion that supports positive and sustainable change at the urban level (Bröder et al., 2020). It opens up opportunities for urban communities to voice their aspirations and needs more effectively. They can use a variety of communication channels, including social media, community forums, or participatory meetings, to present ideas, criticisms, or proposed improvements. With this capability, communities can become active agents of change and play a greater role in shaping policies and programs that reflect their real needs.

Development literacy can be a major driver for increasing the capacity of urban communities in utilizing information technology. Development literate communities can use technology to obtain information, voice their opinions, and engage in technology-based initiatives that can increase efficiency and transparency in urban governance. They can share knowledge, provide training, or become mento-mentees in the context of development literacy. This creates an environment where development literacy is not only the responsibility of individuals, but also part of the collective identity of urban communities.

8. Technology and Innovation

Development literacy that includes an understanding of technology and innovation has a crucial role in bringing positive change and sustainable development. From the product of high level of technological literacy, people can harness the potential of technology to improve the efficiency of

city services, facilitate access to information, and create a more modern and connected urban environment (Radovanović et al., 2020). The technological literacy allows people to understand and adopt various innovations that can improve the efficiency of city services. With a good understanding of technology, communities can support the implementation of smart solutions that include resource management, transportation management, and digitally connected city infrastructure.

Technological literacy opens opportunities for people to actively participate in smart city initiatives (Sarosa et al., 2023). A tech-savvy society can contribute to designing, implementing, and evaluating technology projects that benefit the city and its residents. Examples of this participation could be using smart apps to report infrastructure issues, conveying aspirations, or engaging in digital surveys that support urban planning (Desouza & Bhagwatwar, 2012; Ertiö, 2015). It allows people to access relevant data and information more easily and quickly. Tech-savvy communities can use digital platforms to obtain information about city policies, development programs, or participatory activities they can participate.

Furthermore, technological literacy also includes people's ability to understand and respond to emerging technology trends. By understanding trends such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and green technology, communities can be more proactive in supporting innovations that can improve quality of life and sustainability (Javaid et al., 2022). This understanding enables communities to contribute to designing solutions that integrate the latest technology with their daily needs.

Technological literacy enables society to better respond to the challenges of digital transformation. With an understanding of cybersecurity, data privacy, and technology ethics, people can use technology wisely and responsibly. This awareness is important so that people can involve themselves in digital transformation without leaving the security and privacy aspects. Tech-savvy societies can contribute to reducing the digital divide by supporting inclusive initiatives, such as digital training for less accessible groups. This understanding creates opportunities for all citizens of the city to experience the benefits of technology and participate in digital life (Andreasson, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Development literacy in urban communities is vital for navigating the complexities of modern urban dynamics. It serves as a foundation for addressing challenges and seizing opportunities. The critical aspects of development literacy include understanding city infrastructure, environmental issues, technology, and innovation.

City dwellers with development literacy comprehend the importance of well-functioning infrastructure, such as transportation, electricity, water, sanitation, and telecommunications. This knowledge enhances their daily lives and enables active participation in creating sustainable environments. Environmental awareness, including waste management and conservation efforts, is integral to shaping environmentally friendly behaviour and balancing urban development and conservation.

Technology literacy is another crucial component of development literacy, allowing communities to harness technology for efficient city services, information access, and modern urban connectivity. This understanding enables the support of intelligent solutions for urban challenges. Additionally, development literacy empowers urban communities to actively engage in urban planning, policy discussions, and decision-making processes.

The practical implications of development literacy extend beyond theory, transforming urban citizens into active participants in policy formation. It equips them to understand complex issues like inequality, the environment, and technology, fostering sustainable and inclusive cities. Despite existing challenges, development literacy enables communities to comprehend the root causes of inequality and collaboratively formulate inclusive solutions.

Moreover, development literacy facilitates intergenerational connections by educating young people about development issues. This prepares them to be future agents of change, actively participating in public policy and community development. The ultimate goal is to achieve sustainable development by instilling participatory attitudes toward the environment, emphasizing actions like waste management, green land preservation, and engagement in sustainability initiatives.

In conclusion, development literacy in urban communities goes beyond understanding development issues; it empowers communities to actively shape the urban future. This literacy fosters a deep understanding of rights, obligations, environmental concerns, technological advancements, and economic issues. It forms the basis for sustainable and inclusive urban development, accommodating various aspects of urban life. High development literacy is critical to creating informed, engaged, and proactive urban citizens.

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