



## Students Reading Interest at the Elementary Education Level: the Implementation of the School Literacy Movement in Banda Aceh

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to describe the reading interest of students at the elementary education level in the implementation of the School Literacy Movement in Banda Aceh. A quantitative approach with a descriptive type was utilized. The population of this study comprises all students from MTsS Ulumul Qur'an, SMP Islam Al-Azhar Cairo Banda Aceh, and MTsN Model Banda Aceh, with a sample of 30 students, 10 students from each school. Data analysis techniques involved the use of questionnaires and descriptive statistics. The results of this study indicate that the reading interest of students at the elementary education level in the implementation of the School Literacy Movement in Banda Aceh is very good, with average reading interest scores of 79.88 for MTsS Ulumul Qur'an, 78.75 for SMP Islam Al-Azhar Cairo Banda Aceh, and 77.25 for MTsN Model Banda Aceh, all of which fall into the very good category. This high level of reading interest is supported by various literacy programs, including a 15-minute reading program, classroom library programs, best literacy class programs, library visit programs, and literacy hunting programs.

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## INTRODUCTION

The School Literacy Movement (GLS) is the responsibility of all teachers in every subject because reading and writing are skills used in all fields of study. Therefore, professional development for all teachers is necessary. However, it should be noted that Indonesian language teachers must play a crucial role in literacy because they teach the four language skills. According to Abidin (2017:58), literacy education will not materialize without quality teachers.

In line with this reality, the initial effort to realize literacy education is to improve teacher quality. By improving teacher quality, teachers will be able to enhance the quality of the lessons they deliver. This improvement in teaching quality will impact the

quality of graduates. Ultimately, having teachers with effective character will enhance students' literacy proficiency in the future.

A balanced literacy program is designed by considering various teaching strategies, selecting materials according to needs, and ensuring that teachers are responsive. Students' literacy skills significantly influence their academic achievement. The better the students' literacy, the better their academic achievement will be.

The cultivation of a literacy culture involves efforts to influence, nurture, and develop students' reading interest. Reading interest is not innate but is the result of early habituation. Reading interest needs to be stimulated, influenced, and developed to persist. Therefore, it depends on the efforts of schools, teachers, and families to develop students' reading interest.

According to Inayatillah (2015:19), fostering a literacy culture is a strategic effort to build the nation's civilization. "It is difficult to build civilization without a reading and writing culture (literacy)." This sentiment was echoed by the English poet T.S. Eliot. To build civilization, reading and writing must be cultivated. The advancement of a country can be seen from the high interest in reading and writing among its people.

An individual's literacy interest does not arise on its own but is also influenced by external factors, the demands of readers' needs, competition among peers, the availability of time and resources needed by readers, encouragement from teachers, and rewards (Santoso, 2005:11). Dawson and Rahman (in Santoso, 2005:11) mention that factors influencing reading interest include: (1) the ability to meet basic needs through reading materials; (2) obtaining benefits and satisfaction from reading activities; (3) the availability of reading materials at home and school; (4) the quantity and variety of preferred reading materials; (5) the availability of complete library facilities and ease of borrowing; (6) the presence of special curricular programs providing periodic reading opportunities; and (7) classmates' suggestions and teachers' attitudes in managing teaching and learning activities.

A teacher must possess literacy skills. Literacy skills contribute to daily life because a set of knowledge is acquired through literacy. According to Reitz (2004:356), literacy is the ability to read and write from any obtained information. Therefore, literacy ability is related to the four language skills expected to comprehend information well.

The cultivation of a literacy culture involves efforts to influence, nurture, and develop students' reading interest. Reading interest is not innate but is the result of early habituation. Reading interest needs to be stimulated, influenced, and developed to persist. Therefore, it depends on the efforts of schools, teachers, and families to develop students' reading interest and thereby enhance their literacy.

In reality, schools have not been able to fully develop students' reading interest. Based on researchers' observations, students' reading activities have not fully grown

into a habit. Students' reading interest is below average. This reading issue should be a significant concern for us.

Facts show that reading interest in Indonesia is still concerning. Ideally, one newspaper is read by ten people, but in Indonesia, one newspaper is read by 45 people. Even compared to Sri Lanka, where one newspaper is read by 38 people, and in the Philippines, where one newspaper is read by 30 people. The percentage of Indonesians seeking new knowledge through reading is 23.5%, while 85.9% prefer watching television, and 40.3% listen to the radio. The method of obtaining information through reading has remained static since the 1990s, increasing by only about 0.2%. Therefore, the literacy culture is much lower compared to the culture of watching television.

According to Inayatillah (2015:19), a literacy culture is a strategic effort to build the nation's civilization. "It is difficult to build civilization without a reading and writing culture (literacy)." This sentiment was echoed by the English poet T.S. Eliot. To build civilization, reading and writing must be cultivated. The advancement of a country can be seen from the high interest in reading and writing among its people.

An individual's literacy interest does not arise on its own but requires external encouragement, a challenge to read, and motivation to obtain information through books (Santoso, 2005:11). Dawson and Rahman (in Santoso, 2005:11) mention that factors influencing reading interest include: (1) the ability to meet basic needs through reading materials; (2) obtaining benefits and satisfaction from reading activities; (3) the availability of reading materials at home and school; (4) the quantity and variety of preferred reading materials; (5) the availability of complete library facilities and ease of borrowing; (6) the presence of special curricular programs providing periodic reading opportunities; and (7) classmates' suggestions and teachers' attitudes in managing teaching and learning activities.

From the above explanation, researchers conclude that students' reading interest is still low, necessitating a mechanism to increase reading interest. Therefore, this study is formulated with the title "Students' Reading Interest at the Elementary Education Level: The Implementation of the School Literacy Movement in Banda Aceh."

## **RESEARCH METHODE**

The approach used in this study is quantitative with a descriptive type. The population of this research includes all students from MTsS Ulumul Qur'an, SMP Islam Al-Azhar Cairo Banda Aceh, and MTsN Model Banda Aceh. The sample consists of 30 students, with 10 students taken from each school. The data analysis technique involves the use of questionnaires, and descriptive statistics are employed for data analysis.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The School Literacy Movement (GLS) reinforces the character-building movement as outlined in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 23 of 2015. One activity within this movement is a 15-minute session of reading non-academic books before learning begins. This activity is implemented to cultivate students' reading interest and improve reading skills so that knowledge can be better acquired. Reading materials contain moral values, including local, national, and global wisdom, presented according to the developmental stage of the students.

This significant breakthrough demonstrates that the average reading interest scores of the three schools sampled in this study have reached very good levels, with details as follows: MTsS Ulumul Qur'an (79.88), SMP Islam Al-Azhar Cairo Banda Aceh (78.75), and MTsN Model Banda Aceh (77.25). These scores indicate that the implementation of the School Literacy Movement (GLS) has also been very good. According to Muchlisoh (in Santoso, 2005:11), students' reading interest does not arise on its own but is influenced by external factors, readers' needs, competition among peers, the availability of time and resources needed by readers, encouragement from teachers, and government programs like GLS. Thus, GLS significantly impacts students' reading interest.

In this context, GLS activities implemented by teachers aim to enhance students' abilities to access, understand, and use information intelligently through various activities, including reading, observing, listening, writing, and speaking. GLS is a combined effort involving the participation and cooperation of all school community members (teachers, students, educational staff, principals, school committees, school supervisors, parents/guardians) and the broader community as part of the educational ecosystem. This effort is made to turn schools into learning organizations whose members are literate for life through public involvement.

Observations show that the school literacy movement programs implemented by schools include a 15-minute reading program designed to help students find their favorite authors and increase their reading activities progressively. Additionally, this program can motivate students to read books based on information shared by their peers, explaining why the reading interest survey results indicate a very good category.

The classroom library program also enhances students' reading interest. In this activity, students look for books to gain knowledge independently, without being instructed, and read books assigned by teachers during free time. During observations, students reported that they preferred spending time in the classroom decorating the library, organizing books, cataloging them with numbers, classifying them by group, and reading these books because the school holds a best literacy class program at the end of the semester.

The selection of the best literacy class is assessed from various aspects by the school community, hoping to increase students' reading interest, with indicators such as wanting to read more books after finishing one, asking parents to buy books instead of clothes before the holidays, and joining study groups to borrow books. To ensure the success of the School Literacy Movement mandated by Permendikbud No. 23 of 2015, these three schools also implement a library visit program. In this program, students search for books in the library because they know there are good books available, training students to develop a reading habit so that even when visiting someone's home, they pay attention to the books. Moreover, students are motivated to rent books from book rental providers or visit bookstores to read, even if not purchasing.

The literacy movement requires schools to create programs, such as the literacy hunting program. Students seek various reading sources to increase their reading interest by subscribing to newspapers or magazines. Additionally, students search for books they have heard about, look for books to enhance their knowledge, and find books instructed by teachers to improve school literacy.

School literacy is the responsibility of all teachers to increase reading interest in every subject because reading and writing are skills used in all fields of study. Therefore, professional development for all teachers is necessary. However, it should be noted that Indonesian language teachers must play a crucial role in literacy because they teach the four language skills. According to Abidin (2017:58), literacy education will not materialize without quality teachers.

Reading interest is influenced by literacy movements, which are realized through improving teacher quality. By enhancing teacher quality, teachers will be able to develop the quality of the lessons they deliver. This improvement in teaching quality will impact the quality of graduates. Ultimately, having teachers with effective character will enhance students' literacy proficiency in the future.

A balanced literacy program is designed by considering various teaching strategies, selecting materials according to needs, and ensuring that teachers are responsive. Students' literacy skills significantly influence their academic achievement. The better the students' literacy, the higher their reading interest will be.

The cultivation of a literacy culture involves efforts to influence, nurture, and develop students' reading interest. Reading interest is not innate but is the result of early habituation. Reading interest needs to be stimulated, influenced, and developed to persist. Therefore, it depends on the efforts of schools, teachers, and families to develop students' reading interest.

According to Inayatillah (2015:19), fostering a literacy culture is a strategic effort to build the nation's civilization. "It is difficult to build civilization without a reading and writing culture (literacy)." This sentiment was echoed by the English poet T.S. Eliot. To

build civilization, reading and writing must be cultivated. The advancement of a country can be seen from the high interest in reading and writing among its people.

Students' literacy interest does not arise on its own but is influenced by external factors, readers' needs, competition among peers, the availability of time and resources needed by readers, encouragement from teachers, and rewards (Santoso, 2005:11). Dawson and Rahman (in Santoso, 2005:11) mention that factors influencing reading interest include: (1) the ability to meet basic needs through reading materials; (2) obtaining benefits and satisfaction from reading activities; (3) the availability of reading materials at home and school; (4) the quantity and variety of preferred reading materials; (5) the availability of complete library facilities and ease of borrowing; (6) the presence of special curricular programs providing periodic reading opportunities; and (7) classmates' suggestions and teachers' attitudes in managing teaching and learning activities.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that students' reading interest does not arise spontaneously but is influenced by external factors. Particularly, students' reading interest needs to be stimulated, encouraged, and nurtured so that reading becomes a habit and a necessity.

School libraries have a valuable contribution to increasing students' activities in the learning process and can enhance the quality of education and teaching. Through school libraries, students can educate themselves continuously and learn to explore knowledge independently. According to Santoso (2005:11), the school's task is to provide students with learning skills on how they can learn and read well.

The school library is a determining factor for the success of educational and teaching programs because the information and knowledge obtained through reading and studying in the library can function as "intellectual nutrition" for all aspects of human life in the future. Ralph and Wagner, as quoted by Mbulu (in Santoso, 2005:12), state that the school library is a place for storing knowledge, a teaching laboratory, the heart of the education program, a research site, and a recreational facility. The school library is a living monument that is truly meaningful for the knowledge and culture of the nation over time. The classroom library becomes the kitchen of knowledge and an entertainment facility.

Unconsciously, libraries help educators change students' thinking patterns from static to dynamic. This is evident from the results after students read books in the library. By reading books, students will naturally expand their horizons and, importantly, become more critical through reading discourse.

Implicitly, the role of libraries in increasing reading interest can train students to utilize their free time or during breaks; encourage and motivate students to love books, thereby stimulating their intellectual capacity; foster independent learning, meaning that without teachers, students can learn on their own by reading books in the library;

serve as a pedagogical medium; enhance reading skills; and prevent students' bad habits of playing during free periods.

From the above explanation, it is found that reading interest is influenced by the School Literacy Movement (GLS) or vice versa, because MTsS Ulumul Qur'an, SMP Islam Al-Azhar Cairo Banda Aceh, and MTsN Model Banda Aceh.

## CONCLUSION

Conclusions of the Study on Reading Interest Among Elementary School Students Implementing the School Literacy Movement in Banda Aceh

1. High Reading Interest: It can be concluded that the reading interest among elementary school students participating in the School Literacy Movement in Banda Aceh is very high. This is evidenced by the average reading interest scores of MTsS Ulumul Qur'an (79.88), SMP Islam Al-Azhar Cairo Banda Aceh (78.75), and MTsN Model Banda Aceh (77.25), all of which fall into the very good category. This achievement is supported by literacy programs implemented by the three schools, including: a) A 15-minute reading program to find favorite authors and enhance reading activities. b) A classroom library program to find and read books during free time. c) A best literacy class program to motivate students to read more books. d) A library visit program to cultivate the habit of reading books. e) A literacy hunting program to seek out various reading sources.
2. Influence of Literacy Movement and Teacher Quality: Reading interest is influenced by the literacy movement and teacher quality, as well as the School Literacy Movement (GLS) programs designed by school principals and teachers. The effective character of teachers significantly impacts the improvement of students' reading interest in literacy at MTsS Ulumul Qur'an, SMP Islam Al-Azhar Cairo Banda Aceh, and MTsN Model Banda Aceh.
3. Role of School Libraries: School libraries play a crucial role in enhancing student activities in the learning process and improving the quality of education and teaching. Furthermore, school libraries are key factors in successfully increasing students' reading interest.

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