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Analysis of Students' Reading Interests in Grade IV of SDN Dawuan Tengah 6

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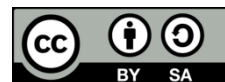
Interest in reading

Literacy

ABSTRACT

The low interest in reading among elementary school students is a serious challenge in education, especially amid the onslaught of digital media. This study aims to analyze the level of interest in reading and the factors that influence it among fourth-grade students at SDN Dawuan Tengah 6. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative method. Data collection techniques were carried out through direct observation in class, distributing questionnaires to students, and interviews with fourth-grade teachers. The results of the study indicate that fourth-grade students' interest in reading is in the [specify: e.g., medium/low] category. Supporting factors for reading interest include the availability of interesting reading materials and teacher support. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors found include dependence on gadgets, a lack of diversity in the book collection in the reading corner, and a lack of reading habits in the family environment. The conclusion of this study is the need for innovation in reading corner management and more interactive literacy strategies to increase students' reading enthusiasm from an early age.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Reading interest is a crucial factor in supporting the success of the learning process, particularly at the elementary school level [1]. It not only affects students' academic achievement but also contributes to the development of critical thinking, creativity, and a deeper understanding of knowledge. Good reading skills not only influence mastery of subject matter but also play a role in developing critical thinking skills, creativity, and student insight. Therefore, fostering reading interest from an early age is a shared responsibility between schools, teachers, and families [2].

Students in Indonesia still demonstrate relatively low reading literacy levels compared to other countries [3]. According to the 2022 PISA report, Indonesia ranked 70th out of 80 participating countries, with a reading literacy score of 359, down from 371 in

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2018 [4]. This condition indicates a serious educational problem, particularly in building students' higher-order thinking skills through reading activities. Theoretically, reflective reading activities can stimulate cognitive processes such as analyzing, evaluating, and concluding information [5].

Reading is the most fundamental intellectual tool in the formal education system, especially at the elementary school level [6]. It is not merely a mechanical process of decoding symbols, but a complex cognitive activity involving comprehension, interpretation, and meaning construction. A strong literacy foundation in early education significantly influences students' future academic success [7]. Conversely, limited reading skills at the elementary level are closely associated with low academic performance in later stages [8].

From a developmental perspective, reading supports children in transitioning from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" [9]. Students who struggle with basic reading skills tend to focus on decoding words rather than understanding meaning, which hinders their overall learning process [10]. Therefore, reading fluency is essential for deeper comprehension and knowledge acquisition [11].

Reading interest can be reflected in indicators such as the frequency of reading, the types of reading materials, and the motivation to engage in reading activities. According to Burs and Lowe, indicators of reading interest include the need for reading, enjoyment, desire, initiative to seek reading materials, and follow-up activities after reading [12]. These indicators highlight that reading interest is not only behavioral but also motivational and affective in nature.

Previous studies have shown that reading interest is influenced by factors such as the learning environment, teacher support, availability of reading materials, and student motivation [13]. However, most studies focus on general literacy programs or cognitive outcomes, and fewer studies specifically examine students' reading interest in real classroom contexts at the elementary level, particularly in relation to daily literacy practices and individual differences among students. This gap highlights the need for contextual and school-based investigations.

Based on preliminary observations in grade IV at SDN Dawuan Tengah 6, students' reading interest varies significantly. Some students show enthusiasm during literacy activities, while others read only when the teacher instructs. Several students can read but have difficulty understanding the content, and a small number still experience basic reading difficulties. In addition, limited access to engaging reading materials and the influence of digital entertainment contribute to low reading habits.

These conditions indicate a gap between expected literacy competencies and actual student performance in the classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis to identify the level of students' reading interest and the factors influencing it.

This study aims to analyze the reading interest of fourth-grade students at SDN Dawuan Tengah 6 and to identify internal and external factors that influence it. Specifically, this research addresses the following questions: (1) How is the level of students' reading interest? (2) What factors influence students' reading interest?

The results of this study are expected to provide insights for teachers and schools in designing more effective literacy strategies and to contribute to the development of reading culture in elementary education. Furthermore, this research is expected to enrich the literature on reading interest by providing empirical evidence from a real classroom context.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative, descriptive approach [14]. This approach was selected to explore and interpret students' reading interests and teachers' efforts in depth within a natural classroom context rather than to test hypotheses. The descriptive method was used to systematically, accurately, and objectively describe fourth-grade students' reading interest at SDN Dawuan Tengah 6.

The subjects in this study were 30 fourth-grade students and 1 fourth-grade teacher at SDN Dawuan Tengah 6. The number of participants was determined by the total student population in the observed class. Fourth-grade students were chosen because they are at a crucial stage in developing reading habits and interests, and the teacher was selected for their role in implementing literacy activities in the classroom. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, based on participants' relevance to the research objectives.

Data collection techniques are crucial in research to obtain information that aligns with the objectives. In this study, data were collected using three consistent techniques: observation, interviews, and questionnaires [15]. Observation was conducted to examine students' reading behavior during literacy activities. Interviews were conducted with the teacher to explore strategies and challenges in fostering reading interest. The questionnaire was administered to students to identify their reading interest levels.

The questionnaire used in this study was a structured questionnaire in the form of a Likert scale, consisting of several indicators such as reading frequency, interest, motivation, and types of reading materials. In addition, several open-ended questions were included to elicit more in-depth student responses.

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. The steps included: (1) data reduction by selecting and simplifying relevant data from observations, interviews, and questionnaires; (2) data display by organizing the data in narrative and tabular forms; and (3) drawing conclusions based on patterns, relationships, and findings that emerged from the data.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the data, this study applied triangulation techniques, namely method triangulation (observation, interviews, and questionnaires) and source triangulation (students and teachers). In addition, prolonged observation and careful data checking were conducted to increase the validity of the findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student reading interest is an attitudinal tendency that demonstrates enjoyment, attention, encouragement, and active involvement in reading activities [16]. In this study, reading interest was analyzed through four main indicators: interest in reading activities, reading habits, reading motivation, and enthusiasm for using reading materials. The findings are presented by clearly distinguishing between empirical data (observation, questionnaire, and interview results) and the author's interpretation to ensure analytical clarity.

Table 1. Summary of students' reading interest indicators

Indicator	Empirical Findings	Category
Interest in Reading	The majority enjoy visual texts; some depend on teacher instruction	Developing
Reading Habits	Consistent at school; inconsistent at home	Moderate
Reading Motivation	Dominated by extrinsic motivation	Sufficient
Use of Reading Materials	Some active use of the library/corner	Quite Good

The categorization (developing, moderate, sufficient, quite good) was determined based on the percentage of student responses in the questionnaire and supported by observational data, where dominance above 75% was categorized as good, 50–75% as moderate/sufficient, and below 50% as developing.

1. Interest in Reading Activities

Based on the questionnaire results and observations, students' interest in reading activities showed varying levels of variation [17]. Empirical data indicate that approximately 60% of students expressed enjoyment in reading, especially when using illustrated storybooks, while 40% tended to read only when instructed by the teacher. Interpretation: This finding suggests that visual appeal and content relevance significantly influence students' reading interest [18]. However, the reliance on teacher instruction suggests that intrinsic reading interest has not fully developed [19].

This result is consistent with previous studies stating that elementary students' reading interest is strongly influenced by engaging media and teacher facilitation. Psychologically, a strong interest is characterized by voluntary engagement. Therefore, students' reading interest can be categorized as developing, as independent reading behavior has not yet been fully established.

2. Reading Habits

Reading habits are related to the frequency and consistency of students in reading activities [20]. Observation data show that all students participate in school literacy activities (100%), but only about 45% report reading regularly at home. Interpretation: This indicates that school-based literacy programs positively shape reading habits, but these habits are not consistently transferred to the home environment [21].

This finding aligns with prior research highlighting that structured school literacy programs are more effective than unstructured home environments in building reading habits. The school context appears more supportive due to scheduled literacy time, teacher supervision, and availability of reading materials, whereas at home, limited book access and high gadget use reduce reading consistency. Thus, reading habits are categorized as moderate, as they are strong in school settings but weak outside of school.

3. Reading motivation

Reading motivation was analyzed in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic factors [22]. Questionnaire results show that around 70% of students read due to external factors

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(assignments, teacher instructions, rewards), while only 30% read based on personal interest or curiosity. Interpretation: This indicates that extrinsic motivation dominates students' reading behavior, while intrinsic motivation remains underdeveloped [23].

This finding supports previous studies that have shown that external reinforcement plays a major role in early reading development. However, intrinsic motivation is crucial for long-term sustainability. This finding supports previous studies that have shown that external reinforcement plays a major role in early reading development, but that intrinsic motivation is crucial for long-term sustainability [24]. If reading is driven solely by obligation, it is unlikely to become a habit. Therefore, students' reading motivation is categorized as sufficient, but requires strengthening of intrinsic aspects to ensure long-term reading engagement.

4. Enthusiasm in Utilizing Reading Materials

Students' enthusiasm for using reading materials can be seen in their interactions with books and literacy facilities [25]. Observation data show that about 50% of students actively use reading corners or borrow books, while the rest show passive behavior. Interpretation: This indicates that although facilities are available, not all students utilize them optimally [26].

This finding is consistent with research emphasizing that the availability of reading materials alone is insufficient without engaging instructional strategies and teacher guidance [27]. The presence of reading corners supports literacy development; however, active facilitation and interactive activities are needed to maximize their use. Thus, enthusiasm for using reading materials is rated quite good, but it still needs improvement through innovative learning strategies. Overall, enthusiasm for using reading materials is quite good, yet it requires further strengthening. Learning innovations and teacher facilitation are essential to enhance literacy engagement [28]. Reading interest development is influenced by environmental, motivational, and instructional factors [29]. Strengthening school literacy programs is necessary to build sustainable reading habits [30].

Overall, the findings indicate that students' reading interest is influenced by three main factors: instructional strategies, environmental support, and student motivation. These results reinforce previous research stating that literacy development is multidimensional and requires synergy between school and home environments.

Compared to previous studies, this research provides a more contextual understanding by highlighting the gap between school-supported literacy practices and less supportive home environments. This finding serves as the study's novelty, emphasizing the importance of integrating school literacy programs with parental involvement.

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted in a single class, which may limit generalization. Second, the data relied on self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to bias. Third, home environment factors were not explored in depth through direct observation. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve broader samples and more diverse data collection methods.

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4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that students' reading interest is still in the developmental stage and is influenced by the interaction among instructional practices, environmental support, and motivation factors, with school-based literacy activities appearing more consistent in shaping reading habits than a less supportive home environment. This finding implies that improving reading interest requires not only access to reading materials but also structured teacher guidance, engaging learning strategies, and efforts to strengthen students' intrinsic motivation. This study contributes to the literature by providing contextual evidence of the gap between school and home literacy environments in elementary education. However, the study is limited to a single classroom context and partially relies on self-reported data, which may affect generalizability. Future research is recommended to involve larger samples, explore home literacy practices more comprehensively, and develop intervention-based approaches. In practice, the findings suggest the importance of implementing consistent daily literacy activities, applying interactive, student-centered reading strategies, and strengthening collaboration with parents to support reading habits at home.

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