Reading Interest and Teacher's Efforts in Increasing Reading Interest for Elementary Schools

Ria Rizky Maryatiningsih
Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta
E-mail: a510190114@student.ums.ac.id

Muhammad Abduh
Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta
E-mail: ma123@ums.ac.id

Abstract
The declining reading interest in Indonesia, attributed to factors such as technological distractions and a lack of awareness about the benefits of reading, presents a complex issue requiring a shift in societal mindset towards reading. The fundamental problem lies in the low awareness of the importance of reading, as a considerable portion of the Indonesian population perceives reading as a dull and insignificantly beneficial activity. This decline raises concern due to its noteworthy impact on education and national development, especially among Grade II and V students. This research aims to explore the efforts made by teachers and schools to increase reading interest and the obstacles they face, emphasizing the importance of understanding effective strategies to enhance students' engagement with reading. This research was a case study utilizing a qualitative research design, the study conducts observations and interactions with research subjects at Mangkubumen Kidul Elementary School No.16, including the principal, teacher, and selected Grade II and V students. The findings showed that the school has implemented various strategies, such as creating a welcoming physical environment, promoting literacy activities, and forming reading communities, but challenges like technological distractions persist. From the results of the study, it can be concluded that needed for collaborative initiatives between schools and parents, highlighting the influential role of teachers and recommending the integration of effective literacy strategies into the curriculum and national-level literacy campaigns to foster a culture of reading interest in society.

Keywords: reading interest, teacher's effort, elementary school

INTRODUCTION

The culture of reading interest in Indonesia is a concern of all circles, both the government and the community. Various policies carried out by the government with a stretch to build a safe and comfortable library that aims to attract public interest in reading. Reading interest in Indonesia is a complex problem and it takes time to change the mindset of people's thinking to read. Lack of awareness of the importance of reading is a fundamental problem for Indonesians who consider reading a boring activity and does not provide significant benefits. Indonesian people prefer other entertainment alternatives such as television, gadgets and social media are also factors that influence the low interest in reading in Indonesia. According to Hardiman (2021), currently there is a revelation of new reality through technology. Thus, people prefer activities in technological space to prove their existence.

Massively developing technology has brought changes to today's education system in Indonesia (Bakistuta & Abduh, 2021). The technological disruption that is currently taking place also affects the level of public interest in reading. The role of humans has begun to be replaced by robots that have almost the same characteristics as humans. According to Gufron et al. (2021), reading has decreased in the digital era by giving birth to new habits, namely oral, updating status and speaking with fingers without thinking first. Humans want to express their existence with virality in the mass media. The virality created is not intellectual but things that do not provide any benefits and are only for fun.

Based on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2019, Indonesian students ranked 74 out of 79 countries in numeracy and literacy (Hasim, 2020). As a result of this research, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia conducted a minimum assessment policy consisting of reading interest, numeracy and character. Objective learning difficulties in primary schools such as students' ability to listen, read, write and others (Cahyani et al., 2022). Reading interest ability means not only the ability to read but can analyze the results of reading. Then, numeracy skills are not only able to understand math lessons but the numeracy concept can be implemented in everyday life. The importance of reading interest lies in the fact that the ability to read, write and understand texts are basic skills needed in everyday life, both in personal and professional contexts.

Formal educational institutions such as elementary schools also have an important role in fostering an attitude of interest in reading from an early age in children. This is to fulfill the ideals of Indonesian national education as stated in Law No. 20 of 2003 so that students can develop all their potential so that they have a good personality, intelligence and noble character (Prasetyo & Abduh, 2021). Education is a means to shape the character of quality students for the progress of the nation and state. Creating students with character requires a long process starting from elementary school to university level education. Primary school as a fundamental level of formal education has an important role to foster the character that is in accordance with the philosophy of the nation so that it is embedded in the soul and implemented in everyday life. The

Indonesian government has designed a long-term program through the 2005-2025 National Long-Term Development Plan which contains character education as a foundation for realizing the vision of national development (Priasti & Suyatno, 2021).

Based on previous literature studies on education, several researchers have conducted research, including research conducted by Rintang *et.al* (2021) which states that the results of the study show that the role of teachers in increasing students' interest in reading is implemented by creating, facilitating, motivating, evaluating, and dynamizing reading activities. Further research was conducted by Anjas & Vanda (2023) which stated that it showed the lack of students' desire for reading activities. This can be seen when observing students who are not interested in reading due to lack of reading habituation and are affected by technological advances so that students have little interest in reading. Research conducted by Sudarto et al. (2022) found that: "the strategies carried out by Elementary School Inpres 6/75 Biru teachers in increasing students' interest in reading in science learning are encouraging students to read books, preparing supporting facilities and infrastructure (for example books that are interesting to students, namely books consisting of pictures), students are given reading quizzes with prizes for those who dare to appear in front of the class to read, and the formation of reading literacy groups where the group is required to read for 15 minutes".

Based on relevant research and the phenomenon, teachers' efforts have a strong influence in increasing students' interest in reading at school. Therefore, this article discusses how teacher efforts are a step in increasing students' interest in reading. The reason for choosing grade II and V students as research subjects is because in these classes the researcher found a phenomenon worthy of research, namely the lack of interest in reading. The purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the efforts made by teachers and schools to increase interest in reading and the obstacles experienced. This research is expected to provide an overview to other researchers. Especially as a prospective educator when facing several students who have a decreased interest in reading.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative research design, focusing on observing the social environment and engaging with research subjects on the chosen theme. The aim of qualitative research is to acquire information related to the main phenomena of the research topic (Yusuf, 2014). Qualitative methods involve seeking in-depth understanding related to symptoms, facts, or reality in a structured manner (Semiawan, 2010). These methods delve into the facts and realities occurring to obtain valid information, providing the advantage of depth beyond surface-level insights (Semiawan, 2010). The research subjects included the principal, teacher, one Grade II student, and three Grade V students, selected based on specific criteria, namely an increase in reading interest following the teacher's efforts. The observation took place at Mangkubumen Kidul Elementary School No.16.

The research adopted a case study approach, involving an in-depth exploration with a bound system and extensive data collection. Yin defines case study research as an empirical inquiry studying phenomena in real life (Fitrah & Luthfiyah, 2017). Utilizing qualitative methods with a case study design, this research analyzed teachers' efforts to boost students' reading interest at Mangkubumen Kidul Elementary School No.16.

The research, conducted after previous observations, focused on a favored elementary school known for its competition wins. The principal, teachers, and students in Grades II and V served as research subjects. Data collection involved interviews, observation, and documentation. To ensure data accuracy, the triangulation method was applied, comparing results from the three methods. After collecting data, the subsequent steps included data reduction, clear presentation, and drawing conclusions from the analysis results. This multi-faceted approach aimed to provide a comprehensive and accurate understanding to address research questions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings

Reading interest is one of the important aspects in basic education to foster the character of reading in children. This affects the literacy index in national education. The observation was conducted at Mangkubumen Kidul Elementary School No.16. The activity begins with the habituation of literacy for 10 minutes before the learning process begins. In addition, there is a library with a collection of reading books that can be read by students. In addition, there are also slogans from world and national figures related to the importance of reading and there are also reading corner facilities available in the classes.

Mangkubumen Kidul Elementary School No.16 is said to be one of the favorite schools in Surakarta with academic and non-academic achievements achieved by the elementary school students. Teachers have motivated students by promoting the reading movement in the school environment and giving awards to students who like to read. Rewards for elementary school students are very interesting because they can motivate other students to love reading.

Increasingly sophisticated technology also affects the level of interest in reading in students. Students have more fun playing gadgets than reading books. Online books are already widely available on gadgets, but it still does not attract attention.

What is the role of the teacher in shaping and improving students' interest in reading?

Based on interviews related to the nature of interest in reading by teachers, namely:

Results of interviews with teachers 1:

"As a teacher, I have an important responsibility and role, especially in increasing students' interest in reading, which is currently a concern. Interest in reading is the beginning of continuing to read until it becomes a useful habit".

What concrete steps have you taken to motivate students to have a strong interest in reading?

Based on interviews related to the methods used to increase interest in reading by principals and teachers, among others:

Results of interviews with teachers 2:

"My efforts in increasing students' interest in reading are always motivating the importance of reading for themselves. And also before teaching and learning activities I synchronize it with the program from the ministry, namely literacy activities for 15 minutes by reading any book".

Interviews conducted with students about motivation for interest in reading. Motivation is very influential on students to move forward. The existence of such motivation can encourage enthusiasm to improve literacy in education.

Based on the results of these interviews, motivation is indeed very influential on students to read books. The closest person is an important factor in increasing interest in reading as well as self-awareness of the importance of reading literacy.

From your experience, what are the main obstacles faced in trying to increase students' interest in reading at this school?

The methods or ways that have been done to increase interest in reading at SD Mangkubumen Kidul No.16 also have obstacles experienced, including:

The principal interview results

"Based on my experience, in increasing interest in reading, a significant obstacle is the lack of supervision and also cooperation between teachers and parents to supervise and synergize to increase interest in reading. Sometimes parents also work so they don't have time to provide assistance regarding the importance of reading".

Schools today must have programs that support the culture of students' interest in reading. Programs from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia such as the school literacy movement by reading before teaching and learning activities begin. Other than that, schools need to create other supporting programs.

Students of Mangkubumen Kidul Elementary School No.16 based on interviews that have been conducted students have a sense of interest in reading. Books that are read include story books, books about hygiene, books about numbers, legend books, bobo books, books about harry potter and others. These students usually read during free class hours and in the living room when at home. These students receive motivation from their family and teachers to always continue reading books. Books have important benefits for the mind and as a bridge of knowledge. The synergy between parents at home and teachers at school is well established to shape the character of children who have an interest in reading. When talking about the importance of books, it cannot be separated from the importance of reading activities. There are many facts if children who always read books have better character and thinking and have good communication skills because they have a broad vocabulary.

Based on interviews with teachers and principals of Mangkubumen Kidul Elementary School No.16, the main obstacle is the competition between reading books and gadgets. Students prefer to play gadgets for hours without knowing the time because there is a strong attraction. Online games or so currently affect student development in the learning process. The existence of gadgets if not considered will experience dependence which can be addicted. This can disrupt children's daily activities and have a negative impact on physical and emotional health.

Another obstacle is the need for synergy between the school and parents at home who always supervise children's daily activities. Children can play with their gadgets, but need to pay attention and be able to filter good and bad things. This method is expected to anticipate things that are not desirable from the gadget. Teachers and parents can utilize gadgets by providing quality educational information that can improve children's cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills. Thus, these obstacles can be anticipated by the motivation carried out by teachers and parents to continue reading and being an example.

Discussion

The Nature of Reading Interest

Interest, defined as a willingness accompanied by a specific purpose, is crucial in guiding individuals toward activities they like. Strong interest fosters persistent efforts towards specific goals. Yasinta & Fernandes (2020) emphasize interest as an attention element with emotional components, while Rohim & Rahmawati (2020) argue that interest is a tendency to and like some activities so that someone will always pay attention and follow these activities. This means that high interest will influence the direction of determining an active attitude toward the activities being carried out.

According to Nursalina & Budiningsih (2014), interest is always related to individual impulses that create an urge to be interested in people, objects, activities, and others. Thus, interest affects individual participation in an activity. Interest has several elements, including cognitive (recognizing), which is a preliminary activity that begins with knowledge or information about the object. Then, emotion (feeling) is an experience that is accompanied by a feeling of pleasure. Furthermore, kinase (will) is a continuation of these two elements, which is realized by willingness.

Language skills have four parts in daily life, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Fauziah & Hidayat, 2022). Reading is an important part of the progress of a nation or country. The index of a country's progress can be assessed by people's interest in reading. Because reading can shape the mindset of an advanced and innovative society. Reading can reveal knowledge and information that was previously unknown. According to Hadini (2017), reading can be defined as a form of understanding the patterns or grammar of a written picture. According to Elendiana (2020), reading is an activity that aims to understand the content of reading. Reading ability is a unique skill and has an important role in the advancement of the repertoire of knowledge in the world.

Reading is an activity that receives the content of the reading; however, in receiving the content of the reading, it is not only taken for granted but processed meaningfully so that the results of reading have moral values that can be exemplified. According to Tarigan, reading is a process to obtain messages conveyed by the author through written media (Patiung, 2016). Thus, reading is a process of developing the reasoning power of each individual. Reading is not only collecting word-for-word information contained in the reading and linking the direction of the reading, but the reader can finally conclude the contents of the reading with the ability of each reasoning power. Thus, reading becomes a dialectical process that creates a synthesis of reading analysis.

Literacy related to reading must be owned by a generation to develop knowledge that produces benefits for society (Irianto & Febrianti, 2017). Thus, it can help Indonesia progress in parallel with other developed countries. Motivation in reading is very important to create a willingness and interest in the content of the reading. Regarding motivation to read for its own sake, there are two types of motivation. First, intrinsic motivation comes from the individual's own will without any encouragement from others to read. Second, extrinsic motivation comes from outside motivation as a stimulus to motivate reading (Hamzah, 2015).

Teachers' Efforts to Increase Students' Reading Interest

Reading interest in the Indonesian generation is said to be low in terms of literacy. This is a problem that needs to be found in a concrete solution so that the ideals of the Indonesian nation in 2045 become a golden Indonesia that has quality human resources. Global competition always has dynamics that are always running and changing, and the nation's generation must compete healthily in intellectual and other matters. The government, schools, and parents need to synergize and work together to increase students' interest in reading. Early education can be done by parents at home by instilling a culture of literacy to increase their children's interest in reading. Then, schools create short-term and long-term programs on reading culture. Teachers who are always character builders through formal education at school have a big role in directing students to do positive activities (Budiono & Habiby, 2023). Teachers in elementary schools have a great responsibility to instill an interest in reading from an early age with methods that are expected to be successful.

Based on the results of the research, the school has a program aimed at teachers to increase interest in reading, such as library book borrowing facilities, regional library book borrowing facilities, the existence of a class reading corner, and teachers requiring students to bring non-lesson books every year to be donated at school. Once a week, students are allowed to write poems and short stories or create opinions from the books they read. After that, students are required to tell stories in front of the class. The existence of a reading corner is an important space for students that can be used while at school. The reading corner is likened to a mini library, but it does not replace the role of the school library but expands the operations of the school library that has been created.

Students and teachers can be guided more easily with the reading corner to explore the widest possible information (Kasim et al., 2023). Reading activities are not only a reflection of activities carried out by reading sentences, but the results of reading can digest or reflect the results of understanding the contents of the book (Ibda, 2017). The existence of student activities to tell stories in front of the class is one of the steps to remembering and understanding the results of reading. Based on interviews with the principal of Mangkubumen Kidul Elementary School No. 16, there are several strategies for fostering student interest in reading through classroom teachers, including:
1. Conditioning a friendly physical environment
2. Cultivating a social and affective environment
3. Cultivating the school as a literate academic environment
4. Raising awareness of the importance of reading
5. Creating written works
6. Forming a Reading Community
7. Creating and pasting slogans
8. Organizing a Field Trip

Based on the strategies that have been carried out by schools, there is one thing that is the basis for shaping the character of students' interest in reading, namely a friendly social environment. However, the concept of child-friendly schools is not to create a new building but to form a new paradigm to create a resilient generation without violence and protect the rights of children. According to Hindina (2020), creating child-friendly schools can be done through the habituation of good speech and attitudes so that the potential of students will be well-formed. Based on this, if the school has a friendly environment, the character of students' interest in reading will be formed along with the guidance and supervision carried out by teachers at school and parents at home.

Muhammadiyah Wonorejo Elementary School has implemented an effective strategy through the SI PANCA extracurricular program. This initiative has significantly influenced the teaching and learning process, empowering students to read fluently and independently. Previously reliant on teacher-led reading, students now exhibit enhanced reading literacy skills both within the school environment and at home (Safitri & Sukartono, 2023).

Another effort made by teachers to increase students' interest in reading is by implementing the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 13 of 2015 relating to the cultivation of character by conducting literacy activities for 15 minutes before starting teaching and learning activities at school. According to Faiza, these activities are carried out to create a school environment that reflects a high literacy culture and are carried out not only by students but also by teachers and other educators to become lifelong learners (Winarsih & Bawawa, 2019).

Based on interviews with teachers at Mangkubumen Kidul Elementary School No. 16, in increasing students' interest in reading, teachers need help from the family environment, who must supervise, facilitate, and encourage their children to always read so that the character of children who are interested in reading is formed. According to

(Elendiana, 2020), parents must be role models and figures for children to always read. Parents need to set an example by reading frequently, and with encouragement and motivation, children can imitate what their parents do. Others believe parents have an important role in supporting children's learning process when entering formal education (Miller & Venketsamy, 2022).

Constraints Experienced by Teachers in Increasing Students' Reading Interest

Every school always has a library that is used to encourage students to love reading. The library facilities in Indonesia have not been fully facilitated until the 3T areas. Schools located in cities or areas that have easy access should be grateful for having the facilities available. It is also a concern for the government to always pay attention to areas that have not been well accessed by library facilities. Indonesia, which has the most libraries in the world, does not reflect human resources that have a good interest in reading. Other things affect the low reading interest of Indonesian people. The development of technology and information that is not used carefully can lead to the use of technology products, such as gadgets, that are not used properly. Based on the results of the research, the main obstacle to increasing interest in reading is the competition between books and gadgets. The current generation uses gadgets more often than reading books. Gadgets contain things that create addiction with games and other features. Someone who has been addicted to using gadgets is called nomophobia, which was first used in 2008. The Post Office United Kingdom has conducted research and found that a person will experience anxiety if the gadget battery runs out, loses the gadget, and others. When viewed from the attitude that occurs, people who experience addiction to gadgets have the same symptoms of addiction. The person will continue to seek pleasure and tranquility through his gadget, which can hurt its users (Khairani et al., 2022). The findings from Nur & Rukmana (2023) support the notion that the utilization of gadgets has a substantial impact on the social behavior and learning interests of elementary school students.

Another obstacle is the need for synergy between the school and parents at home, who always supervise children's daily activities. Based on the results of the research, teachers cannot work alone to increase students' interest in reading if there is no cooperation between teachers and parents at home. Children can play with their gadgets, but they need to pay attention and be able to filter good and bad things. This method is expected to anticipate things that are not desirable about the gadget. Teachers and parents can utilize gadgets by providing quality educational information that can improve children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. Thus, these obstacles can be anticipated by the motivation carried out by teachers and parents to continue reading and being an example.

CONCLUSIONS

Reading interest is one of the important discussions in Indonesia today because the literacy index of Indonesian society is still far from good compared to other

countries. A culture of reading interest needs to be built as early as possible to create the expected character. Mangkubumen Kidul Elementary School No.16 has implemented strategies that support students to continue reading. These strategies include conditioning a friendly physical environment, striving for a social and affective environment, striving for schools as a literative academic environment, fostering awareness of the importance of reading, creating written works, forming reading communities, creating and posting slogans and organizing field trips. The obstacles experienced in increasing students' interest in reading include competition between reading books and gadgets. If not used properly, gadgets will affect children's development which can lead to the effect of dependence or addiction to playing gadgets without knowing the time. Recommendations that can be developed for further research are that the role of teachers and parents in increasing students' interest in reading needs to be the focus of attention that is maximized.

The limitation of this discussion is that it focuses on the strategies that have been implemented at SDN Mangkubumen Kidul No.16, so there may be other variations of strategies that have not been discussed. In addition, the discussion only covers obstacles related to competition between books and gadgets, while other factors can affect students' interest in reading.

A suggestion for future research is to involve more schools as samples to generalize the findings. In addition, further research could explore additional strategies that can be applied at different levels of education. The development of models or programs that can be adopted by other schools could also be the focus of future research. Furthermore, it is important to investigate the impact of technology, such as gadgets, on students' reading interests in more depth.

For educational practitioners and policies, it is recommended to integrate literacy strategies as described into the curriculum or school policies. The active role of teachers and parents in guiding and setting a positive example for students' reading interests needs to be strengthened. In addition, literacy campaigns at the national level can have a positive impact on the culture of reading interest in society.

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