

**Can an Ideal Library Guarantee High Elementary School Students' Interest in Reading?**

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**Abstract**

Reading is a very important activity because it is used to disseminate information for learning. This is because access to information and knowledge is related to reading. This study aims to explore reading interest and the factors that influence reading interest in private primary schools in Surakarta. This research was a qualitative approach with a case study method. The informant selection technique in this study used several data collection techniques, namely observation, interview, and documentation. The results of this study showed that reading interest in private primary schools in Surakarta is low. The low interest in reading was caused by students' lack of reading ability, reading must be ordered by the teacher, students play more during recess. The influencing factors are internal and external factors. In conclusion, the low reading interest of Surakarta primary school students is influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors are factors that come from oneself, while external factors come from outside, such as family environment, peers, gadgets, and libraries that are far from the classroom.

**Keywords:** interest in reading, influencing factors, elementary school students

## **INTRODUCTION**

Elementary school is a formal education that begins literacy, specifically through reading, because reading is a vital role in life. This is in line with Abduh et al. (2022) who state elementary school is a formal education that begins literacy, namely by reading, because reading is an important function in life. According to Afriani et al (2021), reading is important, especially for elementary school students, so an interest in reading must be instilled from an early age. Because, according to Safitri & Sukartono, (2023), reading plays an important role in educational progress, reading can increase insight and information from the texts that have been read. According to Fahmy et al. (2021), interest in reading is a person's effort to read and is accompanied by a strong desire. Meanwhile, according to Hendrayani (2018), interest in reading has the power to attract children's attention and make them enjoy reading, so they have the initiative to carry out reading activities without being asked. According to the opinion mentioned above, it can be concluded that interest in reading is an interest or encouragement that comes from within the individual to carry out reading activities without any coercion.

In other research, such as that carried out by Hapsari et al. (2019), internal factors start with themselves, for example, interest and attention, motivation, intelligence, attitude, perseverance, reading habits, and physical condition and health. Furthermore, research according to Agustina et al. (2023), states that external factors cause a student's lack of interest in reading, namely the influence of playmates, inadequate school environment and infrastructure, lack of parental attention, and teachers' ability to motivate students less. Efforts to increase interest in reading among elementary school students should be encouraged so that the interest in reading comes from within the students and they are introduced to reading materials so that students have the habit of reading. With this habit of reading in elementary school, students will have a maximum interest in reading until they are grow up (Elendiana, 2020).

Creating interest in reading for students can be done in the school library. According to Ramandanu (2019), the library is a supporting facility for learning in schools. Furthermore, Kalida & Mursyid (2015) provide an explanation a library is a unit that cannot be separated; in this case, it shows that the library functions as a learning facility in schools. In fostering an interest in reading from students, the government, the education department, and all components in schools with the hope of being able to manage a library creatively and innovatively (Yahya et al., 2021). Libraries in elementary schools play a role in managing literacy infrastructure, reading areas, and classroom reading corners (Ramandanu, 2019).

One of the library's roles is literacy management. Literacy can be defined as expressing thoughts by carving symbols and language to form understanding through reading and writing activities, be it novels, pantun poetry, or short stories (Rokmana et al., 2023). As knowledge develops, the meaning of literacy has a broad and comprehensive meaning, not only covering reading and writing; the meaning of literacy also develops into the ability to write, listen, speak, and listen (Rokmana et al., 2023). From several studies, it states that there is a positive correlation between interest in reading and reading habits and reading skills; if interest in reading is low, it certainly makes reading habits low; if reading habits are low, then reading skills are also low (Rahmawati, 2020). Given these circumstances, the Ministry of Education and Culture is developing a reading movement called GLS, namely the School Literacy Movement. All stakeholders in the education sector will be involved (Rohim & Rahmawati, 2020). GLS is a comprehensive, connected, and ongoing effort to transform a school into a learning

organization that has literate citizens who include the community (Saadati & Sadli, 2019). With a high interest in reading, students' interest in learning will also be high, because students who enjoy reading will have extensive knowledge and insight from the books they read. If students are not interested in reading or have little interest in reading, then the student's knowledge is limited (Ruslan & Wibayanti, 2019).

In the last 7 years, several studies have conducted research related to reading interest in various subject conditions. Purwaningsih & Ismiyati (2016) stated that there is an influence on library facilities and library services related to elementary school students' reading interests. By improving library facilities and services, students' reading interest will increase. Furthermore, Akbar et al. (2021) stated that the quality of service in the library has an influence on students' reading interest. Andriani (2018) stated that library facilities can have an influence on students' reading interest; library facilities that are considered good make students' reading interest high. Suryani (2018) stated that the quality of the library influences students' interest in reading because a library that has comfort will attract students to visit the library. Purba (2022) stated that this was related to the significant influence of library facilities on students' reading interests.

Tilal & Saputra (2020) states that the results of library innovation have a positive impact because they make students feel at home and enthusiastic about reading books. Before the innovation, students were not interested in visiting the school library. According to Fathoni & Murtiningsih (2021) the absence of books that students need and are reluctant to come to the library proves that the availability of library materials plays an important role in optimizing students' reading interest. Sari (2018) stated that the role of libraries and the limited number of books are two of the factors contributing to students' low interest in reading. From some of these studies it can be concluded that the role of the library is very important, libraries that have limited books make students reluctant to come to the library.

Previous researchers revealed interest in reading from a quantitative perspective, but there were still some inconsistencies and a lack of meaning in the data. Therefore, it still needs to be studied further from a qualitative perspective in order to obtain in-depth significance. The research carried out has the aim of exploring students' interest in reading and the factors that influence it. It is hoped that the results of the research carried out can increase knowledge and insight about students' reading interests and help them understand the factors that influence students' reading interests.

## **METHOD**

The research carried out used a qualitative approach using the case study method. In qualitative research, it is research that creates discoveries that cannot be obtained using statistical procedures or other methods of quantification (measurement) (J & Moleong, 2021). The research carried out used a qualitative approach by looking at an event regarding students' reading interest, which was explained and described. The data is in the form of explanations, documentation, and raw data, which will be compiled into a readable narrative description. Furthermore, the technique for collecting data from the research carried out used interview, observation, and documentation methods, which were carried out for 1.5 months, starting from October 16 to November 24.

Determining the subjects in the research used purposive sampling techniques. Then the subjects in this research were the class teacher, first to sixth grade students, librarian and the school principal. This research was carried out in one of the private elementary schools in Surakarta. The research was carried out at this elementary school because it

has a good library and good services. The available books are 3,114 collections, which include fiction, non-fiction books, teacher guides, student guides, encyclopedia books, dictionaries, and reference books. The number of samples interviewed was 12 students, with this sample representing all grade levels. The research carried out has the aim of exploring students' interest in reading and the factors that influence it. The collection technique used in this research was carried out first, namely observation, followed by interviews and documentation.

In data analysis, an interactive model is used, the elements of which include data reduction that is researchers can summarize, select points, and focus the results of the data obtained on the research object (Mursidik et al., 2015), data presentation of qualitative data is usually carried out in the form of brief descriptions, charts, or relationships between categories in the research (Mursidik et al., 2015), and drawing conclusions from the data (conclusion drawing or verifying), researchers can start by collecting data by recording the information obtained as far as the research is going (Muttalib & Mashur, 2019).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Conditions of Students' Reading Interest**

Reading interest is very important for students, because in the world of education reading is very important. If students cannot read, then they cannot follow the learning that takes place. Because if students cannot read, then what is taught by the teacher cannot be accepted by students. Therefore, the researcher wants to know how the condition of students' interest in reading in one of Surakarta's private elementary schools.

Based on the results of interviews regarding the condition of students' interest in reading, the results were obtained:

#### **1. Teacher interview**

Homeroom teacher for first grade said "Students' interest in reading is still relatively low because there are students who cannot read, and if they are not forced, students will not read. Outside of study or break hours, there are only eight students who take the initiative to read". students' interest in reading was low, and there were only eight students who had the initiative to read.

Second grade's homeroom teacher said, "I observed that interest in reading in second grade is still lacking because only a few students like to read; it can be seen that during breaks only a few read in the reading corner or in the library." Only a few students read at the reading corner.

Third and fifth grade homeroom teachers told that, "interest in reading is low because if students are not asked to read, they will not read with self-awareness. In this class, there are students whose reading skills are still low or lacking. It also causes students to like reading less". If students are not told to read, they will not read by themselves, and there are students whose reading ability is lacking.

Fourth grade homeroom teacher said, "my students' interest in reading was still in the low category because only a few of his students read during breaks. There are only a few students who want to read. I observed that children who like to read have better grades in Indonesian and natural sciences lessons than other students". Few students read during recess, and students who like to read can be seen from their Indonesian and IPAS scores.

Sixth grade homeroom teacher said, "Students' interest in reading is relatively low, because if students are not asked to read, they will not read. During student breaks, more

children play outside the classroom” During break time, students play outside the classroom more.

The result of the interview with the teacher is that students' interest in reading is still categorized as low. Because students will not read if they are not asked to read. During recess, students prefer to play rather than read books. There are also students whose reading skills are still low, which is also the cause of low student interest in reading.

## 2. Student Interviews

To find out whether students like to read books and how often students read books at school, at home and visit the library, researchers conducted interviews with students. the students interviewed were grades I-VI, totaling 12 students.

Student B and P said, "I rarely read books; during breaks, I sometimes go to the library to read; otherwise, I play. I rarely go to the library because it's far from class. At home, I also rarely read". Students rarely read books and rarely come to the library.

The teacher said, "never, ever, taught Student A to read during breaks. I never go to the library either because it's far away, so I can't read. When I'm at home, I just watch TV". Students cannot read, they only watch TV at home and the library is far away.

Student H told that, "I like reading, in class and the library. But when I go to the library, sometimes I play with dolls, sometimes I read. If you're at home, you can also read books, but not every day. I rarely read at home". When in the library, students often play, and rarely read books.

Students N, Ar, and Na said, "I rarely read because I don't like reading books; when we have a break time, we play a lot. I rarely go to the library, and when I go there, I mostly watch films because I get tired walking there. When I'm at home, I rarely read; sometimes I play with friends; I play games like that". During break time, students play more, go to the library only when watching movies, and at home, they play with friends and play games.

Students H and D said, "When they take a break, they usually play; they rarely read books; they rarely go to the library because the library is far away; sometimes they are lazy because the longest break is at 11.30–13.00, so they are already tired. "When I'm at home, I read the lesson package book". Students rarely go to the library because it is far away.

Af, A, and R students are saying something different, "Pretty good, but they read in class, not in the library; if you go to the library, you have to go down first, so you get tired. If you never have textbooks, that's rare. If you're doing assignments, look for them on the internet. At home, I read books whenever I want, and I often play with my friends". tudents prefer to read in class, because if in the library you have to go down stairs first, students are reluctant to go to the library.

The results of interviews with students related to reading interest, students rarely read books at school or at home. During break time, students often play with their friends, rarely go to the library, because the distance between the class and the library is quite far. Students go to the library only to play and watch movies, only a few students come to the library to read books. When at home, students often play with friends and play games on gadgets.

### 3. Principal Interview

The researcher also conducted an interview with the Principal, to find out how students' interest in reading at Surakarta Private Elementary School. Based on the results of the interview from the Principal, the results were obtained:

Mr. H said, "In my opinion, students' interest in reading is quite good, because it can also be seen from the academic achievements obtained by students, such as science competitions, English, and mathematics. Those who achieve this achievement are definitely children who like to read. But there are still many students who don't like reading; sometimes students don't read if they are not asked to read. " Most students who don't like reading have more non-academic skills."

Using findings from interviews and various student responses and statements, it can be concluded that the reading interest of students at Surakarta Private Elementary Schools is relatively low. Because there are still children who cannot read or have poor reading skills, only a few students like to read because of coercion from the teacher, students play more during recess, the library is far away, and the physical condition of students is that they feel tired having to go up. go down the stairs when going to the library. Based on the results of observations, students' interest in reading is still relatively low because there are still few students who read during breaks. Students mostly play games such as soccer, tell stories, and have snacks in the canteen. Based on documentation, students who have a passion for reading get higher scores than students who have a low interest in reading. For 1.5 months, the researchers carried out research at a Surakarta Private Elementary School, and the number of library books read by students was 300.

Researchers also want to explore factors that determine students' reading interest. Based on the results of interviews regarding the reading interest factors of students with the homeroom teacher and school principal, the following results were obtained:

#### **Factors that influence reading interest**

##### *Interview with the homeroom teacher*

Homeroom teachers for first and second grade told me that, "The first factor that influences students' interest in reading is family, namely their parents. Because there are parents who can't bear it if their child cries when asked to read, they let their child play games or on their cellphone, even though they know that the child needs more guidance. Internal factors, namely from within themselves, have prevented students from reading with their own will or desire." Apart from that, libraries also have an influence on students' interest in reading, but there are students who can't read yet, so they just go to the library to play; sometimes there are students who don't want to go to the library at all".

Third and fourth grade's homeroom teachers and school principals said that students' interest in reading comes from themselves and can come from their peers, because if students don't have friends in class who read books, they will also be lazy about reading, especially if they are playing with their friends. Another factor is cellphones or gadgets. In this day and age, students prefer playing games compared to reading books, especially now that there are many more interesting games on students' cellphones, and sometimes there are still parents who let their children play games until they lose track of time. . . Even students may be lazy about going to the library because the Class 4 building and the library are quite far away; to get there, you have to go downstairs first".

Homeroom teacher for fifth and sixth grade said, "The factor is his own, because children prefer playing compared to reading. Then there is a lack of motivation from

parents because sometimes they think they have studied all day at school, so parents think their children are tired at home. Students also prefer to do assignments by searching on the internet rather than in books. Apart from that, comfort—actually, the library is comfortable for elementary school students—but these students rarely go to the library to read books and very rarely go to the library”.

Using findings from interviews and various homeroom teachers' responses, it can be concluded that the factors that influence reading interest are within themselves, which are internal factors; other factors are from the family: parents who let children play games; students who go to the library just to play; peers; gadgets; the distance between class and library is quite far; and students are looking for answers to assignments on the internet. Only a few students read with a desire from within themselves, and the students who visit the library are mostly the same students who have the desire to read. Sometimes students only play when in the library because the library has toys for students. Based on documentation results, only 6–10 students visit the library every day to read because most students just sit around and play. Besides that, the library is busy when there are film screenings. And it's not every day that students borrow books to take home or read.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Conditions of Students' Reading Interest**

The results of this research show that interest in reading for every private elementary school student in Surakarta is still low. The inability of students to read is the first factor affecting each student's decreased interest in reading. Every student doesn't like reading because they can't read or lack the ability to read. The ability to read is something that students need to have; if students do not have reading skills, then they will be disturbed in the reading process, which can reduce students' interest in reading. This is in line with Shofaussamawati (2014), who states that students who have low reading abilities will have low interest in reading. Efendi et al. (2023) stated that students who do not have reading skills will later be disturbed in the reading process and cause students' reading interest to be low.

Second, only a few students have a passion for reading at Surakarta Private Elementary Schools. Because it can be seen that during break time, only a few students read in the reading corner. Because if students have a passion for reading, they will read during break times and take their time. Sari (2018) stated that students who have a passion for reading will spend time reading one day. Hikmawati (2023) Students whose interest in reading is low do not have a passion for reading. If students have a passion for reading, this means they will spend time reading.

Third, there is still coercion from teachers. Students will not read books if the teacher does not tell them to read, even though reading is an important activity in education. Sari et al. (2021) stated that reading is a skill that should be a basic necessity, not because of coercion from other people, because reading can increase one's intelligence and creativity. The purpose of reading is for students to gain information and knowledge. If students read forcefully, they will not know the content of the reading. In this case, it is in line with Kusumadewi et al. (2019) if students read only under coercion from the teacher, then they will not know the information contained in the reading.

Fourth, during break times, students prefer to play by reading books. In the free time students use during break times, they play outside the classroom; some also play inside the classroom. They do not use their free time to read books, even though in Surakarta Private Elementary Schools there are 3 breaks. Only a few students read during

the breaks. This is in line with Khairi (2023) observation that students' interest in reading is low because, during free time, students prefer to play by reading a book. Sari (2018) stated that students who do not have an interest in reading will not use their free time to read; in fact, reading will not be an important activity to carry out.

Fifth, students don't like reading books. From the interview findings, there are students who don't like reading books because they prefer to play rather than read. Even though students who don't like reading books will have little or no knowledge, In line with Ruslan & Wibayanti (2019) students who do not like reading will have limited knowledge and low interest in reading. Because if students no longer like reading, then they will not feel happy when reading.

Sixth, namely the students' physical condition: students feel tired when they have to go up and down stairs to the library. Because the library building is on the first floor, it is even a different building. This is in line with research from Hapsari et al. (2019) which states that the physical condition of students also has an influence on their interest in reading. Waningyun et al. (2023) Interest in reading cannot arise if there is no will from a person. Because interest is closely related to will, a person's will is also closely related to physical conditions, such as being tired, sick, and lethargic.

Seventh, students are lazy about reading books in the library because the class is far from the library. Only students who have a high interest in reading go to the library to read, because most students prefer to be in class rather than the library. Because the library and classroom buildings are different buildings, This is in line with Rochmad (2017), who argues that libraries far from the classroom can influence students to visit the library. Research results from Khasanah (2018) stated that even the distance from a library has an influence on students' interest in visiting a room; a room that is far away can make students lazy to visit.

### **Factors that Influence Students' Reading Interest**

According to the research results, the low interest in reading among private elementary school students in Surakarta is influenced by several factors, namely internal factors and external factors. This is strengthened by Mustafa's opinion in Rohani (2020), which states that there are two factors that cause a student's interest in reading to decrease: internal factors that come from within the student themselves and external factors that come from outside the student. Then the internal factors that cause students' low interest in reading come from within the students themselves. According to the results of interviews with teachers, school principals, and students, the reduced interest in reading originates from the students themselves, namely their reading skills, so reading must be ordered by the teacher. Lack of reading skills such as fluency in reading, errors in the pronunciation of words, and difficulty in knowing the meaning contained in the reading. There are students who lack reading skills and can't even read yet. Students who lack reading skills indirectly have low interest in reading. Abduh & Sedyowati (2022) difficulty reading or lack of reading ability can be due to a lack of support from parents when learning. In line with Anggraeni & Alpien (2019) statement that students' interest in reading can be influenced by themselves, including habits, one's own abilities, and level of education, Apart from that, students do not have the initiative to read; they only read when ordered by the teacher. Based on the research results, students do not yet have the habit of reading; every student cannot read if the teacher does not give them instructions. Each student does not spend time reading books; during break time, each student plays more often than reading books. Sampe et al (2023) Interest in reading will



grow if students have the awareness to read. Awareness begins with self-motivation, which is supported by the environment.

External factors come from outside, including parents, family, peers, gadgets, and libraries. According to Periyeti (2017), students' interest in reading can be influenced by their family and community environment. An unsupportive family environment can affect students' reading abilities. According to the research results, there is no reading habit at home. This is reinforced by Basitha et al (2022) the lack of attention from parents to children because parents give all responsibility to the school, so children's learning to read is still very lacking. This is in line with Amalia & Bimantara (2023), who argue that parents give full responsibility to teachers, even though parents are the first educators and provide motivational support for children. However, encouragement and motivation from parents are very important to their students' interest in reading. Putra et al (2020) Parents have an important role in guiding and educating their children, for example, by fostering an interest in reading in children, thus requiring attention, guidance, and assistance from everyone closest to the child. Khasanah (2018) The family has a big influence on a child's interest in reading because the attention of parents towards children is very important in cultivating children's interest in reading. If parents have the habit of reading, then the child will imitate it unconsciously.

Parents often let their children play online games or gadgets, causing children to prefer playing with gadgets and be lazy about reading books. As a parent, you should accompany your child and supervise or set limits for your child so they don't always play with gadgets. Because when children play with gadgets without supervision, they will feel happy and free to play without thinking about studying or reading books. This is in line with Nugraha (2021), who states that parents allow and pamper their children by playing online games; as a result, they prefer playing online games when reading books and studying. Anggriani (2020) stated that students' interest in reading is low because parents still often allow their children to play online games or gadgets and do not support instilling their children's interest in reading.

Peers can also have an impact on low reading interest. Only a few students invite their friends to read, and sometimes they only look at the pictures in the book. Students more often invite their friends to play outside the classroom, such as soccer, tell stories, and play with the toys they bring. In this case, it is in line with research from Larayba et al. (2022) that students are more often invited to play than to read books and study. When at home, students often play with their friends rather than reading books. In line with Hijjayati et al. (2022) when students are in the community or with their peers, they are more often invited to play, watch television, and play online games rather than read books.

Cellphones and gadgets are also a factor that causes low reading because students more often play online games available on these gadgets. In line with A'yun et al. (2021) statement that the features available on gadgets can divert a child's attention to playing rather than reading books, sometimes children prefer watching YouTube and playing games. Research results from Isma et al. (2022) state that students' low interest in reading is greatly influenced by gadgets, because some students are influenced by gadgets and are too lazy to read.

Apart from that, students' interest in reading is low because, when doing assignments, students search on the internet more often than reading books. Students think looking for answers on the internet is more efficient if they have to look for answers in a book and have to read it first. This is in line with Solahudin (2022) who states students rarely look for reading material; they always do assignments via the internet

without reading books. Zuhria et al. (2020) Students more often do assignments via the internet because they think everything can be searched on the internet, so their interest in reading is low, and they only read when instructed by the teacher.

Another factor is the library; in fact, the existing library at Surakarta Private Elementary School is good and meets school library standards. However, students rarely visit the library because the distance between the classroom and the library is quite far for students. Students have to go downstairs to get to the library; even classes and the library are in different buildings. Most students are too lazy to visit the library because of the distance. In line with Muhtadien & Krismayani (2017) students are reluctant to go to the library because classes and the library are far away, so students are too lazy to visit the library, except for students who have an interest in reading. Distance is not a problem because they have a purpose for going to the library.

Sometimes students visit the library just to play and usually sit around because the air conditioning in the library feels colder. Fatimatuzzuhroh (2017) low interest in reading because students have not been able to use the library. When students go to the library, they only play and join their friends. Khafidin & Santoso (2018) When students go to the library, they only play, don't borrow books, and don't read books; they cannot make good use of the library. There are even students who have never visited the library. Because of this, students do not recognize and understand the benefits they get from visiting the library. This is reinforced by research Verawati (2012), with the results of her research proving that interest in reading has an influence related to user visits to a library

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of this research, students' interest in reading is still relatively low. Because students still do not have the awareness to read, they read only when instructed by the teacher. Students use their time more to play than to read. Factors that influence the low reading activity of students at Surakarta Private Elementary Schools are internal factors and external factors. Then the internal factors come from the students themselves, then the external factors, namely the family environment, gadgets, parents who let their children play games, libraries that are far from class, peers, and students who go to the library just to play, not to read books. This research only uses a small number of samples. Recommended For future research, the number of samples and aspects interviewed will be more. As well as using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data to get more complex and accurate data.

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