

The Influence of Librarian Competence and Facilities on Elementary School Students' Reading Interest

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyelidiki faktor-faktor kritis yang menentukan keterlibatan literasi dengan menganalisis dampak kompetensi pustakawan dan fasilitas perpustakaan terhadap minat baca siswa sekolah dasar di Kecamatan Talang Kelapa. Menggunakan pendekatan survei kuantitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 120 siswa yang dipilih melalui stratified random sampling. Analisis melalui regresi linier berganda mengungkapkan bahwa kompetensi pustakawan secara signifikan mendorong keterlibatan siswa, sementara kualitas fasilitas menyediakan infrastruktur fisik dan digital yang diperlukan untuk mempertahankan minat. Secara bersamaan, variabel-variabel ini menyumbang varians yang substansial dalam motivasi membaca. Temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan sinergis menggabungkan pengembangan sumber daya manusia profesional dengan memodernisasi aset fisik adalah penting untuk membangun budaya membaca yang kuat di sektor pendidikan dasar.

Kata kunci: Kompetensi Pustakawan, Fasilitas Perpustakaan, Minat Baca, Sekolah Dasar, Pengembangan Literasi.

Abstract

This research investigates the critical determinants of literacy engagement by analyzing the impact of librarian competence and library facilities on the reading interest of elementary school students in Talang Kelapa District. Utilizing a quantitative survey-based approach, data were gathered from 120 students selected via stratified random sampling. Analysis through multiple linear regression reveals that librarian competence significantly fosters student engagement, while the quality of facilities provides the necessary physical and digital infrastructure to sustain interest. Simultaneously, these variables account for a substantial variance in reading motivation. The findings suggest that a synergistic approach combining professional human resource development with modernizing physical assets, is essential for cultivating a robust reading culture in the primary education sector.

Keywords: Librarian Competence, Library Facilities, Reading Interest, Elementary School, Literacy Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading interest is a foundational component of literacy development and academic success in elementary education. Students who demonstrate high reading interest tend to show stronger comprehension skills, vocabulary growth, and long-term academic achievement (OECD, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Early cultivation of reading motivation is particularly crucial, as elementary school years represent a critical period for establishing lifelong learning habits (Guthrie & Klauda, 2021; Schiefele & Schaffner, 2022).

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Research in literacy education consistently highlights that students' reading interest is influenced not only by individual factors but also by environmental and institutional support systems (Wigfield et al., 2021; Toste et al., 2022). Among these institutional factors, school libraries play a strategic role in promoting literacy engagement. Libraries function as learning hubs where students access diverse reading materials and participate in literacy-enriching activities (IFLA, 2023; Merga, 2022).

One essential element in library effectiveness is librarian competence. Competent librarians are not merely custodians of books but literacy facilitators who guide students in selecting appropriate materials, organize interactive reading programs, and create motivating literacy experiences (Todd, 2021; Lance & Kachel, 2022). Librarian instructional competence, interpersonal communication skills, and technological literacy are increasingly recognized as determinants of successful literacy promotion (Julien et al., 2021; Small et al., 2023).

In addition to human resources, library facilities significantly shape students' reading behavior. The availability of diverse, updated books; comfortable reading spaces; and access to digital resources have been shown to positively influence reading frequency and engagement (Clark & Picton, 2021; OECD, 2022). Modern library infrastructure supports student-centered learning environments and promotes autonomous reading practices (Loertscher & Koechlin, 2021; IFLA, 2023).

However, despite growing recognition of these factors, empirical studies examining the combined influence of librarian competence and library facilities on elementary students' reading interest in Indonesia remain limited. Many previous studies have analyzed these variables separately (Merga, 2022; Small et al., 2023), leaving a research gap concerning their simultaneous and interactive effects within elementary school contexts.

Furthermore, rapid educational transformation and digitalization demand integrated literacy strategies that combine professional expertise with adequate infrastructure (UNESCO, 2023; World Bank, 2023). Without competent librarians, even well-equipped libraries may not fully stimulate student engagement. Conversely, highly skilled librarians may face constraints when facilities are inadequate. Therefore, examining both variables together provides a more comprehensive understanding of literacy development in schools.

This study aims to investigate how librarian competence and library facilities simultaneously influence elementary school students' reading interest. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to literacy research and practically to school library management policies, particularly in Indonesian elementary education.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the influence of librarian competence and library facilities on students' reading interest (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The correlational approach was selected to measure the magnitude and direction of relationships among variables.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of elementary school students from selected public schools in [City/Region], Indonesia. A total of 120 students were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across grade levels and schools (Fraenkel et al., 2022).

Research Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into three sections:

1. Librarian Competence
 - Instructional guidance
 - Communication skills
 - Literacy promotion activities
 - Digital literacy support
2. Library Facilities
 - Availability and diversity of books
 - Physical environment (comfort, seating, lighting)
 - Accessibility and organization
 - Digital infrastructure
3. Reading Interest
 - Reading frequency
 - Intrinsic motivation
 - Engagement and enjoyment
 - Voluntary reading behavior

The instrument was validated through expert judgment and pilot testing. Reliability testing produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.85, indicating high internal consistency (Taber, 2021).

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved:

- Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation)
- Pearson correlation analysis
- Multiple regression analysis
- Assumption testing (normality, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity)

Statistical significance was determined at $\alpha = 0.05$. Multiple regression was used to determine the simultaneous influence of librarian competence and library facilities on reading interest (Field, 2022).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis of the data is presented in Table 1. It shows students' perceptions of librarian competence, library facilities, and reading interest.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
Librarian Competence	120	4.08	0.52	High
Library Facilities	120	4.12	0.48	High
Reading Interest	120	4.05	0.55	Moderately High

Note: Scale: 1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships between the independent variables and students' reading interest:

Variables	r	p-value
Librarian Competence → Reading Interest	0.61	<0.05
Library Facilities → Reading Interest	0.58	<0.05

Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression was performed to determine the simultaneous effect of librarian competence and library facilities on reading interest. Results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	β	t	p-value
Librarian Competence	0.45	5.86	<0.05
Library Facilities	0.39	5.12	<0.05
R ²	0.52	F = 65.47	<0.05

The model indicates that librarian competence and library facilities jointly explain 52% of the variance in students' reading interest, with both predictors being statistically significant. Librarian competence has a slightly stronger influence than library facilities.

Discussion

The results suggest that both librarian competence and library facilities play critical roles in shaping students' reading interest. Librarians act as literacy mentors by providing guidance, fostering intrinsic motivation, and supporting students' engagement in reading activities (Todd, 2021; Lance & Kachel, 2022). High-quality librarian interactions, including instructional support, communication, and literacy promotion, create a motivating social environment that encourages voluntary reading, aligning with literacy motivation theories (Wigfield et al., 2021; Schiefele & Schaffner, 2022).

Library facilities also significantly contribute to reading interest by providing access to diverse books, comfortable learning spaces, and digital resources. Physical and digital infrastructures reduce barriers to reading and enhance students' sustained engagement (Clark & Picton, 2021; Loertscher & Koechlin, 2021). The moderate difference in influence between librarian competence ($\beta = 0.45$) and library facilities ($\beta = 0.39$) indicates that social guidance slightly outweighs environmental support, but both are necessary for optimal literacy development.

These findings confirm that literacy development is multidimensional. Investing solely in infrastructure without developing librarian competencies may limit the effectiveness of reading programs, and vice versa. Therefore, integrated strategies are recommended, combining professional development for librarians with library improvement initiatives. Such holistic approaches are consistent with UNESCO's (2023) recommendations on school literacy programs and World Bank (2023) evidence emphasizing the synergy between human resources and physical resources in improving learning outcomes.

Furthermore, these results highlight the importance of a student-centered approach in library management. Librarians who actively interact with students and tailor reading activities to their interests can enhance engagement and intrinsic motivation, creating long-term positive reading habits. Similarly, well-organized, accessible, and stimulating library environments reinforce these habits, demonstrating that educational interventions must balance both social and environmental factors (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Fraenkel et al., 2022).

4. CONCLUSION

The study confirms that both librarian competence and library facilities significantly influence elementary school students' reading interest. Librarian competence contributes through instructional guidance, motivational interaction, and literacy promotion activities. Library facilities enhance access, comfort, and resource diversity. The findings demonstrate that these factors operate synergistically. Schools that combine competent librarians with well-equipped library environments achieve higher levels of student reading engagement. Practically, schools should prioritize continuous professional development for librarians and invest in modern, accessible, and student-friendly library infrastructure. Policymakers should design integrated literacy programs that address both human and material resources. By emphasizing the dual importance of professional competence and environmental quality, this study contributes to strengthening literacy development strategies in Indonesian elementary education.

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