

Improving Reading Interest Through the Wall Magazine Program for Elementary School Students in Bajawa, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the increase in students' reading interest through the wall magazine program at Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative research with an observation and interview approach. The subjects of the study consisted of 13 fifth grade students and the object of this study was students' reading interest at Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit. Data collection methods were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. The instruments used were interview guidelines, observation sheets, and photo documentation of activities. The results of the analysis showed that the wall magazine program was effective in increasing students' reading interest. Based on observation data, the number of student visits to the wall magazine increased every day, indicating greater enthusiasm for reading. This program also encourages students' creativity in writing and conveying information, as well as strengthening collaboration between students, teachers, and parents. Thus, wall magazines can be an effective means of building a culture of literacy in elementary schools.

1. Introduction

Reading interest is not something that grows automatically, but rather needs to be developed through various methods and efforts so that it becomes a strong habit in children, which will help them in exploring knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Zulaikhoh, 2022). The introduction of reading and writing literacy should start early and continue when children enter Elementary School. At the elementary school level, literacy is more focused on developing students' interest and positive attitudes towards reading and making reading activities fun. The School Literacy Movement is not only about teaching reading and writing, but also about developing deeper understanding, critical thinking, and creativity, all of which are very important to face the challenges of an increasingly complex modern world (Wahyuningrum et al., 2022).

Elementary school age is known as a very important age in child development, so human resources must be fostered from an early age. One way to develop this potential is through literacy activities, which include many abilities, one of which is reading (Nay, 2024). Reading is not just an activity, but also a motivation to achieve progress and success. With the habit of reading since elementary school, students can gain extensive knowledge as well as speed reading skills and understand words better. In addition, reading also functions to help students understand the contents of the text being read. The purpose of reading is to deepen understanding of the written material and to gain new knowledge (Elendiana, 2020). Increasing reading activities and reading interest among elementary school students is highly expected, but currently there are still many difficulties in fostering reading interest due to lack of motivation from within themselves. In fact, if students are more aware of the benefits of reading, they can increase their insight and understand the meaning of the text being read. Lack of interest in reading is an obstacle to students' self-development, which ultimately prevents them from achieving their goals because of the lack of reading habits that should be routine activities.

Reading interest is a deep concern for reading activities (Ama, 2021; Artana, 2016). Students who have an interest in reading tend to feel interested and emotionally involved in the reading process and enjoy the contents of the reading material (Wijaya et al., 2021; Sari, 2018). Reading interest also means carrying out reading activities with pleasure, not because of coercion or obligation, which encourages individuals to read voluntarily (Tantri, 2017).

From interviews with the principal and teachers at Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit, it is known that each class has a special schedule to read for 15 minutes before learning, although this activity is not carried out every day. Several factors that cause low interest in reading among students are limited supporting facilities and infrastructure, lack of motivation from within students, inability to choose books according to interests and ability levels, less interesting teaching methods and lack of parental attention in supporting reading habits at home. This shows that education at Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit has not sufficiently developed students' reading interests and skills. Therefore, the role of schools and parents in creating children's interest in reading is very important, especially at an early age. As expressed by Kurniawan et al. (2020), by fostering interest in reading from an early age, children will be accustomed to reading in the future.

One way to increase interest in reading is through the creation of a wall magazine. This program can be a creative means to encourage students to be more active in reading, managing information, and developing writing skills. Haidar (2021) stated that wall magazines can add reading materials and train students to be more fluent in reading. The creation of this wall magazine also aims to develop literacy, especially students' interest in reading, considering that the school does not yet have a wall magazine.

Wall magazines are communication media that are installed on walls, containing information that can be read by anyone who passes by (Zubaidah, 2022). Suriyanto added that wall magazines are a cheap and easy-to-implement solution in schools. Its presence is not only as a complement to facilities but has become a necessity in schools. In addition, wall magazines have various functions, including as a means of information, communication, recreation, and creativity. Through the creation of wall magazines, students can be trained to write and develop their reading interests, as well as utilize the school library as a reference for creating written works.

Wall magazines function as a medium for conveying information designed to attract readers' attention, containing various types of information such as stories, opinions, and short stories (Mehmory et al., 2023). This provides an opportunity for students to develop writing and communication skills, and can create creative works such as posters, poems, or picture stories. Thus, wall magazines can improve students' literacy and develop their writing skills through collaboration and communication.

Based on the explanation above, wall magazines are a simple, inexpensive, and effective solution that can be implemented in schools to improve students' reading habits. Therefore, the presence of wall magazines is expected to increase students' interest in reading. In line with this, a study on improving students' interest in reading through the wall magazine program for elementary school students at the Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit was conducted.

2. Method

The research method is a way used by researchers to answer the problems that have been formulated (Arikunto, 2013). This research was conducted for 4 months, starting from August 12 to December 5, 2023, at Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit, with the research subjects being 13 grade V students. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative research, which consists of several stages, namely planning, implementation, and observation to describe the process of fostering reading interest through school wall magazines. The methods used in this study are observation to see conditions in the field, interviews to find out the views of students and teachers at Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit, and documentation to collect data in the form of notes and photos of ongoing activities.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

This research was conducted in August 2023 at Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit. Based on the results of interviews and observations, it is known that there are still many fifth grade students who have not shown a high interest in reading. According to interviews with class teachers, the low interest in reading of students is caused by the lack of facilities and media that can encourage them to read. One way to increase interest in reading is to utilize the wall magazine program. This program has proven effective in attracting students' attention and encouraging them to read more often. This research was conducted in several stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation.

3.1.1. Wall Magazine Program Planning at Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit

The planning stage is the initial step that aims to design and prepare the actions to be taken in the research. At this stage, we held a meeting with the teachers to present the work program plan that will be implemented.

The planning process for making a wall magazine involves preparing a plan to make a wall magazine in front of the school, which is expected to increase students' interest in reading (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. FGD activities with teachers

3.1.2. Implementation of Wall Magazine Making at Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit

In this activity, a product is produced in the form of a magazine containing information for students. The contents of this wall magazine include education about healthy schools, interesting facts about Indonesia, photos of togetherness between teachers and students, and works of students and students in the form of short stories and poems. The steps in making this wall magazine include (1) Determining the theme of the wall magazine, which is chosen to be general knowledge (2) Making a sketch of the magazine which includes making a title, compiling editorials, materials used, and decorations for the wall magazine.

The wall magazine is made using a long board decorated with paper flowers (see Figure 2). The contents of the magazine include several sections, including (1) Education about school health, which explains the steps to create a healthy school environment. This content is in the form of an A4-sized pamphlet that is attractively designed with a white color dominance; (2) Facts about Indonesia, which includes interesting information about Indonesia that is rarely known by students, aimed at expanding their knowledge; (3) Writing poetry and impressions of students' messages, where students are asked to write about the school and decorate their writing to increase creativity; (4) Photos of togetherness, which show images that can help students understand the message or wisdom contained in the image.



Figure 2. Making a Wall Magazine

Table 1 present the number of student visits to the wall magazine at school during a week. It can be seen that every day, the number of student visits to the wall magazine is increasing.

Table 1. Number of student visits to the wall magazine

No.	Day	Number of visits
1.	Monday	10 people
2.	Tuesday	15 people
3.	Wednesday	20 people
4.	Thursday	30 people
5.	Friday	40 people

3.2. Discussion

The product produced is a school wall magazine containing information and knowledge for students. The contents of this magazine include education about healthy schools, facts about Indonesia, photos of togetherness between teachers and students, and writings in the form of short stories and poems made by students and college students. The steps in making this wall magazine include (1) Determining the theme, which focuses on general knowledge; (2) Designing a sketch of the wall magazine, which includes making the title, editorial composition, materials used, and wall decoration.

In general, literacy activities at Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit have been carried out every day, namely by reading for 15 minutes before learning begins. However, there is no special literacy program other than this activity. Although each class already has a bookshelf to meet students' reading needs, the diversity of books available is still very limited, only subject textbooks are available. Therefore, researchers are trying to improve the reading corner to be more optimal. Because the level of student literacy is still low, researchers then create a work program, one of which is a wall magazine program, to increase students' interest in reading.

The wall magazine program has proven effective in increasing students' interest in reading. Research by Pratama et al. (2022) shows that wall magazines are a new way to improve students' reading literacy and writing creativity. Another study by Haidar (2021) also revealed that wall magazines can add reading materials and help students read more fluently. By creating a wall magazine, students can express their creativity through writing short stories, poems, and posters, which at the same time encourages their interest in reading. This activity not only improves literacy skills but also builds students' self-confidence when their work is read by friends. With the wall magazine, students become more motivated to read and write, creating a more interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Realizing a culture of literacy amidst the rapid development of digital technology can still be done in a non-digital way that is packaged in an interesting and contemporary way without reducing the essence of literacy itself. Various information can still be conveyed to students through writing presented in easy-to-understand language (Triyono et al., 2016).

Wall magazines are a cheap means of communication to create interpersonal communication in a group. This makes wall magazines an interesting place to share ideas, form reading habits, fill free time by reading documents, come up with smart ideas, and build team spirit, in accordance with agreements and self-discipline in working. Wall magazines also involve writing and communication exercises between students, teachers, and schools (Ubaydillah, 2021). Wall magazines consist of various writings attached to a flat board, such as cardboard or cork, and decorated with colorful ornaments to paintings to attract the attention of readers (Nafi'in & Amrulloh, 2021).

Wall magazines are not only information media in the school or community environment, but also a place for expression and creativity. The existence of a community is very important in supporting the sustainability of the wall magazine program. The community can be a source of inspiration, ideas, and information that makes the contents of the wall magazine more alive and relevant. Not only that, but the community can also contribute directly through written works, images, or opinions, so that the wall magazine belongs to everyone, not just the editorial team. Moral support from the community, such as appreciation and suggestions, also encourages wall magazine managers to continue working. In addition, community involvement in disseminating information and inviting others to read the wall magazine will increase its reach and influence. In other words, collaboration between the community and the wall magazine team will create more meaningful and positive media.

The movement to create a class wall magazine that is carried out routinely and involves all parties in the school including students, teachers, staff, parents, and the community - is able to overcome the problem of low reading interest in Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit. Students are increasingly enthusiastic about following this movement every semester. The desire to display the best wall magazine encourages them to read more books and expand their knowledge that can be poured into works on the wall magazine. Support from teachers, staff, parents, and the community provides great motivation for students to produce the best work. The teacher's assistance in providing direction and guidance greatly helps students to produce more innovative work. Staff support in preparing wall magazine materials and facilities also facilitates students' work. Appreciation from parents and the community, such as donating books or visiting wall magazine exhibitions, makes students feel prouder and more confident.

4. Conclusion

Based on research conducted at Waewaru Presidential Elementary School Technical Implementation Unit, it can be concluded that the level of student literacy has increased with the wall magazine program. Wall magazines have an important role in improving students' reading skills. Through the wall magazine, students are introduced to new vocabulary and various types of texts, which enrich their understanding. Reading and writing activities for the wall magazine also train critical thinking skills and creativity. In addition, the wall magazine encourages students to be more active in reading, which in turn increases their overall interest in reading. With support from teachers and the right strategies, the wall magazine can be an effective tool for building a culture of literacy in schools. Wall magazines also help students to develop their skills and motivate their friends to continue to be creative. In addition, wall magazines provide opportunities for students to fill their free time by reading and producing works that can be displayed on the school wall magazine. When students' work is read by their friends, they feel more confident. The enthusiasm of students in creating and posting their work shows their enthusiasm in using wall magazines as a medium for learning and creating.

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