

# POHON GEULIS MEDIA AS A LITERACY PROGRAM INNOVATION TO IMPROVE FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS' READING INTEREST

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## Abstract

This study aims to describe the implementation of a reading literacy program using *pohon geulis* media to enhance students' reading interest in Grade V at SDN Nangela. The study is motivated by the low level of students' reading interest, which remains a major challenge in the implementation of the School Literacy Movement (*Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*). *Pohon geulis* media is a visual and interactive innovation designed in the form of a tree, where students attach "leaves" containing short summaries or brief reflections based on the texts they have read. This study employed a descriptive quantitative method, using questionnaires and observation sheets as research instruments. The findings indicate that the use of *pohon geulis* media has a positive effect on improving students' reading interest. Students perceived the media as attractive, engaging, and easy to use, which supports the achievement of school literacy objectives. Questionnaire and observation data show increased motivation and enthusiasm for reading after the implementation of this media. Through *pohon geulis* media, students not only develop reading habits but also learn to express their understanding of texts creatively. Moreover, this media creates a more interactive learning atmosphere, thereby improving the overall quality of learning in elementary school. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more effective instructional strategies to enhance reading interest among elementary school students.

## Introduction

Education is not merely a means of transferring knowledge to future generations, but also a strategic instrument for shaping the development of society (Ariyanti, 2017). Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized that education is an effort to foster the intellectual, moral, and physical development of learners. One of the fundamental elements supporting this educational process is literacy, particularly reading literacy, which plays a crucial role in expanding knowledge, strengthening character, and enhancing students' thinking abilities.

Reading literacy refers to students' ability to understand, analyze, and interpret information from various written sources. This ability is essential for active and critical participation in the learning process (Rahmatunisa, 2017). In the contemporary educational context, literacy is no longer limited to basic reading and writing skills, but also encompasses information, media, and digital literacy, all of which are rooted in strong reading competence (Ainiyah, 2017). Therefore, strengthening reading literacy at the elementary school level is a strategic effort to cultivate critical and creative thinking skills from an early age.

Despite its importance, several studies indicate that students' reading interest in Indonesia remains relatively low. Previous research has shown that although school literacy activities have been implemented, limited access to reading materials reduces the quality of students' reading experiences (Yunianika, 2019). Moreover, the widespread use of digital devices has further diminished students' motivation to read printed texts, presenting a significant challenge to the development of reading habits (Sudiana, 2020; Sariyani, 2020). These conditions highlight the need for innovative learning strategies that can foster students' interest in reading through engaging and meaningful activities.

In response to this issue, the School Literacy Movement (*Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*) was introduced to promote students' reading habits through stages of habituation, development, and literacy-based learning (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). One instructional innovation aligned with this initiative is the use of *Pohon Geulis*, a creative visual medium designed in the form of a tree where students display summaries or brief reflections of the texts they have read. This medium encourages active engagement and provides a visually stimulating learning environment that supports literacy habituation in schools.

Empirical evidence indicates that creative and participatory literacy media can effectively enhance students' reading interest and engagement. Zara, Johan, and Silvana (2018) found that the implementation of *Pohon Geulis* in elementary schools positively influenced students' motivation and participation in reading activities by creating an enjoyable and interactive literacy atmosphere. Similarly, Nudiati and Anggraeni (2023) reported that the *Pohon Geulis* program successfully increased reading interest among learners in the Package C equivalency program, particularly when supported by systematic program management and learner involvement. In a related context, Sileardika, Pradnyana, and Numertayasa (2024) demonstrated that the development of a *Pohon Ilmu* as a classroom learning medium enhanced students' conceptual understanding and learning engagement, indicating that tree-based visual media can support both literacy and cognitive development. Furthermore, Rahmawati et al. (2023) emphasized that the effectiveness of school literacy programs is strongly influenced by transformational leadership from school principals, which reinforces teacher commitment and ensures the sustainability of literacy initiatives.

Based on these findings, this study aims to describe the implementation of *Pohon Geulis* as a reading literacy medium and to examine its contribution to improving the reading interest of fifth-grade students at SDN Nangela.

## Method

### Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach aimed at systematically and objectively describing students' reading interest before and after the implementation of the *Pohon Geulis* media. According to Sukardi (2003), a quantitative descriptive approach allows researchers to measure phenomena numerically and to explain changes in variables based on collected data. This approach provides a numerical description of the variables under investigation, making it easier to identify trends or changes following a specific intervention. Similarly, Sugiyono (2018) states that descriptive quantitative research is used to describe independent variables without comparing them or examining relationships among variables.

## Data Sources

The participants of this study were all 16 fifth-grade students of SDN Nangela. Given the relatively small population, the entire population was used as the research sample (Sugiyono, 2018). This sampling technique enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive and representative data regarding students' reading interest.

## Research Instruments

Data were collected using the following techniques:

*Questionnaire:* A questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale was administered, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The questionnaire was developed based on content validity principles, considering psychological and pedagogical aspects appropriate to elementary school students. Arikunto (2010) notes that questionnaires are effective instruments for measuring students' perceptions of subjective phenomena that can be quantified.

*Participatory Observation:* During the literacy activities, both the classroom teacher and the researcher conducted direct observations. The observations focused on students' engagement in reading activities, their responses to the *Pohon Geulis* media, and their interactions during literacy discussions. Observation was also used to assess students' consistency in attaching their reading outcomes to the media. According to Nasution (2003), observation enables researchers to capture naturally occurring behaviors in real social contexts, thereby enhancing data validity.

*Documentation:* Documentation included photographs of literacy activities, students' work in the form of reading leaves, and teachers' notes on the development of students' reading interest throughout the program. This technique was used to complement the quantitative data and strengthen data triangulation. Moleong (2017) emphasizes that documentation supports data credibility by providing concrete evidence of research implementation.

The research instruments consisted of: (1) A questionnaire measuring students' reading interest, (2) An observation sheet based on indicators of students' literacy engagement and (3) A documentation format for recording students' reading outputs written on leaf-shaped colored paper.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive quantitative techniques by comparing questionnaire scores before and after the implementation of the program. The scores were converted into percentages and presented in tables and graphs to illustrate trends in students' reading interest improvement. This analysis followed Sugiyono's (2018) descriptive analysis approach, which aims to provide an overall depiction of research findings using simple statistical procedures.

**Table 1. Distribution of Students' Responses to the Questionnaire**

No.	Statement	SS	S	D	SD
1	I feel happy adding my "reading leaf" after finishing a book.				
2	I want to write book recommendations on the <i>Pohon Geulis</i> .				
3	I enjoy writing my reading summary and attaching it to the <i>Pohon Geulis</i> .				
4	Reading books at school feels more enjoyable with the <i>Pohon Geulis</i> .				
5	<i>Pohon Geulis</i> helps me appreciate reading activities more.				
6	I believe reading helps me understand lessons better.				
7	The <i>Pohon Geulis</i> activity motivates me to visit the reading corner/library more often.				

No.	Statement	SS	S	D	SD
8	I enjoy reading books before going to sleep.				
9	I like visiting the school library.				
10	The classroom atmosphere has become more lively since the <i>Pohon Geulis</i> media was implemented.				

Note: SS = Strongly Agree, S = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

## Results and Discussion

### Results Based on Table 2

This study aimed to improve the reading interest of fifth-grade students at SDN Nangela through the implementation of a reading literacy program using the *Pohon Geulis* media. The use of this media transformed the classroom into a more engaging learning environment, encouraging students to manage knowledge independently and sustain learning through reading. In the current digital era, students tend to prioritize the use of electronic devices over reading printed fiction or non-fiction books; therefore, innovative literacy activities are required to address this challenge. This study was conducted by comparing students' reading behaviors before and after the implementation of the *Pohon Geulis* program.

The presence of *Pohon Geulis* in the classroom had a positive impact on students' attitudes toward reading. Students became more enthusiastic about reading and were actively involved in writing short synopses of the books they had read on leaf-shaped colored paper, which were then displayed on the classroom literacy tree. This activity encouraged both reading comprehension and creative expression.

**Table 2. Improvement of Students' Reading Interest Before and After the Implementation of *Pohon Geulis* (Observation Sheet)**

Aspect	Before (%)	After (%)
Students who read regularly	50.00	93.75
Students who wrote reading synopses	62.50	87.50
Students who retold reading content	25.00	71.00
Average	45.83	84.08

The data in Table 2 show a significant improvement in all observed literacy aspects. Prior to the program, only 50% of students read regularly; after implementation, this figure increased to 93.75%. The ability to write reading synopses improved from 62.5% to 87.5%, indicating that students not only read more frequently but also demonstrated better comprehension. Furthermore, the percentage of students able to communicate the content of their reading increased markedly from 25% to 71%, reflecting growth in confidence and communication skills. Overall, the average reading interest rose from 45.83% to 84.08%, suggesting that *Pohon Geulis* effectively created an interactive and motivating literacy environment.

### Documentation Results

Figure 1 illustrates fifth-grade students at SDN Nangela completing the questionnaire with full concentration. This documentation captures students' responses regarding their experiences using the *Pohon Geulis* media in literacy activities. Figure 2 shows students writing summaries of their reading on leaf-shaped paper to be displayed on the *Pohon Geulis*. This activity not only strengthened reading skills but also enhanced students' writing and summarizing abilities. Figure 3 presents students completing observation sheets to record literacy activities conducted regularly. These visual documents provide concrete evidence of students' enthusiasm and active participation in the literacy program, demonstrating the effective implementation of this creative learning approach in the classroom.



Figure 1. Fifth-grade students completing the questionnaire.



Figure 2. Students writing summaries of their reading on leaf-shaped paper.



Figure 3. Students completing the observation sheet during literacy activities

Results Based on Table 3

Table 3. Questionnaire results on students' reading Interest

No.	Statement	SS	S	D	SD
1	I feel happy adding my "reading leaf" after finishing a book.	7	9	-	-
2	I want to write book recommendations on the <i>Pohon Geulis</i> .	6	10	-	-
3	I enjoy writing my reading summary and attaching it to the <i>Pohon Geulis</i> .	10	5	1	-
4	Reading at school feels more enjoyable with the <i>Pohon Geulis</i> .	12	4	-	-
5	<i>Pohon Geulis</i> helps me appreciate reading activities more.	6	9	-	1
6	I believe reading helps me understand lessons better.	13	3	-	-
7	The <i>Pohon Geulis</i> activity motivates me to visit the reading corner/library more often.	4	9	1	2
8	I enjoy reading books before going to sleep.	3	8	5	-
9	I like visiting the school library.	6	8	2	-
10	The classroom atmosphere has become more lively since <i>Pohon Geulis</i> was implemented.	14	2	-	-
Total		84	67	9	3

Based on the data presented in Table 3, students demonstrated a predominantly positive response toward the implementation of *Pohon Geulis* as a reading literacy medium. Overall, the distribution of responses shows a strong tendency toward *Strongly Agree (SS)* and *Agree (S)* categories, with very few responses indicating disagreement. This pattern suggests that *Pohon Geulis* was well received by students and effectively supported their reading interest and engagement, which is consistent with previous findings on tree-based literacy media in elementary education (Zara et al., 2018; Bhala et al., 2024).

In terms of affective response, most students expressed enjoyment and positive emotions toward the activity. Statements related to happiness and enjoyment—such as feeling happy after adding a “reading leaf” (Item 1) and enjoying writing summaries and attaching them to the *Pohon Geulis* (Item 3)—received high frequencies of agreement. This finding aligns with earlier studies indicating that visually engaging and participatory literacy media can foster positive emotional connections to reading activities, thereby increasing students’ willingness to engage with texts (Borut, 2023; Nudiati & Anggraeni, 2023).

Students also showed strong intrinsic motivation related to reading and literacy participation. A large number of respondents agreed that *Pohon Geulis* made reading at school more enjoyable (Item 4) and helped them appreciate reading activities more (Item 5). Furthermore, nearly all students believed that reading helped them understand lessons better (Item 6), reflecting an awareness of the cognitive benefits of reading beyond mere enjoyment. Similar outcomes have been reported in studies emphasizing that structured school literacy programs contribute to both motivational and cognitive dimensions of reading development (Hapsari et al., 2019; Fransisca et al., 2024).

With regard to behavioral engagement, the results indicate a moderate but meaningful increase in reading-related habits. While most students agreed that *Pohon Geulis* motivated them to visit the reading corner or library more frequently (Item 7), a small number expressed disagreement, suggesting that changes in reading behavior outside the classroom may require more sustained intervention and environmental support. This finding supports previous research noting that school-based literacy initiatives may not immediately translate into personal reading habits beyond school contexts (Yunianika, 2019; Sariyani, 2020).

One of the most notable findings relates to classroom atmosphere. Almost all students strongly agreed that the classroom became more lively after the implementation of *Pohon Geulis* (Item 10). This suggests that the medium not only influenced individual reading interest but also contributed to a more interactive and engaging learning environment. Such improvements in classroom climate have also been linked to the successful implementation of literacy programs supported by active teacher facilitation and institutional commitment (Rahmawati et al., 2023; Sumadyo et al., 2023).

Overall, the questionnaire results indicate that *Pohon Geulis* had a highly positive impact on students’ reading interest, particularly in terms of enjoyment, motivation, and classroom engagement. Although some aspects of reading behavior outside school showed varied responses, the findings reinforce the effectiveness of *Pohon Geulis* as a literacy medium for fostering positive reading attitudes among elementary school students.

## Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that the use of *Pohon Geulis* as a visual and interactive literacy medium significantly contributes to improving students’ reading interest. This

improvement can be understood through the lens of learning motivation theory, which emphasizes the role of external stimuli—such as visual representation, symbolic rewards, and learner involvement—in sustaining students' engagement in learning activities. By allowing students to visually display their reading achievements in the classroom, *Pohon Geulis* provides tangible evidence of progress, which in turn enhances students' intrinsic motivation to read.

The process of writing reading summaries on leaf-shaped paper and attaching them to the literacy tree encourages deeper cognitive engagement with texts. This activity aligns with constructivist learning theory, which posits that learners actively construct knowledge through reflection and meaningful tasks. Rather than merely reading passively, students were required to comprehend, synthesize, and communicate the main ideas of the texts they read. As a result, reading literacy was not limited to decoding written symbols but extended to higher-order thinking skills, such as summarizing and interpreting information.

Moreover, the social dimension of the *Pohon Geulis* activity played an important role in fostering a positive literacy culture in the classroom. The public display of students' reading outcomes created a supportive and collaborative learning environment in which students could observe and learn from one another. This condition promoted healthy competition and peer motivation, encouraging students to read more frequently and participate actively in literacy discussions. Such findings support previous studies suggesting that creative and collaborative literacy media can enhance students' engagement and reading motivation.

The questionnaire results further indicate that students perceived reading activities as more enjoyable after the implementation of *Pohon Geulis*. Enjoyment is a critical factor in the development of long-term reading habits, especially at the elementary school level. When students associate reading with positive emotions and creative expression, they are more likely to sustain reading behaviors both inside and outside the classroom. However, although most indicators showed significant improvement, some aspects—such as independent reading at home and increased frequency of library visits—were less pronounced. This suggests that while classroom-based literacy interventions are effective, they should be complemented by support from families and schools to strengthen students' reading habits beyond formal learning settings.

In relation to the School Literacy Movement (*Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*), the *Pohon Geulis* media supports the stages of habituation and development by creating routine reading practices and encouraging reflective literacy activities. The findings indicate that innovative visual media can serve as an effective bridge between policy-level literacy programs and classroom-level implementation. Therefore, integrating creative media such as *Pohon Geulis* into literacy instruction can be considered a practical strategy for enhancing reading interest and building sustainable literacy practices in elementary schools.

### Research Limitations

Despite the positive findings, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted with a relatively small sample consisting of only 16 fifth-grade students from a single elementary school. This limited sample size may restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader educational contexts or different student populations.

Second, the duration of the implementation of the *Pohon Geulis* literacy program was relatively short. As a result, this study primarily captured short-term changes in students'

reading interest and literacy behaviors. Long-term effects, such as the sustainability of reading habits and their impact on academic achievement, were not examined.

Third, the data collection relied mainly on questionnaires and classroom observations, which may involve subjectivity in students' responses and observer interpretations. Although documentation was used to strengthen data triangulation, future studies may incorporate more objective measures, such as standardized reading assessments or longitudinal tracking of reading frequency.

Finally, this study focused on reading interest rather than reading comprehension outcomes in depth. While improvements in literacy engagement were evident, further research is needed to explore how the *Pohon Geulis* media influences students' comprehension skills and overall academic performance.

Acknowledging these limitations, future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples, longer implementation periods, and mixed-method approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of creative literacy media in elementary education.

## Conclusion

The implementation of the reading literacy program using the *Pohon Geulis* media proved to be effective in improving the reading interest of fifth-grade students at SDN Nangela. This medium not only encouraged active student participation in reading literacy activities but also helped create a more interactive and engaging classroom environment. Based on data obtained from observation sheets and questionnaires, a significant increase was found in the number of students who read regularly and confidently shared the results of their reading.

Furthermore, the *Pohon Geulis* media fostered a lively learning atmosphere that enhanced students' enthusiasm and active involvement in literacy activities. The visual nature of this medium also assisted teachers in monitoring and evaluating students' literacy development more systematically, as each reading and synopsis-writing activity was clearly documented on the literacy tree. This visual record ensured greater student accountability in completing literacy tasks and enabled teachers to conduct more objective evaluations.

Overall, the use of *Pohon Geulis* in the literacy program at SDN Nangela demonstrates that innovation in instructional methods plays a crucial role in increasing students' motivation to read and in cultivating a strong school literacy culture. Thus, this media not only supports reading activities but also enriches students' learning experiences, preparing them to face future academic challenges more effectively.

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