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## Revealing Literacy Practice in Primary Schools: A Multi-Perspective Study from Teachers, Students, and Classroom Observation

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### **ABSTRACT**

The misalignment between literacy policies and actual classroom practices highlights the need for a comprehensive mapping of literacy implementation in elementary schools; therefore, this study aims to explore reading and writing literacy practices through a multi-perspective approach involving teachers, students, and school leaders. This research employs a descriptive qualitative design with a multi-case study approach, involving a total of 35 participants: 10 classroom teachers directly engaged in literacy instruction (two from each school), 5 principals who provided institutional and policy perspectives, and 20 upper-grade students (four from each school) representing learners' voices and literacy experiences. The study was conducted in five elementary schools in Jakarta: SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi, SDN Sukabumi Utara 01, SD IT Harum, SDN Paseban 03, and SDN Pondok Kopi 02. Data were collected through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation, and analyzed using thematic analysis consisting of initial coding, categorization, and identification of emerging themes. The findings indicate that schools have implemented literacy practices consistently and in varied forms, including morning reading sessions, journal writing, storytelling activities, mini-book projects, and parental involvement, all of which contribute to the development of a positive literacy culture. Students demonstrated strong reading motivation, particularly when provided with relevant, illustrated texts connected to their everyday experiences. However, the study also identified a lack of leveled reading materials that explicitly incorporate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) themes. Both teachers and students emphasized the need for leveled books with SDG themes, presented in accessible language and

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supported by engaging visuals. This study reinforces its contribution by providing empirical foundations for the development of SDG-based leveled reading materials as a means to integrate basic literacy skills with global awareness and character education from an early age.

**Keywords:** Literacy practices; Reading and Writing Literacy; Elementary education; Leveled reading books; Multi-perspective approach.

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## ABSTRAK

Permasalahan rendahnya keselarasan antara kebijakan literasi dan praktik nyata di kelas mendorong perlunya pemetaan komprehensif terhadap implementasi literasi di sekolah dasar, sehingga penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi praktik literasi membaca dan menulis melalui pendekatan multi-perspektif dari guru, siswa, dan pihak sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi multi-kasus, melibatkan total 35 partisipan, yaitu 10 guru kelas yang terlibat langsung dalam pembelajaran literasi (dua dari setiap sekolah), 5 kepala sekolah yang memberikan perspektif kelembagaan dan kebijakan, serta 20 siswa kelas tinggi (empat dari setiap sekolah) yang mewakili suara dan pengalaman literasi mereka. Penelitian dilakukan di lima sekolah dasar di Jakarta: SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi, SDN Sukabumi Utara 01, SD IT Harum, SDN Paseban 03, dan SDN Pondok Kopi 02. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, kuesioner, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik yang meliputi proses pengodean awal, kategorisasi, dan penarikan tema-tema utama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sekolah telah melaksanakan praktik literasi secara konsisten dan bervariasi, antara lain membaca pagi, penulisan jurnal, kegiatan mendongeng, proyek buku mini, serta keterlibatan orang tua, yang bersama-sama berkontribusi terhadap terbentuknya budaya literasi yang positif. Siswa menunjukkan minat baca yang tinggi, terutama terhadap buku yang relevan, bergambar, dan dekat dengan pengalaman mereka. Namun demikian, ditemukan keterbatasan bahan bacaan berjenjang yang secara eksplisit mengangkat tema *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs). Guru dan siswa menekankan perlunya pengembangan buku berjenjang bertema SDGs yang disajikan dengan bahasa yang mudah dipahami dan visual menarik. Penelitian ini menegaskan kontribusinya dalam memberikan dasar empirik bagi pengembangan bahan bacaan berjenjang berbasis SDGs sebagai bentuk integrasi literasi dasar, kesadaran global, dan pendidikan karakter sejak dini.

**Kata Kunci:** Praktik Literasi; Literasi Membaca dan Menulis, Pendidikan dasar; Buku bacaan berjenjang; Pendekatan multi-perspektif.

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## INTRODUCTION

Literacy constitutes a fundamental component of primary education, shaping children's critical thinking, information processing abilities, and active participation in society. Early literacy development has been widely recognized as a predictor of students' long-term academic trajectories and their capacity to engage constructively with their surroundings (Aliyyah et al., 2025). In contemporary educational contexts, literacy extends beyond mechanical reading and writing, encompassing multimodal skills that involve interpreting and producing meaning through diverse forms of text, symbols, and digital media (Apriliana, Hartati, & Sunendar, 2022). Multimodal literacy significantly influenced creative teaching practices among elementary school teachers (Kingsford-Smith et al., 2024). Although various policies have been rolled out to improve literacy in elementary schools, literacy practices in the classroom often do not match curriculum expectations. There are still mechanistic approaches, less contextual, and minimal active student involvement. To fully understand the conditions of these literacy practices, a study is needed that combines the perspectives of teachers,

students, and real observations in the classroom. Recognizing the complex and dynamic nature of literacy, a comprehensive understanding of its practice in primary schools requires a multi-perspective approach, examining insights from teachers, students, and direct classroom observations.

To better understand the complexity of literacy learning, scholars argue that literacy should be viewed as a socially situated practice shaped by cultural and contextual factors. This study draws on the theory of literacy as social practice, which emphasizes the influence of social interactions and cultural norms on meaning-making activities. Complementary to this, emergent literacy theory (Chan & Sylva, 2015) highlights the developmental nature of children's early literacy experiences, while Vygotsky's constructivist concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) provides a lens for examining how classroom interactions scaffold students' literacy growth. These theories collectively guide the study's analytical orientation, particularly in assessing how teacher-student interactions and classroom environments shape literacy engagement.

In the 21st century, literacy not only includes the ability to read and write, but also involves understanding, analyzing, and evaluating information in various contexts (Yarmi et al., 2024). The importance of literacy in shaping 21st-century competencies has been emphasized in various studies, which show that strong literacy skills at an early age contribute significantly to students' future academic and social success. Literacy practices in elementary schools play a key role in shaping students' basic skills, cognitive development, and long-term academic success (Hadiyaturido; & Meilani, Apriliana, 2025). Likewise, international assessments such as PIRLS 2023 reveal that Indonesian students score below the global average, underscoring persistent national challenges related to reading comprehension, vocabulary depth, and higher-order reasoning. This gap demonstrates the urgency of developing more effective, contextualized literacy practices in Indonesian elementary classrooms.

Despite the increasing emphasis on literacy in the global education agenda, there is still a gap in understanding how this practice is implemented from multiple perspectives, including teachers, students, and classroom interactions (Apriliana, Hartati, & Sunendar, 2022). Previous studies have often focused on a single perspective, such as teacher strategies or student learning outcomes, thus ignoring the dynamics of interactions between pedagogical approaches, student engagement, and observed classroom behaviors (Al Mamun & Lawrie, 2023). The implementation of literacy learning in elementary schools often faces challenges, such as limited effective teaching strategies and lack of student engagement in the learning process. A multi-perspective approach is essential to understand the complexity of literacy teaching and its implementation in diverse educational contexts (Iswati, 2022).

Research by Triningsih et al., (2025) highlights the importance of teacher learning communities in transforming literacy practices in elementary schools. Through collaboration and sharing experiences, teachers can develop more innovative and responsive teaching strategies to students' needs. Studies indicate that teacher learning communities are effective in transforming literacy practices in elementary schools through collaboration and the sharing of experiences, as well as in creating innovative and responsive teaching strategies. In addition, interactions between teachers and students play a crucial role in supporting students' cognitive

development, including working memory which is closely related to literacy skills (Grosse et al., 2022).

Classroom observation is also an important tool in assessing the effectiveness of literacy teaching practices. Cao et al., (2023) in their meta-analysis found that directly observed teaching practices were significantly correlated with students' literacy achievement, although the relationship varied depending on grade level and duration of observation. This suggests that evaluating teaching practices directly can provide in-depth insights into the effectiveness of the teaching strategies used.

However, there is still a gap in the literature regarding a comprehensive understanding of literacy practices in elementary schools, especially those that integrate the perspectives of teachers, students, and classroom observations simultaneously. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring literacy practices in elementary schools through a multi-perspective approach, so as to provide a more comprehensive and contextual picture of literacy implementation at the elementary education level.

Although various policies have been implemented to improve literacy at the elementary school level, there is a gap between these policies and actual classroom practices. A study by Cardenal et al., (2023) highlighted that the relationship between teacher teaching style and student perception plays a significant role in the effectiveness of literacy learning. In addition, culturally relevant learning approaches have been shown to increase student engagement and comprehension of reading materials (Gildore et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, various intervention strategies have been implemented to improve elementary school students' reading skills. For example, the use of interesting learning media such as pop-up books and educational games has shown positive results in improving students' reading interest and ability (Sunarti et al., 2023; Khadijah et al., 2022). However, there are still limitations in research that integrates teacher, student, and classroom observation perspectives simultaneously to provide a holistic picture of literacy practices in elementary schools. Therefore, this study aims to uncover literacy practices in elementary schools through a multi-perspective approach involving interviews with teachers and students, as well as direct observation in the classroom. By understanding the dynamics of literacy learning from various perspectives, it is hoped that this study can contribute to formulating more effective and contextual learning strategies according to student needs and school conditions.

This study offers a distinctive contribution by revealing the real conditions of literacy practices in primary schools through an integrated multi-perspective approach that has rarely been explored in previous research. By simultaneously examining teachers' instructional approaches, students' literacy experiences, and authentic classroom interactions, this research provides a comprehensive picture of how literacy is actually enacted in everyday learning situations. Such a triangulated analysis enables the identification of gaps between curriculum expectations and actual classroom practices, offering nuanced insights that can inform the development of more context-responsive and effective literacy strategies tailored to students' needs and the school environment.

Recent research has highlighted the importance of classroom observation in uncovering gaps between teachers' reported practices and actual learning outcomes (Barone & Wright, 2008). Meanwhile, students' perspectives provide critical insights into their engagement, motivation, and perceived barriers to learning (Barnyak & McNelly, 2016). By integrating these

perspectives, this study aims to present a holistic view of literacy practices in primary schools, thereby contributing to discussions about effective literacy education. Drawing on international frameworks such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Mullis et al., 2023) and socio-cultural theories of literacy (Rivas, 2019) this study seeks to bridge the gap between policy, theory, and classroom realities.

Despite these valuable insights, a clear research gap remains: few studies integrate the perspectives of teachers, students, and direct classroom observations simultaneously to provide a comprehensive, context-sensitive understanding of literacy practices in Indonesian primary schools. National initiatives such as the *Asesmen Nasional Berbasis Komputer (ANBK)* further reveal disparities in students' literacy performance, reinforcing the need for multi-layered investigations that consider policy expectations alongside classroom realities.

To address these gaps, the present study adopts a multi-perspective approach grounded in socio-cultural and developmental theories to examine how literacy practices unfold across different stakeholders and settings. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to explore literacy practices in Indonesian elementary schools by integrating insights from teachers, students, and classroom observations to generate a holistic, empirically grounded understanding of literacy implementation within the primary education context.

## METHODS

### Type and Design

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive multi-case study design. The purpose of this approach is to describe and understand literacy practices taking place in elementary schools from multiple perspectives, namely those of teachers, students, and classroom observations. The qualitative method was chosen to capture in-depth descriptions of literacy practices in primary schools as they occur naturally, focusing on meanings, experiences, and contextual dynamics from various perspectives – teachers, students, and classroom observations. The multi-case design enables comparison across several school contexts to identify common patterns as well as distinctive literacy practices that emerge in different settings. This approach aligns with (Creswell & Creswell, 2019) notion that qualitative inquiry seeks to understand complex phenomena from participants' viewpoints through rich, contextualized data. The study emphasizes a multi-perspective analysis, integrating teacher pedagogical approaches, student engagement, and real classroom practices to build a holistic understanding of literacy implementation. This design also allows the triangulation of data across participants and settings, thereby increasing the validity and transferability of the findings.

### Data and Data Source

The research was conducted in five elementary schools located in the DKI Jakarta area: SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi (East Jakarta), SDN Sukabumi Utara 01 (West Jakarta), SD IT Harum (North Jakarta), and SDN Paseban 03 (Central Jakarta), SDN Pondok Kopi 2 (East Jakarta). The selection of schools was based on their active participation in the School Literacy Movement (*Gerakan Literasi Sekolah - GLS*) and their representation of both public and private institutions. The participants consisted of: 10 classroom teachers (two from each school)

involved in daily literacy instruction, 5 principals, who provided institutional and policy perspectives, and 20 students (four from each school) from upper elementary grades, representing learners' voices regarding reading and writing habits. This purposive sampling ensured that data were obtained from individuals directly engaged in and knowledgeable about literacy practices at school.

### **Data collection technique**

Data collection was carried out using several main instruments, namely: Semi-structured interview guides, to explore teachers' understanding of literacy practices, methods used, and students' perceptions of literacy activities. Observation sheets, used to directly record literacy learning activities in the classroom, including teacher-student interactions, media use, and student involvement. Open questionnaires, given to teachers to write down literacy practices, obstacles, and strategies implemented in schools. Documentation, in the form of photos, copies of lesson plans, student portfolios, and teaching materials used in literacy activities.

The selection of informants was carried out using purposive sampling techniques, based on their roles and involvement in school literacy activities. The number of informants consisted of: 10 class teachers (2 teachers from each school), 5 principals, and 20 grade students (4 students from each school).

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach with the following stages: 1) Transcription of interview results and field observation notes. 2) Data reduction to sort data relevant to the focus of the study. 3) Coding to group data based on categories such as literacy strategies, challenges, student responses, and learning contexts. 4) Identification and formulation of themes, both for each school (in the case) and across schools (between cases). 5) Data verification was carried out through triangulation of techniques and sources and member checking to ensure the validity and credibility of the results.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study focuses on reading and writing literacy, which refers to students' fundamental ability to comprehend, use, reflect on, and create written texts in various life contexts. Reading and writing literacy is considered the primary foundation for cross-subject learning in elementary schools. The following is a description of reading and writing literacy practices in the four schools that served as research sites:

### **SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi**

Literacy activities at SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi are part of the school's efforts to cultivate reading and writing as basic skills that must be possessed by every student. These activities are carried out in a structured, routine, and varied manner, involving the entire school community, especially teachers and students.

The following are the forms of literacy activities carried out:

1. 15 Minute Literacy Before Learning Activities

Every morning, before the lesson begins, students carry out reading activities for 15 minutes. This activity is free to choose reading materials, but remains under the supervision of the teacher. The books read can be folk tales, popular knowledge books, educational comics, or books brought from home.

## 2. Class Reading Corner

Each class is equipped with a reading corner that displays a collection of reading books that are appropriate to the age and interests of the students. Teachers and students together maintain this collection, and periodically add to it through a borrow-and-carry program from the school library.

## 3. Writing a Daily Journal

Students are asked to write a daily journal or simple reflection notes after reading activities or after experiencing meaningful events at school. This activity aims to train self-expression and narrative writing skills.

## 4. Reading Aloud

Teachers periodically read story books or short texts expressively to students. After that, a question and answer session or discussion of the contents of the reading is carried out to improve students' understanding, vocabulary, and listening skills.

## 5. Mini Book Project

Students create mini books containing short stories, poems, or personal experiences, complete with illustrations. The results of this work are then displayed in class or stored in the school's mini library as a shared collection.

## 6. Collaboration with Parents

The school also encourages parental participation in accompanying children to read at home and documenting family literacy activities through reports or photos.

## 7. Thematic Literacy

Literacy activities are often associated with certain learning themes, such as environmental themes, heroes, or culture. This makes literacy more meaningful and contextual.

Literacy activities at SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi have succeeded in creating a conducive and literate learning environment. Innovations such as a gallery of works and parental involvement strengthen the impact of this activity. The teacher's strategy in facilitating students to read and write in a fun way has proven effective in increasing student participation and literacy skills.

## 8. The LiterAsyik Tourism activity

The LiterAsyik Tourism activity at SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi is one form of school innovation in fostering a culture of literacy through a fun and meaningful approach. This activity is carried out in a structured manner every morning before learning begins, where students carry out independent reading activities for 15 minutes. The readings used vary, from folklore books, popular knowledge books, to educational comics, which can be selected from the class reading corner or brought from home. In addition to reading, students are also involved in daily journal writing activities containing short reflections on their reading activities or experiences at school. One of the leading activities in the LiterAsyik Tourism is reading aloud which is carried out by teachers with interesting expressions and followed by a

discussion of the story content with students. This activity has been proven to be able to improve students' understanding, imagination, and courage in expressing their opinions. In addition, students are also invited to make mini books containing their own writing and illustrations, which are then displayed in the class gallery or mini library. Documentation in the form of photos of activities, student portfolios, and teacher notes shows that this program runs consistently and continuously. This LiterAsyik Tourism activity also involves the role of parents in accompanying children to read at home, strengthening the synergy between schools and families in supporting the strengthening of children's basic literacy.



**Picture 1. The LiterAsyik Tourism activity**

Based on the results of interviews with teachers at SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi, it can be concluded that the school has consistently implemented literacy activities in the classroom as part of the daily learning routine. The teacher explained that literacy activities are conducted every morning before formal lessons begin in the form of teacher-guided independent reading. As the informant stated, *"Every morning, before we start the lesson, the students read first. This has become our routine."* Students read books available in the classroom reading corner, and afterward, they are asked to retell what they have read or record it in a short summary or simple journal. The teacher emphasized, *"I usually ask them to retell the story or write a short summary so I know they understand what they read."* This practice is intended not only to foster regular reading habits but also to strengthen students' comprehension and writing skills. The types of reading materials used are quite varied, including fiction story books, non-fiction books, picture stories, knowledge books, and children's encyclopedias. The teacher assessed that although there are quite a lot of reading choices available, not all reading materials are fully in accordance with the level of students' reading ability, especially for lower grade students. Therefore, teachers feel the need to select and adjust reading materials to the characteristics and needs of students so that the reading process is more meaningful and does not cause boredom or confusion.

In terms of student interest and involvement, teachers said that most students were quite enthusiastic about participating in reading activities, especially if the books used were

interesting, illustrated, and in accordance with their life experiences. Students also showed a positive response to readings that were relevant to everyday life or that contained elements of adventure and inspirational figures.

Teachers also confirmed that the school had provided several books or readings that introduced issues such as the environment, cleanliness, and justice, although the number was still limited. Readings with the theme of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were considered important because they not only broadened students' horizons, but also instilled character values, such as caring for the environment, social responsibility, and justice from an early age. Therefore, teachers strongly encouraged the provision and use of SDGs-themed books in elementary school environments.

Regarding recommendations for the type of ideal reading books, teachers suggested that books for elementary school students have simple language, contextual and inspiring content, accompanied by interesting illustrations and be relevant to the world of children. The book should also contain moral values or life lessons that are easy to understand and can be applied in students' daily lives.

#### SDN Sukabumi Utara 01

Literacy activities at SDN Sukabumi Utara 01 are carried out in an integrated manner and are part of the students' daily routine. Every morning before lessons begin, students participate in morning literacy activities, namely independent reading for 10-15 minutes with readings that are adjusted to their ability level and interests. The school provides a class reading corner filled with a collection of children's story books, educational comics, illustrated encyclopedias, and other thematic readings collected from the school library, parental grants, and community donations. Teachers encourage students to write reflection journals or story summaries after reading, which are then read together in front of the class as a form of appreciation for the students' work. In addition, teachers routinely hold "taking turns" or storytelling activities carried out by students in turns, both retelling the contents of the books they have read and their personal experiences. At SDN Sukabumi Utara 01, literacy activities are also integrated into thematic learning, for example when the theme is "My Hero", students are asked to write poetry or create a biography of an inspirational figure. Literacy activities do not only take place in the classroom, but also in open spaces such as the school garden, to create a more enjoyable reading atmosphere. The school also involves parents in Home Literacy activities, namely by filling out reading assistance sheets at home every weekend. All of these activities are well documented through student portfolios, teacher notes, and visual documentation, which shows that literacy is not just a program, but a culture that grows naturally and sustainably in the school.



**Picture 2. Literacy activities At SDN Sukabumi Utara 01**

Based on the results of teacher interviews at SDN Sukabumi Utara 01, it is known that literacy activities have become a consistent part of the classroom routine, particularly through morning reading sessions conducted before lessons begin. The teacher explained that students are given the freedom to choose reading materials available in the classroom, including fiction, non-fiction, picture books, and children's encyclopedias. As the teacher stated, *"Every morning, the students start with reading time, and they can choose any book they like from the classroom collection."* Most of these reading materials are aligned with students' reading abilities, as the teacher actively supports them in selecting appropriate texts. The informant added, *"I always guide them to choose books that match their level so they can understand what they read and stay motivated."* The teacher explained that students are given the freedom to choose reading materials available in the classroom, such as fiction, non-fiction, picture stories, and children's encyclopedias. Most of these reading materials are in accordance with students' reading abilities, especially because the teacher plays an active role in helping students choose books that are appropriate to their level of understanding.

The teacher also observed that students' interest in reading activities was quite high, especially when the books read contained interesting stories, easy-to-understand language, and supporting illustrations. The school also has a number of reading materials that raise important themes such as the environment, cleanliness, and social justice, although the number and variety are still limited. The teacher stated that books with the theme of SDGs are very important to be introduced to students from an early age because they can instill character values, social concern, and environmental awareness.

As input, the teacher suggested that ideal reading materials for elementary school students should use simple language, have interesting illustrations, and contain educational messages that are contextual and close to children's lives. This is important so that students are not only interested in reading, but are also able to understand and relate the contents of the reading to their own experiences.

#### **SD IT Harum**

Literacy activities at SD IT Harum are carried out comprehensively and creatively, aiming to improve students' reading, writing, and understanding and processing information.

This school not only implements the School Literacy Movement (GLS) routinely, but also develops various innovative programs that involve all elements of the school. One of the leading activities is training in making illustrated stories (cergam), which is carried out in special moments such as the commemoration of the Prophet's Birthday. In this activity, students are invited to channel their creativity through narrative stories equipped with self-made illustrations, so that they can improve their visual thinking skills as well as their writing skills. In addition, SD IT Harum consistently holds the School Literacy Festival (FLS) as an annual event that serves as a forum for appreciating the work of students and teachers. In this festival, a book launch was held by students and teachers, especially those from SMPIT Harum Ngawi, as part of strengthening community-based school literacy. On the other hand, the implementation of the GLS program has also been effective through activities such as reading non-subject books before learning begins and making literacy trees in each class – a visual media where students stick the titles of books they have read. This literacy tree serves as a reminder and encouragement to continue to increase the frequency and variety of reading. The culture of reading and writing is instilled through daily, weekly, and annual events, which make literacy an integral part of the learning process and school life.



**Picture 3. Leading activities in making illustrated stories**

Teachers at SD IT Harum explained that the implementation of literacy activities has become an integral part of the school routine. These activities are carried out every morning through a 15-minute reading session before lessons begin, as well as through teacher-guided shared reading. One teacher stated, *“Every morning we start with 15 minutes of reading, sometimes individually and sometimes reading together.”* The reading materials used are varied, ranging from illustrated children’s storybooks and children’s magazines to religious books. However, teachers acknowledged that the available reading materials are not yet systematically organized according to students’ reading ability levels. As the informant noted, *“We have many books, but they are not yet arranged based on the students’ levels.”* Despite this limitation, students show high enthusiasm, especially when engaging with texts that include appealing illustrations or stories about animals and inspirational figures. The teacher emphasized, *“Students get excited when the book has colorful pictures or stories about animals or famous figures.”*

Teachers strongly support the existence of SDGs-themed books because they are considered important to shape students' character and social awareness from an early age. They hope for leveled books that are appropriate to students' reading level, have attractive illustrations, contain moral messages, and raise contextual issues such as the environment and social justice.

### SDN Paseban 03

Based on the results of field observations, interviews with teachers, and documentation obtained at SDN Paseban 03 Jakarta, it is known that this school has carried out literacy activities in a structured and consistent manner as part of strengthening the culture of literacy in the elementary school environment. These activities are not only routine, but also integrated into the thematic learning process and students' daily lives.

One of the main activities is morning literacy, where students independently read non-textbook books for 10-15 minutes before starting lessons. Reading books can be taken from the class reading corner, which is filled with a collection of illustrated children's books, fables, simple encyclopedias, and inspirational stories collected from the school library and community donations. This morning literacy is supervised by the class teacher and is often continued with daily journal writing activities, which contain summaries of readings or notes on students' personal experiences. These works are then read in front of the class in turns, to practice speaking skills and foster self-confidence and appreciation for the work of classmates.

SDN Paseban 03 also routinely carries out storytelling and read aloud activities, especially for lower grade students. Teachers read stories and involve students in discussions about the content of the story, moral values, and messages that can be taken. This activity has been proven to help improve students' understanding, concentration, and ability to listen and connect the content of the reading with their own experiences.

Literacy practices not only take place separately, but are also integrated into thematic learning. For example, in the theme "Living Things and Their Environment", students are asked to make a small book containing descriptions of their favorite animals or plants. They are also given project assignments to create environmental-themed poems or write short stories that describe human interactions with nature. Thus, literacy skills are developed through creative expressions that are closely related to the learning context.

To support these activities, each class has a literacy board, where students can display their written work, either in the form of poetry, stories, or narrative pictures. This activity not only fosters a sense of pride in one's own work, but also sparks a spirit of literacy among other students. In addition, the school also encourages parental participation through a home literacy program, namely reading assistance at home which is recorded in a daily monitoring sheet.

All of these literacy activities are systematically documented in the form of activity photos, teacher journals, student portfolios, and literacy products collected by homeroom teachers. The documentation shows that SDN Paseban 03 Jakarta has attempted to instill a culture of literacy through a comprehensive approach, based on habits, creative expression, and the involvement of the entire school community.

The types of reading materials available at school are quite diverse, ranging from fiction and non-fiction books, picture books, to short articles that are relevant to the world of children. Teachers also ensure that the reading materials are appropriate to the students' reading ability level, especially by adjusting the text to the class and the students' understanding background. This contributes to increasing students' interest in reading and engagement during literacy activities.

However, teachers noted that there is still a lack of books that explicitly introduce Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) themes, such as environmental care, cleanliness, justice, and social diversity. One teacher expressed this concern by saying, *"We don't have many books that talk about the environment, fairness, or diversity. Those kinds of themes are still very limited here."* They emphasized that books with SDGs-related content are essential because they not only support literacy development but also help shape students' social awareness and character. As the informant explained, *"Books like that are important, not just for reading skills, but to build students' awareness and attitudes."* Therefore, teachers suggested that schools expand their collection of SDGs-themed reading materials that are structured by difficulty level, include engaging illustrations, and use language that is accessible for elementary school students. One teacher added, *"We really hope the school can provide more SDGs-themed books – graded, interesting, and easy for children to understand."*

#### SDN Pondok Kopi 02

Literacy activities at SDN Pondok Kopi 02 Jakarta are carried out comprehensively and are an important part of the daily learning routine. This school implements 15-minute literacy before learning begins, where all students are required to read non-textbook books independently in their respective classes. The books read come from the class reading corner, the school library, or are brought from home. After reading, students are asked to write a summary of the reading or personal opinion in the form of a literacy journal that is collected periodically by the class teacher. This activity aims to train reading and writing skills simultaneously and foster reflective habits towards the contents of the reading.

In addition to daily literacy, the school also holds thematic literacy days that are integrated with the momentum of national or religious holidays. For example, on Kartini Day, students are invited to create poetry or write short stories about inspiring female figures. The school also actively holds storytelling and read aloud activities, especially for lower grade students, to improve listening skills, comprehension, and imagination.

To appreciate the students' work, the school created a literacy gallery in the school hallway and classrooms, which displays the best works such as short stories, poems, literacy posters, and other writing project results. This literacy program is also supported by parental participation through literacy monitoring at home, where parents record their children's reading activities at home and write them down on a form provided by the school. With a comprehensive approach and involving the entire school ecosystem, literacy activities at SDN Pondok Kopi 02 Jakarta demonstrate their seriousness in building an active, creative, and sustainable literacy culture.



**Picture 4. Thematic literacy at SDN Pondok Kopi 2**

The reading materials used in this school are quite varied, including children's storybooks, educational comics, popular scientific articles, and children's encyclopedias. Teachers stated that the selection of books is adjusted to students' reading abilities so that each child can learn according to their developmental stage. As one teacher explained, *"We always try to give books that match their reading level so they won't struggle and can enjoy the activity."* This approach helps increase students' enthusiasm and interest in reading. The informant added, *"When the books are suitable for them, the students become more excited and eager to read."*

The literacy tree at school is a creative medium designed to foster students' reading interest and literacy culture through engaging and interactive visualization. Typically, a literacy tree takes the form of a board or an installation shaped like a tree, with branches and leaves that can be decorated with students' work, such as book summaries, inspirational quotes, or reading recommendations. Each time a student finishes reading a book, they add a "leaf" or "fruit" containing brief information about the book, making the tree grow "fuller" as reading activities increase. In addition to serving as a platform to appreciate students' work, the literacy tree also encourages active participation, motivates students to read more, and creates a learning environment that is both enjoyable and meaningful. Innovative learning media, such as the "literacy tree", have shown potential in enhancing students' literacy experiences by creating a more interactive and stimulating learning atmosphere (Aliyyah et al., 2025). Similarly, generative reading methods, which allow students to explore their basic knowledge with visual aids and create stories, can inspire active participation and improve language skills and creativity ( Apriliana, et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2025; Yarmi et al., 2024).

However, just like at SDN Paseban 03, teachers at SDN Pondok Kopi 02 also revealed that the school still lacks reading materials that discuss important issues in the SDGs. They emphasized the need for additional reading books that introduce students to topics such as environmental sustainability, gender equality, and healthy living. Teachers hope that there will be the development of graded books that not only educate from a literacy perspective, but also convey global life values in a contextual, interesting, and easy-to-understand manner for children

Based on the results of interviews with students from five elementary schools, namely SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi, SDN Sukabumi Utara 01, SD IT Harum, SDN Paseban 03, and SDN Pondok Kopi 02 Jakarta, several important findings were obtained that describe students' habits, interests, and needs in reading.

In general, students from the five schools showed a high interest in reading activities. Most students stated that they liked reading books, especially picture books, fables, educational comics, and adventure books. The books that were often mentioned and liked by students were books that had interesting illustrations, funny stories, and inspiring characters. Several students also mentioned that they had read religious books, children's encyclopedias, and children's magazines both at school and at home. This shows that students are quite familiar with various types of reading and have varying interests in the contents of the books.

In terms of understanding the contents of the book, the majority of students admitted that they could understand the storyline and moral messages conveyed in the reading. They were also able to identify parts that they liked, such as certain characters, funny events, or interesting illustrations. This shows that students' basic literacy skills have developed quite well. When reading in class, most students feel happy, because reading is considered a fun activity and can take them to a world of imagination or new knowledge. However, there are also some students who feel bored if the contents of the book are too difficult or the appearance is not attractive.

Regarding reading with the theme of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), some students have read books related to environmental issues such as maintaining cleanliness, the importance of disposing of garbage in its place, and healthy living. However, only a few students realize that these themes are part of the global issue of SDGs. Social-themed stories such as justice and mutual assistance are also mentioned several times as part of the reading they encounter at school or home. This indicates that although SDGs values have been introduced to some extent through books, they are still unstructured and have not become a prominent part of children's reading collections.

When asked about what kind of books they want, students expressed their hope that the books they read at school would contain more pictures, exciting stories, and easy-to-understand language. They also like stories that are close to everyday life, such as activities at home, at school, friendship, pets, and environmental protection activities. Several students also expressed their desire to read books that can provide moral lessons or teach good things.

From the overall results of the interviews, it can be concluded that students in the five schools have good reading habits and interests, but still need more relevant, easy-to-understand, and enjoyable reading books – especially books that explicitly raise SDGs themes in the form of tiered stories. This strengthens the urgency of developing tiered books based on SDGs as a means of not only improving literacy skills, but also instilling global values and positive characters from an early age.

Based on the results of field observations, interviews with teachers, and in-depth interviews with students in five elementary schools – SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi, SDN Sukabumi Utara 01, SD IT Harum, SDN Paseban 03, and SDN Pondok Kopi 02 Jakarta – it can be concluded that reading and writing literacy practices in elementary schools have been implemented well and variedly. Each school has a literacy program designed to instill reading and writing habits as the main foundation for cross-subject learning. Literacy activities are

carried out routinely every morning in the form of reading corners, independent reading, reading aloud, writing journals, and mini-book making projects.

One of the leading practices seen at SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi is the LiterAsyik program, which combines reading, writing, and students' creative expression in a fun atmosphere. Likewise at SDN Sukabumi Utara 01 and SD IT Harum, literacy is developed creatively through literacy festivals, picture story projects, and parental involvement in home literacy activities. According to Kalantzis & Cope (2023), literacy success at the elementary education level is greatly influenced by a supportive environment, the role of teachers as active facilitators, and family involvement in literacy learning. Teachers are central to the implementation of literacy education, and their knowledge, beliefs, and practices significantly influence student outcomes. While teachers believe literacy is crucial for every individual (Apriliana, Hartati, & Sunendar, 2022), many primary school teachers, especially in early grades, still exhibit significant knowledge and skill gaps in teaching foundational reading components such as phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Ukumo & Berlie, 2024). Furthermore, some teachers may not be familiar with specific literacy models like the Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM) or the multiliteracy model and differentiated approaches in literacy learning (Apriliana, Hartati, & ..., 2022; Apriliana et al., 2024; Yarmi et al., 2024). Teachers face various challenges in implementing effective literacy practices. These include large class sizes, limited instructional resources (such as books and teaching aids), and heavy teaching loads, which impede their ability to provide quality feedback and conduct meaningful assessments (Shafii & Berger, 2025). Professional learning is recognized as a key strategy to enhance teacher expertise and change classroom practices (Serry et al., 2025; Chibutane et al., 2025; Gath et al., 2025).

Students' motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes are critical indicators of successful literacy practices. Student motivation in reading and writing is a crucial factor that often receives insufficient attention from educators (Hadiyaturido; & Meilani, Apriliana, 2025). Teachers need to be actively involved in motivating students (Apriliana, Hartati, & Sunendar, 2022). The reading interest of students in the five schools is quite high. They show a preference for books that have interesting illustrations, funny stories, adventures, and inspiring characters. Students' understanding of the content of the reading is also quite good, as seen from their ability to summarize the content of the story and re-express the moral message contained in it. This is in line with the results of research by (Robledo & Grove (2019) which states that children will be more involved in literacy activities if the reading material is in accordance with their interests and abilities, and is supported by interactive teacher strategies.

However, important findings from teacher and student interviews indicate that there is still a lack of availability of reading books that explicitly raise the theme of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Although some students have read books on the theme of the environment, healthy living, or justice, only a few understand that this is related to global issues covered in the SDGs. Teachers in the five schools consistently stated the importance of developing SDGs-themed reading books, which not only increase students' insight, but also instill character and values of social and environmental concern from an early age.

The need for leveled books that raise the theme of SDGs is important to fulfill. This kind of book allows teachers to adjust the material to the level of students' reading ability, and ensures that moral messages and learning content can be understood well. As explained by

Fountas & Pinnell (Denis, 2022) the leveled book approach helps students develop in their proximal zone with gradual and structured literacy challenges. On the other hand, contextual literacy that inserts SDGs values in an integrated manner has been shown to increase students' global awareness and empathy for social and environmental issues (Bernárdez-Gómez et al., 2024).

In addition, the results of observations and documentation also show that these schools have begun to develop a culture of literacy that involves the wider community, including parents, libraries, and community programs. This sustainable and participatory growing literacy culture is in line with the findings of Rowsell & Walsh (2020), which states that today's literacy must be multimodal based on digital literacy, cross-contextual, and connect students' personal experiences with global issues. The rapid integration of digital devices and gadgets in daily life represents a form of technological advancement that significantly influences students' cognitive and social development (Wardani et al., 2024). When utilized appropriately within the educational context, these technologies can serve as powerful tools to enhance literacy learning in primary schools. Through interactive reading applications, digital storybooks, and multimedia learning platforms, students are exposed to diverse texts, visual stimuli, and auditory narratives that foster engagement and comprehension (Lestari, 2024).

Moreover, the use of gadgets encourages multimodal literacy, enabling students to construct meaning not only through printed text but also through images, sounds, and digital interactions. This aligns with the concept of *21st-century literacy*, which emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, and communication across multiple media. By integrating technology in literacy instruction, teachers can create more dynamic, individualized, and engaging learning experiences—helping students to develop both traditional reading and writing skills as well as digital literacy competencies essential for lifelong learning.

Thus, literacy learning in elementary schools does not only need to focus on the technical aspects of reading and writing, but also be directed toward strengthening meaning, relevance, and life values. The development of graded books based on SDGs is one strategic solution to address these needs. Books designed with attractive illustrations, simple language, and themes that are close to students' daily experiences can support the achievement of basic literacy goals while simultaneously promoting global character education.

However, this study still has several limitations. First, the data are limited to interviews with teachers and do not yet include parents' perspectives or students' deeper reflections on their reading experiences. Second, the availability and quality of SDGs-themed reading materials in schools vary significantly, making it difficult to generalize the findings across different contexts. Third, this study does not evaluate students' literacy outcomes after exposure to SDGs-themed reading materials, so the effectiveness of such books has not been empirically measured.

Future studies are recommended to involve a broader range of stakeholders, including students, parents, and school administrators, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of literacy needs. Researchers may also conduct experimental or quasi-experimental studies to examine the impact of SDGs-based graded books on students' literacy skills, critical thinking, and character development. Additionally, future research could focus on developing prototypes of SDGs-themed graded books and testing their usability, attractiveness, and effectiveness in real classroom settings.

## CONCLUSION

Based on observations, questionnaires, and interviews with teachers and students from five elementary schools SDN Kelapa Dua Wetan 01 Pagi, SDN Sukabumi Utara 01, SD IT Harum, SDN Paseban 03, and SDN Pondok Kopi 02 Jakarta it can be concluded that reading and writing literacy practices have been implemented consistently and contextually across the schools. Students show strong interest and active engagement in various literacy activities, including independent reading, journal writing, and storytelling. The reading materials provided are relatively diverse and generally aligned with students' interests; however, there remains a notable shortage of books that explicitly incorporate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) themes.

Teachers and students express a shared need for leveled reading books that integrate SDG themes through simple language, appealing illustrations, and meaningful content. This finding underscores the importance of developing SDG based leveled books to strengthen students' literacy skills while fostering their global awareness and character development. For teachers, the findings suggest the importance of integrating SDG related themes into literacy activities to enrich students' moral and social understanding. Schools are encouraged to expand their reading collections with structured, SDG oriented materials that support differentiated learning. Policy makers may consider supporting the production and distribution of SDG based leveled books to ensure equitable access across schools. Further research is needed to test the effectiveness of SDG-based leveled books in improving students' literacy competencies and global awareness in a wider range of school settings.

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