

The Effect of Storytelling on the Reading Interest of Third Grade Students at MI Teknologi BMT 03

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ABSTRACT

Reading interest is a vital aspect of students' literacy development, particularly at the elementary school level. However, many students continue to display low reading motivation due to monotonous teaching methods. This study aims to examine the effect of the storytelling method on the reading interest of Grade 3 students at MI Teknologi BMT 03. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach involving classroom observations and interviews. The findings indicate that the storytelling method significantly enhances student enthusiasm, participation, and motivation in reading activities. Furthermore, this method creates a more interactive classroom atmosphere, allowing students to become more actively engaged in the learning process. Consequently, storytelling can be regarded as an effective method to foster reading interest in elementary school students.

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ABSTRAK

Minat baca merupakan aspek penting dalam perkembangan literasi peserta didik, khususnya pada jenjang sekolah dasar. Namun, banyak peserta didik masih menunjukkan motivasi membaca yang rendah akibat metode pengajaran yang monoton. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh metode *storytelling* (bercerita) terhadap minat baca siswa kelas III di MI Teknologi BMT 03. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan melibatkan observasi kelas dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode *storytelling* secara signifikan meningkatkan antusiasme, partisipasi, dan motivasi siswa dalam kegiatan membaca. Selain itu, metode ini juga menciptakan suasana kelas yang lebih interaktif sehingga siswa menjadi lebih terlibat dalam proses pembelajaran. Dengan demikian, *storytelling* dapat dianggap sebagai metode yang efektif untuk meningkatkan minat baca peserta didik di sekolah dasar.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the fundamental skills that plays an essential role in the learning process, particularly at the elementary school level. Through reading, students not only acquire information and knowledge but also develop critical thinking skills, broaden their understanding, and build character and personality. Students' reading interest at the elementary level is even regarded as the main foundation for literacy development and long-term academic success. Therefore, fostering reading interest from an early age has become one of the primary tasks in education, especially for teachers as facilitators of classroom learning.

Reading interest can be defined as a strong internal drive or desire to read without any external compulsion. A high level of reading interest encourages students to actively seek out and explore reading materials, which in turn indirectly enhances their literacy skills. Conversely, low reading interest negatively affects students' literacy competence, ultimately influencing their overall learning outcomes.

However, empirical conditions in the field indicate that students' reading interest at the elementary level in Indonesia remains relatively low. This condition is caused, among other factors, by the limited availability of engaging reading materials and an unsupportive literacy environment both at school and at home. (Ahmad, 2023), in a study entitled *Rendahnya Minat Baca Anak Sekolah Dasar* (The Low Reading Interest of Elementary School Children), also confirms that monotonous teaching methods are one of the main causes of students' low enthusiasm for reading activities. Efforts to restore students' reading motivation have likewise become an important concern in literacy assistance programs, as demonstrated by (Astika et al., 2025) in their study entitled *Pendampingan Literasi Membaca Melalui Self Motivation untuk Menumbuhkan Motivasi Membaca pada Siswa di SMP N 37 Kabupaten Tebo Jambi* (Reading Literacy Assistance through Self-Motivation to Foster Students' Reading Motivation), which found that a self-motivation-based approach was effective in reviving students' enthusiasm and reading habits. These findings reinforce the urgency of implementing innovative and enjoyable teaching methods, not only at the secondary level but also at the elementary level. This condition of low reading interest is also commonly found among third-grade students at MI Teknologi BMT 03, where students' enthusiasm and participation in reading activities remain low. If this issue is not promptly addressed, it may result in a long-term decline in students' literacy abilities.

One alternative teaching method that can be employed to enhance students' reading interest is storytelling. (Artana, 2017), in his work *Anak, Minat Baca, dan Mendongeng* (Children, Reading Interest, and Storytelling), explains that storytelling activities introduced from an early age can build children's emotional attachment to books and reading activities. In line with this, (Nurhayati, 2018) study entitled *Metode Storytelling untuk Meningkatkan Minat Membaca pada Anak Usia Dini* (Storytelling Method to Improve Reading Interest in Early Childhood) demonstrates that this method is effective in fostering children's interest in reading from the early childhood education stage. This finding is further supported by a study conducted at MI Bahrul Ulum Kemlagilor Lamongan, which revealed that the application of a media-assisted storytelling method increased students' attention, interest in the material, and desire to further explore the content of the stories presented (*Penerapan Pembelajaran Storytelling Berbantu Media Kobe*, 2024).

In addition to influencing reading interest, storytelling has also been shown to enhance broader student engagement in learning. This is consistent with (Jenkins, 2009) view in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, which asserts that narrative possesses the power to create emotional engagement between audiences and content. Furthermore, (O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015), in *The Impact of Digital Storytelling on Student Engagement and Learning*, found that storytelling whether conventional or digital significantly increases student engagement and learning motivation. Through storytelling, teachers can deliver reading materials in a more engaging and interactive manner, thereby increasing students' motivation to actively participate in reading activities, while also stimulating

imagination and strengthening the interaction between teachers and students throughout the learning process.

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "The Effect of Storytelling on the Reading Interest of Third-Grade Students at MI Teknologi BMT 03." This study aims to examine the extent to which storytelling can improve students' reading interest, while also offering an alternative solution for teachers in designing more effective and enjoyable reading instruction at the elementary school level.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive research design. According to Sugiyono (2019), descriptive qualitative research aims to describe and analyze a phenomenon, event, social activity, attitude, belief, or perception of an individual or group in depth, without intending to test statistical hypotheses. This approach was chosen because the study sought to naturally and accurately describe how the implementation of the storytelling method unfolded in the classroom, as well as its impact on students' enthusiasm, participation, and reading motivation. In line with this, (Moleong, 2017) asserts that qualitative research seeks to holistically understand a phenomenon through description in the form of words and language within a specific, natural context.

This study was conducted at MI Teknologi BMT 03, involving all third-grade students, totaling 30 students, as the research subjects. In addition to the students, the classroom teacher was also involved as a supporting informant to obtain more comprehensive data related to the learning process and students' responses. The research was carried out over a period of two months, starting from the initial observation stage, the implementation of the storytelling method in learning activities, to the final data collection stage through observation and interviews. This time span was used to observe the gradual development of students' reading interest and to obtain a more accurate depiction of the effect of the storytelling method on students' enthusiasm, participation, and reading motivation.

Data collection in this study was carried out through two main techniques: classroom observation and interviews. Observations were conducted directly to examine the reading learning process using the storytelling method, including the level of students' enthusiasm, active participation, teacher–student interaction, and the overall classroom atmosphere during the activities. (Sugiyono, 2019) explains that participatory observation enables researchers to obtain more valid data, as it allows direct observation of subjects' behavior within their natural context. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the classroom teacher and students to gain deeper insight into their perceptions, experiences, and changes in reading motivation before and after the implementation of the storytelling method. According to (Creswell, 2014), semi-structured interviews provide researchers with the flexibility to explore information while remaining focused on the research objectives.

The data obtained from observations and interviews were then analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis, referring to the interactive analysis model of Miles and (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction was carried out by selecting, simplifying, and focusing the observation and interview data relevant to the research objectives. The reduced data were then systematically presented in the form of a descriptive narrative to facilitate understanding of the

research findings, before being interpreted to answer the research problem regarding the effect of the storytelling method on students' reading interest. To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, the researcher employed source and technique triangulation by comparing observation data with interview data obtained from various informants, including students and the teacher, in order to produce consistent and reliable findings.

RESULT AND DISUCSSION

1. Increased Student Enthusiasm in Reading Activities

Based on observations conducted over two months involving 30 third-grade students at MI Teknologi BMT 03, it was found that the implementation of the storytelling method had a significant effect on students' enthusiasm for reading activities. In the early stage of the study, most students displayed passive attitudes and showed little interest when asked to read texts conventionally. However, after the storytelling method was gradually implemented, students began to show enthusiastic expressions, such as asking about what happens next in the story, requesting the teacher to repeat certain parts, and voluntarily raising their hands to read the next part of the story.

2. Increased Student Participation

The observation results also revealed an increase in students' active participation throughout the learning process. In the early sessions, participation in reading activities tended to be dominated by a small number of students who already had a high level of reading interest. However, from the middle to the end of the study period, nearly all students became actively involved, whether in listening to the story, answering questions related to its content, or taking turns reading aloud.

3. Increased Reading Motivation

Based on interviews with the classroom teacher, it was found that students' reading motivation increased significantly. The teacher reported that students who previously rarely visited the classroom reading corner began to develop a habit of reading storybooks independently outside class hours. Interviews with students further supported this finding, as most of them stated that they felt happier and less bored when reading activities were presented in the form of stories delivered interactively by the teacher.

4. Creation of a More Interactive Classroom Atmosphere

In addition to its effect on reading interest, the storytelling method also created a livelier and more interactive classroom atmosphere. Observations showed an increase in two-way interaction between teacher and students, marked by a growing number of students asking questions, giving responses, and discussing the content of the stories presented.

Tabel 1. Summary of Observation Results on the Effect of the Storytelling Method on the Reading Interest of Third-Grade Students at MI Teknologi BMT 03

No	Aspect Observed	Condition Before Storytelling	Condition After Storytelling	Indicator of Change
1	Student Enthusiasm	Students were passive and showed little	Students actively asked about the story's continuation, requested	Increased enthusiastic expression and

		interest in reading conventional texts	repetitions, and voluntarily raised their hands to read	emotional engagement
2	Student Participation	Participation was dominated by a small number of students with pre-existing reading interest	Nearly all students actively participated in listening, answering questions, and taking turns reading	Expansion of participation from a minority to the majority of students
3	Reading Motivation	Students rarely visited the classroom reading corner independently	Students began reading storybooks independently outside class hours	Emergence of independent reading habits beyond teacher instruction
4	Classroom Atmosphere	Teacher–student interaction was mostly one- directional with minimal discussion	Two-way interaction increased, with students actively asking, responding, and discussing	Classroom atmosphere became livelier and more interactive

The table 1 summarizes four main aspects observed during the course of the study, namely student enthusiasm, student participation, reading motivation, and classroom atmosphere. Each aspect is compared between the conditions before and after the implementation of the storytelling method, thereby clearly illustrating the changes that occurred throughout the learning process.

The aspect of student enthusiasm, prior to the implementation of storytelling, students tended to be passive and showed little interest when reading texts in a conventional manner, such as reading without variation in delivery. After storytelling was implemented, students began to display livelier attitudes, such as actively asking about the continuation of the story, requesting the teacher to repeat certain parts, and voluntarily raising their hands to read. This change indicates that interactive storytelling was able to stimulate students' curiosity and emotional engagement with the reading material.

The aspect of student participation, prior to the implementation of this method, student involvement in reading activities was dominated only by a small number of students who already had a high level of reading interest from the outset. After the consistent application of storytelling, nearly all students became actively engaged, whether in listening to the story, answering questions about its content, or taking turns reading. This change demonstrates that the storytelling method successfully broadened the scope of participation, extending not only to students who were already interested in reading but also to those who had previously been less active.

The aspect of reading motivation, the data show a shift from a previously minimal habit to a more established one. Before the implementation of storytelling, students rarely visited the classroom reading corner on their own initiative. However, after the method was applied, students began to develop the habit of reading storybooks independently, even outside class

hours. This indicates that storytelling not only affects reading activities directed by the teacher but also fosters the growth of students' intrinsic motivation to read on their own accord. The aspect of classroom atmosphere, prior to the implementation of this method, classroom interaction tended to be one-directional, from teacher to students, with minimal discussion or question-and-answer exchanges. After storytelling was implemented, the classroom atmosphere became more interactive, marked by increased two-way interaction between teacher and students, such as students actively asking questions, responding to the story, and discussing its content. The four aspects presented in the table are interrelated and illustrate a single, cohesive process of change, in which increased enthusiasm drives greater participation, which in turn contributes to the growth of independent reading motivation, ultimately creating a more interactive classroom atmosphere that supports the overall learning process.

The findings of this study indicate that the storytelling method is effective in improving the reading interest of third-grade students at MI Teknologi BMT 03, particularly in terms of enthusiasm, participation, and reading motivation. Regarding the enthusiasm aspect, prior to the implementation of storytelling, students tended to be passive and showed little interest when reading texts in a conventional manner without variation in delivery. After storytelling was introduced, students began to display livelier attitudes, such as actively asking about the continuation of the story, requesting the teacher to repeat certain parts, and voluntarily volunteering to read. This shift indicates that interactive storytelling was able to stimulate students' curiosity and emotional engagement with the reading material. This result is consistent with (Artana, 2017), who states that storytelling activities can build children's emotional attachment to books and reading. This emotional closeness appears to have encouraged students to become more enthusiastic and voluntarily engaged in reading activities, without feeling burdened or forced. This finding is also in line with (Hartini, 2020), who found that active and interactive teaching strategies can significantly enhance young learners' language skills, as demonstrated in her study on improving English-speaking ability through active play strategies among kindergarten students. Although her study focused on speaking skills at the early childhood level rather than reading skills at the elementary level, both findings support the notion that interactive, activity-based approaches are more effective in stimulating children's language engagement than conventional, passive methods of instruction.

Regarding the participation aspect, prior to the implementation of storytelling, student involvement in reading activities was dominated only by a small group of students who already had a high level of reading interest from the outset. After the consistent application of storytelling, nearly all students became actively engaged, whether in listening to the story, answering questions about its content, or taking turns reading. This finding reinforces (Nurhayati, 2018) study, which demonstrated that the storytelling method is effective in fostering children's interest in reading. This can be explained by the fact that storytelling presents reading material in a livelier way using intonation, expression, and sometimes props making previously passive students more inclined to become actively involved. This change also indicates that storytelling successfully broadened the scope of participation, extending beyond students who were already interested in reading to include those who had previously been less engaged. This is further supported by (Fitri et al., 2022), who emphasized that children's language development is strongly influenced by the type of stimulation and interaction they receive in their learning environment. In their study on the effect of gadgets on

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language development in early childhood education, they noted that excessive passive exposure to digital devices may hinder active language engagement, whereas structured and interactive stimulation, such as that provided through storytelling tends to encourage more active participation in language-related activities.

Concerning the motivation aspect, the data show a shift from a previously minimal reading habit to a more established one. Before the implementation of storytelling, students rarely visited the classroom reading corner on their own initiative. However, after the method was applied, students began to develop the habit of reading storybooks independently, even outside class hours. The classroom atmosphere aspect, prior to the implementation of this method, classroom interaction tended to be one-directional, from teacher to students, with minimal discussion or question-and-answer exchanges. After storytelling was implemented, the classroom atmosphere became more interactive, marked by increased two-way interaction between teacher and students, such as students actively asking questions, responding to the story, and discussing its content. This finding reinforces (Jenkins, 2009) view that narrative has the power to create emotional engagement between audiences and content. When students feel emotionally engaged with the story being told, they tend to interact more actively, both with the teacher and with classmates. This finding is also in line with (O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015), who found that storytelling significantly increases student engagement and learning motivation.

The four aspects presented in the table are interrelated and illustrate a single, cohesive process of change, in which increased enthusiasm drives greater participation, which in turn contributes to the growth of independent reading motivation, ultimately creating a more interactive classroom atmosphere that supports the overall learning process. These results reinforce the argument that monotonous teaching methods are one of the main causes of students' low reading interest, as noted by (Ahmad, 2023). Conversely, the interactive and enjoyable nature of the storytelling method has proven to be an effective alternative solution to this problem, particularly at the elementary school level. This finding is also relevant to the study by (Astika et al., 2025), which emphasizes that a motivation-based approach combined with appropriate literacy assistance can effectively revive students' enthusiasm for reading.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the effect of the storytelling method on the reading interest of third-grade students at MI Teknologi BMT 03. Based on the results of classroom observations and interviews conducted over a two-month period involving 30 students, it can be concluded that the storytelling method has a significant positive effect on students' reading interest, particularly in terms of enthusiasm, participation, and motivation.

The findings show that prior to the implementation of storytelling, students tended to be passive, showed limited engagement in reading activities, and relied heavily on teacher-directed instruction. After the method was applied, students demonstrated greater enthusiasm by actively engaging with the stories presented, broader participation as nearly all students became involved in reading activities regardless of their initial interest level, and stronger intrinsic motivation as reflected in their growing habit of reading independently outside class hours. In addition, the storytelling method contributed to the creation of a more interactive classroom atmosphere, characterized by increased two-way communication between teacher and students.

These findings confirm that monotonous teaching methods are a major contributing factor to low reading interest among elementary school students, while interactive and engaging approaches such as storytelling offer an effective alternative to address this issue. The results of this study are consistent with previous research indicating that storytelling strengthens students' emotional connection to reading material, broadens active participation in the classroom, and fosters intrinsic motivation to read.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that elementary school teachers consider integrating storytelling techniques into reading instruction as a strategy to enhance student engagement and reading interest. Schools may also support this effort by providing adequate storytelling resources, such as illustrated books, props, or audiovisual media, to further enrich the learning experience. For future research, it is suggested that studies be conducted with larger and more diverse samples, across different grade levels, and using mixed-method approaches to obtain more comprehensive and generalizable findings regarding the effectiveness of storytelling in improving students' reading interest.

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