

The Role of Reading Corners in Encouraging Reading Literacy in Grade V Students at Muhammadiyah Robbani Elementary School

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Abstract. This research aims to describe the optimization strategies, describe constraints, and analyze the role of reading corners in encouraging reading literacy in grade V students of Muhammadiyah Robbani Elementary School. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach involving 20 Grade V Al Farabi students. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using reduction, display, and verification. Reading literacy was assessed through six indicators: frequency, duration, engagement in discussions, material variety, interest and motivation, and participation. Reading corner aspects were examined based on eight characteristics: design, book collection, location, literacy activities, teacher support, parental involvement, comfort, and accessibility. Findings revealed strategies to optimize reading corners, such as parental involvement in creating and donating books. Constraints included limited book collections and differences in students' abilities and interests, making it difficult for teachers to facilitate discussions. Overall, reading corners play an essential role in promoting reading literacy by providing convenient classroom access and fostering engagement. The study presents several key implications: (1) reading corners represent a cost-effective and scalable approach to promoting reading literacy; (2) educators are encouraged to design reading corners that are both visually engaging and inclusive in terms of content and learning preferences; (3) future initiatives should focus on enriching book collections and incorporating interactive, literacy-based activities; (4) policymakers should provide sustained support to schools by ensuring access to adequate and culturally relevant reading materials; and (5) the development of early reading literacy skills should be prioritized as a foundation for long-term academic success.

Keywords: Elementary Education; Grade V Student; Literacy Program; Reading Corner; Reading Literacy.

1. Introduction

Reading literacy is a foundational element in modern education and a key determinant of student success. In the global context, countries with high literacy rates demonstrate better academic achievements and economic productivity. However, Indonesia still struggles with low reading interest despite having supportive infrastructures. The Ministry of Education and Culture has identified reading literacy as one of the six fundamental literacies. According to the results of the Most Literate Nation in the World study conducted by Central Connecticut State University in March 2016, Indonesia ranked 60th out of 61 countries based on reading interest levels. This position placed Indonesia just below Thailand, which was ranked 59th, and slightly above Botswana, which was in the 61st position. Interestingly, in terms of literacy support infrastructure, Indonesia is actually above several European countries (Marlia & Si, 2025). These data indicate that the culture of reading books has not yet taken strong root in Indonesian society. This condition poses a challenge for the government, schools, educators, and parents to promote reading habits.

Reading is not merely a routine activity but a part of reading literacy that plays a significant role in broadening life perspectives. For elementary school students, fostering a reading culture needs to begin from an early age. This habit is expected to form positive behavior that continues to grow as they mature. This is in line with Hidayat's (2025) opinion that cultivating

reading habits in students aims to help them develop reading and writing skills optimally. Students with good reading literacy are expected to develop critical thinking skills and the ability to solve problems. Therefore, understanding reading literacy becomes a fundamental basis in developing students' potential and skills across various fields of life.

One of the innovative efforts to improve reading literacy is through the creation of classroom reading corners. Reading corners are part of the implementation of the school literacy program aimed at increasing students' reading interest. Literacy campaigns in schools are directed at expanding literacy activities, such as the establishment of reading corners and other supporting programs (Desysetyowati et al., 2023). These spaces provide accessible and engaging reading environments for students, especially in elementary schools. This study explores the implementation of reading corners in SD Muhammadiyah Robbani and evaluates their effectiveness in promoting literacy among Grade V students.

1.1. Problem Statement

Although schools are equipped with libraries and reading programs, many students still lack consistent engagement with reading materials. This issue is particularly evident in elementary education, where the habit of reading should ideally begin. The main identified problem is low reading literacy, particularly in the classroom, among students with limited reading motivation, varying reading abilities, and limited access to reading resources (Aprianti & Hasriani, 2025; Desysetyowati et al., 2023; Purningsih, 2025).

These problems have significant effects on students' academic development. Without early reading engagement, students may struggle to build essential literacy skills that are critical for learning across subjects. Weak literacy affects not only their comprehension but also their critical thinking and ability to process information. According to the results of the Most Literate Nation in the World in 2016 study by Central Connecticut State University ranked Indonesia 60th out of 61 countries based on reading interest levels, revealing a national crisis in reading habits (Marlia & Si, 2025).

This research is important to investigate because reading literacy is a foundational competency that supports success in all learning areas. Early interventions, especially those based in classrooms, offer the most strategic opportunity to reverse negative reading trends. In this context, the reading corner serves as an affordable and accessible literacy strategy which, if optimized, can play a significant role in promoting students' engagement and reading habits.

1.2. Related Research

Reading literacy continues to be a significant concern in primary education, both in Indonesia and globally. One commonly adopted strategy is the establishment of reading corners within classrooms. In Indonesia, several studies have examined the effectiveness of this approach in enhancing students' reading interest. Puspitasari and Wahyuni (2021) further argued that beyond physical design, effective management and support from schools and parents are critical to the success of reading corners. In a more digital context, Purningsih (2020) discovered that incorporating digital reading materials into the reading corner also increases students' interest in reading, especially among those less inclined toward print books.

Internationally, similar approaches have been studied and developed in various models. Bingham et al. (2021) reported that well structured reading corners, including categorization of books by difficulty level and student interest, can significantly enhance phonological awareness and reading comprehension. Skae et al. (2020) addressed disparities in access to reading materials across schools of differing socioeconomic backgrounds and found that students with access to well-equipped reading corners tend to achieve higher literacy scores. A study from Ethiopia by Tadesse et al. (2020) even showed that reading corners can remain effective in improving literacy in resource-constrained schools, provided there is strong collaboration between schools and local communities. In Turkey, Yildiz (2022) demonstrated that routine activities integrated with the reading corner, such as book discussions and daily

reading journals, significantly improve vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension among children aged 7 to 9.

Based on this review, the present study offers novelty by positioning the reading corner not merely as a learning aid, but as part of a collaborative ecosystem involving both teachers and parents. It also integrates a reflective approach through the use of a "reading star journal," which encourages students' intrinsic motivation while creating a space for recognizing their literacy development. Furthermore, a contextual analysis is conducted through in-depth qualitative methods, highlighting the real challenges faced by elementary schools in developing reading corners and identifying adaptive strategies that emerge organically from the interactions among teachers, students, and parents. Such an approach is rarely found in existing literature, which is largely quantitative or experimental in nature, thus offering a new contribution to the understanding of reading corner implementation within specific social and cultural contexts, particularly in Indonesia.

1.3. Research Objectives

This study aims to: (1) describe strategies to optimize reading corners, (2) describe constraints reading corners, and (3) analyze role reading corners encouraging reading literacy among Grade V students at SD Muhammadiyah Robbani. The study is expected to inform best practices for schools seeking to improve literacy outcomes using existing classroom resources.

2. Theoretical Framework

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) defines Reading literacy as the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. Readers can construct meaning from texts in a variety of forms. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment (Araújo and Costa, 2023). Furthermore, according to Robi and Abidin (2020), reading literacy encompasses not only the basic ability to decode written texts but also the higher-order skills needed to critically engage with content and solve problems. Reading literacy plays a crucial role in academic achievement and lifelong learning.

The reading corner, according to Ginting and Yanti (2025), is a place located in the corner of the room which is equipped with a collection of books. This space is intended to foster students' reading interest and create an environment conducive to independent and collaborative literacy activities. Research has shown that an attractive, strategically placed reading corner can stimulate students' curiosity, extend their reading duration, and improve comprehension skills.

Reading literacy can be measured through several key indicators. Reading frequency and duration are crucial, as students who read more often and spend longer periods reading demonstrate stronger comprehension, critical thinking, and vocabulary mastery (Priasti & Suyatno, 2021; Prayoga et al., 2023). Engagement in reading discussions also plays an important role in deepening analysis and fostering active interaction with texts (Rohim & Rahmawati, 2020). The diversity of reading materials contributes to broader perspectives and the development of analytical and reflective skills (Ruzain et al., 2023). Moreover, reading interest and motivation encourage students to integrate reading into their daily routines, making literacy practices more sustainable (Aryani & Purnomo, 2024). Finally, active participation in literacy activities and reading communities strengthens the cultivation of a long-lasting reading culture and enhances overall literacy skills (Irmayanti & Mustiningsih, 2025).

In addition to these reading literacy indicators, the effectiveness of reading corners can also be understood through their specific characteristics. The characteristics of a reading corner according to Dhiu et al. (2024, p. 859) are: (1) an attractive room design, (2) a diverse and age-appropriate book collection, (3) a strategic location, (4) the presence of literacy activities, (5) articipation from teachers and parents. Meanwhile, the characteristics of a reading corner according to Setiawati & Mahmud (2020, p. 91) are: (1) a comfortable

environment.n interesting book collection, (2) easy access, (3) teacher support, (4) the presence of literacy programs.

The theoretical foundation of this research is based on constructivist learning theories which emphasize the role of the environment and student autonomy in building knowledge. By integrating reading corners into classroom settings, students are provided with a semi-structured space where they can actively engage with texts, collaborate with peers, and receive support from teachers thus fostering a community of practice centered around literacy.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the strategies, constraints, and role of reading corners in promoting reading literacy. The purpose of qualitative descriptive research, as explained by Moleong (2021), is to provide a comprehensive and in-depth portrayal of a phenomenon by uncovering the meaning behind human behavior, experiences, and social interactions within their natural context. Rather than attempting to generalize the findings, this approach emphasizes the understanding of contextual realities through rich and detailed data. In qualitative descriptive research, data are collected and analyzed in the form of words (written) and human actions. The researcher is able to directly observe and experience events within the natural environment, thereby allowing for a deeper understanding of reading literacy practices in the classroom through the role of the reading corner. This approach was selected because it allows the researcher to capture subtle meanings, values, and lived experiences that cannot be conveyed through quantitative data. The research was conducted as a case study at SD Muhammadiyah Robbani, focusing on one specific class Grade V Al Farabi.

3.2. Participants

In this study, the sampling technique used is purposive sampling. According to Mulisa (2022), purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique in which research subjects are selected because they have specific characteristics that match the research objectives. The research involved 20 Grade V Al Farabi students, the classroom teacher of Grade V Al Farabi, and the principal of Muhammadiyah Robbani Elementary School (Table 1).

Tabel 1. Characteristic, Frekuensi, and Presentase of the Participants

No	Partisipants	Gender	Age	Frekuensi	Presentase
1	Grade V Al Farabi Students	Girl	9-10	12	60%
		Boy	9-10	8	40%
		Total		20	100%
2	Classroom Teacher of Grade V Al Farabi	Female	28	1	100%
		Total		1	100%
3	School Principal	Female	41	1	100%
		Total		1	100%

These students were selected using purposive sampling due to their consistent exposure to the reading corner program in their class. The participants showed diverse interests and abilities in reading, making them suitable for observing the role of the reading corner. The study also included interviews with the classroom teacher and the school principal.

3.3. Data Collection

Data were collected through three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations focused on student behavior and reading patterns during their interaction with the reading corner. Interviews were conducted with the classroom teacher and principal to gain insights into the program's strategies and challenges. Documentation

included poster, reading logs, student journals, and records of books available in the reading corner.

In developing the instrument for measuring aspects of reading literacy, the following indicators were used (Table 2).

Table 2. Reading Literacy Indicators

No	Reading Literacy Indicator
1	Reading Frequency
2	Reading Duration
3	Engagement in Reading Literacy Discussions
4	Variety of Reading Materials
5	Interest and Motivation in Reading
6	Participation in Literacy Activities

Source: Researcher's Processed Results

The aspects of reading corner analysis were measured using the following characteristics (Table 3).

Table 3. Characteristics of a Reading Corner

No	Characteristics of the Reading Corner
1	Attractive Room Design
2	Diverse and Age-Appropriate Books
3	Strategic Location With Easy Access
4	Presence of Literacy Activities
5	Teacher Support
6	Parental Participation
7	Comfortable Environment
8	Interesting Book Collection

Source: Researcher's Processed Results

3.4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's model which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles and Huberman, 2020). Relevant information was organized thematically based on the study's objectives. This facilitated identification of common patterns and critical differences in how students engaged with the reading corner. The following is a detailed explanation of each stage in the data analysis process.

3.4.1. Data Reduction

At this stage, raw data from field notes were selected, focused, simplified, and categorized. The researcher retained only data relevant to the research objective, which was to understand the role of the reading corner in enhancing reading literacy among Grade V Al Farabi students. Data reduction helped provide a clearer and more directed overview for the next stage of analysis.

3.4.2. Data Display

After being reduced, the data were presented in the form of narratives, tables, or thematic diagrams. The data were organized systematically to facilitate the identification of patterns, such as students' reading habits and the contribution of the reading corner to their engagement. Data visualization enabled the researcher to better understand the phenomena occurring in the classroom.

3.4.3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

Preliminary conclusions were drawn based on patterns that emerged from the displayed data. However, since the study is qualitative in nature, these conclusions remained tentative and were subject to verification using additional data. The researcher continuously reviewed the

consistency of the findings until valid conclusions were obtained that addressed the research questions regarding the role of the reading corner in supporting students' reading literacy.

3.5. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the trustworthiness of data in this study, the approach proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) was employed, encompassing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was maintained through data triangulation involving interviews with the school principal of Muhammadiyah Rabbani Elementary School, the Grade V Al Farabi class teacher, and Grade V Al Farabi students, as well as observations of students' literacy activities in the reading corner and supporting school documents. The researcher also conducted *member checking* and was directly involved in the field to ensure that the meanings communicated by participants were accurately captured, particularly within the context of collaborative implementation of the reading corner.

Transferability was reinforced by providing a detailed description of the school setting, student characteristics, the specific form and use of the reading corner, and the interaction patterns among the school principal, teacher, and students. This enables the findings to be applied in other elementary schools with similar characteristics. Dependability was ensured by developing a complete audit trail of the research process, including instrument development and the stages of data analysis. The validity of this process was strengthened through peer discussions with experts familiar with children's literacy development in primary education.

Confirmability was achieved through reflective journal documentation throughout the research process, as well as clear links between data interpretations and field-based quotes. Additionally, instrument validation was conducted by two experts in literacy education and qualitative methodology, who evaluated the alignment of the interview guides and observation checklists with the study's objectives. Their input helped refine the instruments to more effectively explore the role of the reading corner in fostering students' reading literacy through collaborative strategies between teachers and parents within the classroom setting.

4. Findings

4.1. The Strategy for Strengthening Reading Literacy through Student Activities in the Reading Corner

Based on interviews with the principal of SD Muhammadiyah Robbani as well as interviews and observations with the fifth-grade teacher of class V Al Farabi, several strategies have been found for strengthening reading literacy through student activities in the reading corner. Both the teachers and school administrators strive to promote reading literacy through the role of the reading corner.

4.1.1. Reading Frequency

Every morning during the Dhuha Prayer, Memorization, and Motivation (Sholat Dhuha, Hafalan, Motivasi/SDHM) session, the teacher always motivates students to read more often, including encouraging them to visit the reading corner. This is one of the teacher's strategies to increase students' reading frequency in the reading corner. As a result, students become more accustomed to reading, especially in the reading corner.

4.1.2. Reading Duration

The teacher also pays attention to the reading duration by allocating specific times for students to read: during the first break, the second break, and during their free time. As stated by the fifth-grade teacher of Al Farabi class:

"We allocate reading time for students during the first break for 20 minutes, the second break for 30 minutes, and during any free time for a total of 15 minutes." (Informant 1: May 24, 2025).

The total reading time provided is around one hour. In addition, there is a dedicated literacy subject which also utilizes the reading corner as reading time.

4.1.3. Engagement in Reading Literacy Discussions

During literacy and Indonesian language lessons, students are encouraged to discuss books they have read from the reading corner. The teacher directly supervises student engagement during these book discussions. One literacy activity involves each student reading a book and then presenting the content, including characters and moral messages, in front of the class. Other students are allowed to respond. Though this book discussion activity doesn't occur frequently, the effort to facilitate reading literacy discussions still exists.

4.1.4. Variety of Reading Materials

The types of reading materials in the reading corner are diverse, including short stories, fables, prophet stories, and encyclopedias. Teachers and school principals collaborate with parents in providing books for the reading corner. Parents can also contribute as book donors, offering both fiction and non-fiction reading materials (Endiyani, 2024). Each parent donates one book for the reading corner, resulting in a diverse collection of reading materials.

4.1.5. Interest and Motivation in Reading

Teachers continuously strive to foster interest and motivation in students by giving encouragement during the SDHM sessions. There is also a "Student Star Journal" which motivates and increases students' reading interest. For every book a student reads, they receive a star. Stars can also be earned through other achievements. The reading corner also features motivational reading posters to inspire students.

4.1.6. Participation in Literacy Activities

Literacy activities in the reading corner typically include reading books during breaks and specific lessons that incorporate reading corner materials. During literacy activities, teachers guide and direct students to participate actively and stay focused. As stated by the fifth-grade teacher of Al Farabi class:

"Literacy reading activities in class V Al Farabi mainly involve reading books in the reading corner during breaks and certain lessons. We guide and direct students to participate actively and stay focused during literacy reading activities." (Informant 1: May 24, 2025)

4.2. The Strategy for Optimizing the Reading Corner to Support Students' Reading Literacy

Based on interviews with the principal of SD Muhammadiyah Robbani as well as interviews and observations with the fifth-grade teacher of class V Al Farabi, several strategies have been found for optimizing the reading corner to support students' reading literacy. Both the teachers and school administrators strive to optimize the use of the reading corner in reading literacy activities.

4.2.1. Attractive Room Design

The reading corner in class V Al Farabi is decorated with attractive ornaments such as trees and motivational quotes. The design of the reading corner was made by the students' parents. The school has a program that involves parents in designing and decorating the reading corner. At the beginning of each academic year, parents are invited to collaborate in setting up the reading corner.

4.2.2. Diverse and Age-Appropriate Books

Teachers cooperate with parents in providing books for the reading corner by encouraging them to donate books. The donated books are quite diverse in type and genre. Teachers ensure that the books are age-appropriate by screening them before placing them in the reading corner.

4.2.3. Strategic Location with Easy Access

Parents also assist in choosing the reading corner's location with teacher approval. The reading corner in class V Al Farabi is strategically located in the back corner of the classroom. The space is relatively wide and well-lit as it is near a window. This strategic location makes it easier for students to access the reading corner, especially during their free time as they often go to the back of the class.

4.2.4. Presence of Literacy Activities

The reading corner of class V Al Farabi supports literacy activities by encouraging students to read during their free time and breaks. One of the reading corner's functions is to optimize students' free time for reading (Ida et al., 2025). Teachers also utilize the reading corner during certain subjects like literacy and Indonesian language classes.

4.2.5. Teacher Support

Teacher support is essential in managing the reading corner. Teachers are always involved in overseeing the reading corner's management, offering suggestions during the parents' design process, and encouraging students to maintain cleanliness and order. Classroom duty students are tasked with cleaning and tidying the reading corner. Teachers and school supervisors also conduct evaluations to continuously improve the reading corner's quality.

4.2.6. Parental Participation

Teachers and school principals run programs to encourage parental involvement in managing the reading corner. Parents assist in designing, decorating, and donating books at the beginning of every academic year, as stated by the principal:

"We have a program that involves parents in designing, decorating, and donating books. This program is carried out at the beginning of each academic year." (Informant 2: May 26, 2025)

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in managing the reading corner of class V Al Farabi.

4.2.7. Comfortable Environment

The reading corner environment is located within the classroom. During break times, the classroom is relatively quiet, providing a comfortable space for reading. Together with the parents, the teacher placed the reading corner at the back of the class and provided carpets and a table to enhance comfort.

4.2.8. Interesting Book Collection

The book collection in the reading corner is sourced from the school principal and teachers' program that encourages book donations from parents. Teachers suggest suitable types of books to ensure the collection is appealing. Some parents bring illustrated books or books that match students' interests.

4.3. The Constraints in Strengthening Reading Literacy through Student Activities in the Reading Corner

Based on interviews with the principal of SD Muhammadiyah Robbani as well as interviews and observations of the fifth-grade teacher of the Al Farabi class, there are challenges faced in strengthening reading literacy through student activities in the reading corner. Both the teacher and the school sometimes encounter obstacles in promoting reading literacy through the role of the reading corner.

4.3.1. Reading Frequency

In increasing the frequency of students reading often, there are challenges. Fifth grade students of Al Farabi have different abilities and interests, so not all of them frequently read during breaks and free time even though they have been motivated by the teacher. Furthermore, when all the books in the reading corner have been read, students start to stop

reading there because there are only 20 books in the reading corner of the Al Farabi fifth grade class, as conveyed by the fifth grade teacher of Al Farabi class:

"The abilities and interests of students vary, so not all students often read books even though we have motivated them. The books in the reading corner are sometimes all read because there are only 20 books, so students in Al Farabi class begin to rarely read." (Informant 1: May 24, 2025)

4.3.2. Reading Duration

Teachers do not face many difficulties in managing students' reading duration in the reading corner because reading time is allocated during the first break, the second break, and students' free time. However, there is no specific time dedicated for all students to read books. Break times are also often used for buying food and eating lunch, so students only read briefly during breaks. All students reading books simultaneously usually only occurs during certain subjects when the teacher asks all students to read books from the reading corner.

4.3.3. Engagement in Reading Literacy Discussions

Student involvement in book discussions is limited due to a lack of literacy discussion activities. Teachers only facilitate literacy discussions by discussing the books read during literacy lessons and Indonesian language lessons. Outside of these two subjects, there are no literacy discussions. Student ability also becomes a challenge in participating in discussions because most fifth grade students in Al Farabi are still in the early stages of reading and need teacher guidance to understand the content of books.

4.3.4. Variety of Reading Materials

The variety of reading materials in the reading corner is quite diverse, but the total number of books is only around twenty. These books are donations from parents, with each parent contributing at least one book. This causes difficulties for teachers in providing a very diverse book collection because the donations from parents often include multiple copies of the same type of book.

4.3.5. Interest and Motivation in Reading

Not all students have an interest or motivation to read. Teachers face challenges in fostering and increasing students' motivation because students have different interests and motivations, and not all students like reading. Most fifth grade students in Al Farabi prefer active and physical activities, so for students to sit quietly and read is quite a challenge for teachers in cultivating interest and motivation for reading in the reading corner, as stated by the fifth grade teacher of Al Farabi class:

"Our challenge in fostering interest and increasing students' motivation to read comes from students having varying levels of motivation and interest; not all students enjoy reading. Most students in fifth grade Al Farabi prefer activities that involve moving actively rather than reading quietly." (Informant 1: May 24, 2025)

4.3.6. Participation in Literacy Activities

Student participation in literacy reading activities in the reading corner sometimes encounters difficulties. Different interests and abilities among students sometimes overwhelm teachers in making students active in literacy reading activities in the reading corner. Some students, even though motivated and guided to read in the reading corner during breaks, rarely read there.

4.4. The Constraints in Optimizing the Reading Corner to Support Students' Reading Literacy

Based on interviews with the principal of SD Muhammadiyah Robbani as well as interviews and observations of the fifth-grade teacher of the Al Farabi class, there are challenges faced in optimizing the reading corner to support the reading literacy of fifth-grade Al Farabi students. Both the teacher and the school sometimes encounter obstacles in using the reading corner for reading literacy activities.

4.4.1. Attractive Room Design

The reading corner in fifth grade Al Farabi has an attractive design, but in creating it, teachers and parents face some time constraints. Although parents help in designing the reading corner, there are still some difficulties, namely in scheduling. Parents are busy working, so designing the reading corner can only be done on holidays.

4.4.2. Diverse and Age-Appropriate Books

In providing a variety of books appropriate for the students' age, teachers involve parents to donate one book each. Teachers face difficulties in making the reading corner very diverse because book donations from parents may include many of the same types. Teachers only suggest types of books since they cannot force the types of books parents donate.

4.4.3. Strategic Location with Easy Access

The determination of the reading corner location in Al Farabi class does not face many obstacles. Teachers cooperate well in deciding the location of the reading corner. Parents have appropriately chosen the location of the reading corner so that it is strategic and easily accessible for students to read. The only challenge is that some students still rarely read even though the reading corner is very close to them.

4.4.4. Presence of Literacy Activities

Literacy activities have already been conducted in the reading corner of Al Farabi class. However, teachers face difficulties in organizing consistent and dedicated literacy reading activities because they lack time and ideas to conduct them. Literacy activities mainly consist of reading during breaks and free time. In addition, literacy activities during certain subjects use the reading corner as part of learning activities, as stated by the principal:

"Teachers face challenges in organizing consistent and dedicated literacy reading activities in the reading corner because there is no time and ideas. So, literacy reading activities in the reading corner are only reading during breaks and during certain lessons using the books in the reading corner." (Informant 2: May 26, 2025)

4.4.5. Teacher Support

Teachers always support the management of the reading corner. However, there are challenges in maintaining the reading corner so that it remains tidy and comfortable. Fifth grade students in Al Farabi have often been asked to help tidy and clean the reading corner to keep it well maintained, but this is not done consistently by the students. The class cleaning duty officers also sometimes neglect cleaning the reading corner area.

4.4.6. Parental Participation

Parents actively participate in managing the reading corner. Teachers do not experience many difficulties in encouraging parents to participate in the reading corner. The only challenge is scheduling time to create and design the reading corner. Parents are busy working, so they have to find free time, usually on holidays.

4.4.7. Comfortable Environment

The reading corner environment is inside the classroom. Teachers face difficulties in making the reading corner environment comfortable for students to read, especially in maintaining a quiet classroom atmosphere. The Al Farabi class is sometimes still noisy, making students uncomfortable reading in the reading corner. Students who are not reading sometimes play inside the classroom and talk loudly.

4.4.8. Interesting Book Collection

The reading corner in Grade V Al Farabi class has an interesting collection. However, compared to the school library, the reading corner is less attractive and has fewer book collections than the school library. Teachers face difficulties in presenting an attractive book collection in the reading corner. Book donations from parents are only suggested by book

type, but parents cannot be forced to donate interesting books. Sometimes the donated books are old rather than new.

4.5. The Role of Reading Corners in Encouraging Reading Literacy

Based on interviews, observations, and documentation at SD Muhammadiyah Robbani, the reading corner for Grade V Al Farabi has an important role in encouraging reading literacy. Both teachers and school staff sometimes encounter obstacles in utilizing the reading corner for reading literacy activities.

4.5.1. Reading Frequency

The reading corner has an important role in encouraging students' reading literacy through reading frequency. The reading corner is often visited by students for reading during the first recess, second recess, and during free time while waiting for the teacher to start the lesson. The reading corner is visited by 1 to 4 students almost every day. Compared to reading in the library, students more often read in the reading corner. In addition, during certain lessons, books from the reading corner are also frequently used as reading materials. The reading frequency in reading corner can be seen in Figure 1.

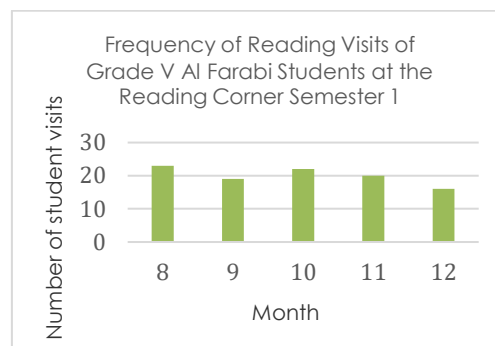


Figure 1. Student Reading Frequency in the Reading Corner for Semester 1

Source: Student Visit Book of Grade V Al Farabi to the Reading Corner

This frequent use is supported by data. In Semester 1, the reading corner was visited by 23 students in August, 19 in September, 22 in October, 20 in November, and 16 in December. These numbers, based on the Student Visit Book of Grade V Al Farabi, reflect consistent student engagement. A high reading frequency also contributes to a broader vocabulary mastery and a deeper ability to understand information (Priasti & Suyatno, 2021).

4.5.2. Reading Duration

In addition to frequency, the provision of reading duration also plays a crucial role in supporting students' reading literacy. Grade V Al Farabi students are provided reading opportunities three times a day: during the first recess (20 minutes), second recess (30 minutes), and an additional 10 minutes of free time, totaling approximately 1 hour daily. However, actual reading duration averages only about 30 minutes per day, indicating underutilization of the provided time. According to Prayoga et al. (2023), reading duration significantly affects literacy outcomes, with students who read for over 60 minutes daily showing a 33% improvement in reading literacy.

4.5.3. Engagement in Reading Literacy Discussions

Not only does the reading corner support reading duration, it also fosters student engagement through reading discussions. During literacy and Indonesian language lessons students are involved in reading literacy discussion activities in the reading. Discussion activities are usually conducted by having students read their respective books, then share the content such as characters, storyline, and message. Then the teacher invites other students to respond to the content presented by their peers. According to Rohim and Rahmwati (2020), reading discussions are important in reading literacy because they allow students to share

understanding, deepen analysis, and enhance their engagement with the material studied in each subject (Rohim and Rahmawati, 2020). As shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Book Discussion in the Reading Corner of Class V Al Farabi

4.5.4. Variety of Reading Materials

Equally important is the variety of reading materials provided. In the Grade V Al Farabi reading corner, various types of books are available, including short stories, fairy tales, stories of prophets, knowledge books, encyclopedias, the Qur'an, and comics. Students read almost all of these materials, with the greatest interest shown in fairy tales and short stories. Some students have even finished reading the entire collection. Overall, the reading materials in the corner are quite diverse. According to Ruzain et al. (2023), the variety of reading types also plays a role in increasing one's knowledge and critical thinking skills.

4.5.5. Interest and Motivation in Reading

This diversity is further supported by students' interest and motivation in reading. Some students show a strong interest in reading and frequently use the reading corner, especially at the beginning of the school year when it is still visually appealing and offers new books. Their enthusiasm is further supported by the use of the student star journal. Grade V Al Farabi students demonstrate considerable interest and motivation in reading at the reading corner. High interest in reading can encourage someone to make reading part of their daily routine, so this activity can continue to develop consistently (Aryani & Purnomo, 2024).

4.5.6. Participation in Literacy Activities

Moreover, the reading corner promotes literacy through active participation in literacy activities. Grade V Al Farabi students actively participate in reading literacy activities by utilizing the reading corner during recess, free time, literacy lessons, and certain subjects. The reading corner supports teachers in providing books, and students consistently engage in reading activities during lessons. Irmayanti and Mustiningsih (2025), explains that active participation in literacy activities and reading communities plays a vital role in fostering a sustainable reading culture and enhancing literacy skills.

4.5.7. Attractive Room Design

An important factor that draws students to the reading corner is its attractive room design. The Grade V Al Farabi reading corner has an attractive design, winning a best reading corner award. It is decorated with trees, flowers, motivational posters, and wall ornaments, complemented by hanging shelves, tables, and carpets. The appealing design strongly encourages students' interest and motivates them to read there. According to the students, the design of the Grade V Al Farabi reading corner is aesthetic, as expressed by one student:

"This reading corner is aesthetic, so it's comfortable to read here, Sis." (Informant 3: May 26, 2025)

The design of the Grade V Al Farabi reading corner is very attractive and has even won the best reading corner award. An attractive reading corner design is very important to create a pleasant atmosphere and encourage students' interest in reading (Dihu et al., 2024). The attractive design of the reading corner can be seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Class V Al Farabi Reading Corner

4.5.8. Diverse and Age-Appropriate Books

Along with visual appeal, the reading corner also benefits from offering age-appropriate reading materials. The Grade V Al Farabi reading corner provides a diverse collection of age-appropriate books, including stories, knowledge books, the Qur'an, and comics, which are actively read by students. This aligns with the opinion of Dhiu et al. (2024) that the book collection in a reading corner should include various genres such as picture stories, fables, popular science, and activity books, and be adjusted to the age and comprehension level of the students.

4.5.9. Strategic Location with Easy Access

Another strength lies in the strategic location with easy access of the reading corner. The reading corner is located inside the classroom, specifically in the back corner near the window, so the lighting is good. Students find it easy to read books because the location is strategic and easily accessible inside the classroom.

"The location of the reading corner is strategic, situated at the back of the classroom with good lighting because it is near the window. Students find it very easy to access the reading corner since it is located inside the classroom." (Informant 1: May 24, 2025)

The location of the Grade V Al Farabi reading corner is strategic and provides easy access for students to read. The reading corner should be placed in a location easily reachable by students, for example, inside the classroom or in common school areas that are frequently passed by students (Dhiu et al., 2024). The strategic location of the reading corner is illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Location of the reading corner for class V Al Farabi

4.5.10. Presence of Literacy Activities

Beyond infrastructure, the reading corner is enhanced through the presence of structured literacy activities. Grade V Al Farabi students engage in literacy activities during breaks, free time, literacy lessons, and certain subjects, where teachers often encourage them to read and use books as learning resources in the reading corner. The presence of a reading corner should be complemented with structured literacy programs such as reading together, writing reviews, retelling the content of books, or reading competitions (Dhiu et al., 2024). As depicted in Figure 5,



Figure 5. Reading Literacy Activities in the Class V Al Farabi Reading Corner

4.5.11. Teacher Support

The success of the reading corner is also made possible by strong teacher support. The teacher monitors and provides input during the creation of the reading corner by the students' parents, as stated by the principal:

"The Grade V Al Farabi teacher always supports the reading corner of Grade V Al Farabi. They monitor when the students' parents create the reading corner and also provide input." (Informant 2: May 26, 2025)

The Grade V Al Farabi teacher supports the reading corner's management by guiding students to maintain its cleanliness and conducting regular evaluations with the school supervisor. According to Setiawati & Mahmud (2020), teachers have an important role in ensuring that the reading corner functions optimally as a means to improve students' literacy. The teacher's support is also reflected through regular supervision, as shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Supervisor's Evaluation of the Class V Al Farabi Reading Corner

4.5.12. Parental Participation

In addition to teacher support, parental participation plays a vital role. Parents of Grade V Al Farabi students actively support the reading corner by helping with its creation, design, book donations, and ongoing management, reflecting their strong enthusiasm and participation. When children see their parents actively supporting literacy activities, they are more encouraged to imitate and regard reading as a valuable activity (Dhiu et al., 2024).

4.5.13. Comfortable Environment

Another key aspect is the comfortable environment. The classroom situation during breaks is sometimes not very noisy, allowing students to read quietly. The presence of carpets and tables in the reading corner adds to the comfort of the students while reading. The environment of the Grade V Al Farabi reading corner, which is located inside the classroom, is quite comfortable for students to read. If students feel physically and emotionally comfortable in the environment, they tend to stay longer, focus better, and be motivated to make reading a part of their daily activities (Setiawati & Mahmud, 2020).

4.5.14. Interesting Book Collection

The reading corner is also able to attract students through its interesting book collection. In the 2024/2025 academic year, the Grade V Al Farabi reading corner, supported by parental donations, holds about 20 books. The book collection ranges from illustrated fairy tales, interesting short stories, illustrated knowledge books, to mini Qur'ans, which have successfully attracted students' interest, with some reading the entire collection, as shown in Figure 7. Books that have attractive illustrations, communicative language, and topics relevant to children's daily lives are more likely to spark their interest in reading (Setiawati & Mahmud, 2020).



Figure 7. Book Collection in the Grade V Al Farabi Reading Corner

5. Discussion

The study reaffirms the importance of the role of reading corners in promoting reading literacy among fifth-grade elementary school students. In terms of strategies, the teacher integrated the reading corner into Indonesian language lessons, provided dedicated time for reading, and engaged parents through book donations while involving students in decorating the reading space. In terms of constraints, the limited collection and variety of reading materials, along with differences in students' abilities and interests, emerged as challenges that must be addressed for the reading corner to remain effective. Finally, in terms of its role, the reading corner proved to enhance students' reading frequency, duration, and engagement, while also fostering positive character traits such as responsibility and perseverance.

These findings are consistent with previous research and theories on literacy development. The strategies for managing the reading corner align with Priasti and Suyatno (2021), who emphasized the importance of structured literacy activities in improving comprehension and vocabulary. Parental involvement supports the work of Puspitasari and Wahyuni (2021), who argued that school, family collaboration is essential for sustaining literacy programs. Similarly, the constraint of limited book collections echoes the findings of Dhiu et al. (2024), who noted that a lack of variety in reading materials can reduce student motivation. The role of the reading corner in shaping reading habits and student character also resonates with Robi and Abidin (2020), who viewed literacy as a medium for character formation. From the perspective of constructivist theory, these strategies, constraints, and roles illustrate how the reading corner functions as a scaffolded environment where students construct meaning through authentic practice, social interaction, and teacher guidance.

While much of the evidence is consistent with previous studies, some differences also emerged. Marlia and Si (2025), for example, argued that passive literacy environments are less suitable for kinesthetic learners. In contrast, this study showed that students were more engaged when the reading corner was supported by a structured schedule and appealing design. This suggests that the effectiveness of the reading corner depends heavily on contextual factors such as teacher facilitation and the diversity of reading resources. Furthermore, while Setiawati and Mahmud (2020) emphasized the role of physical design in encouraging reading, the current findings indicate that design alone is insufficient without active facilitation and continuous renewal of resources.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the sample was limited to a single school, which reduces the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study relied solely on qualitative data, limiting the ability to measure literacy development quantitatively. Third, variations in teacher implementation and student backgrounds were not controlled, which may have influenced the results.

The implications of this study remain valuable. Reading corners offer a cost-effective and scalable solution to enhance reading literacy, particularly when integrated into the daily learning environment and supported by all stakeholders. To maximize their impact, educators should design reading corners that are not only visually appealing but also inclusive in terms of content variety and learning styles. Future initiatives should include enriching book collections, implementing interactive or movement-based literacy activities, and providing structured opportunities for meaningful reading discussions. In addition, policymakers and curriculum developers should support schools in providing adequate and culturally relevant reading materials, in order to cultivate strong reading literacy skills from an early age.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the application of constructivist learning theory in the context of reading corners in elementary schools. By examining strategies, constraints, and roles, the study demonstrates how a physical literacy environment, when combined with structured routines and collaborative support, can embody the principles of scaffolding, active meaning-making, and social interaction. This reinforces the view that reading corners should not be seen merely as supplementary spaces, but rather as integral components of constructivist-based literacy ecosystems that foster both literacy skills and character formation.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the strategies, constraints, and overall role of classroom reading corners in encouraging reading literacy among Grade V students at SD Muhammadiyah Robbani. The findings indicate that reading corners has an important role in supporting students' reading habits when managed effectively. Strategies such as embedding reading time into daily routines, involving parents in both book provision and corner design, and creating an accessible, comfortable space have proven to increase students' engagement and motivation to read.

However, despite these positive outcomes, several challenges were identified. Among them are the limited variety of book collections, differences in student reading interest and ability, and the lack of consistent literacy discussion activities. These constraints suggest that while reading corners are a valuable tool, their success depends heavily on continuous support, careful planning, and collaboration between teachers, parents, and school leaders.

This study also has its limitations. The research was conducted in a single classroom context using a qualitative approach, which means that the results cannot be generalized to all elementary schools. Additionally, the reading habits observed may be influenced by specific teacher practices and classroom culture that are unique to this setting.

Despite these limitations, the implications of this study remain valuable. Reading corners offer a low-cost and scalable solution to promote reading literacy, especially when integrated into the daily learning environment and supported by all stakeholders. Future initiatives should consider diversifying book collections, incorporating more interactive literacy activities, and providing structured opportunities for students to engage in meaningful reading discussions. These efforts can help maximize the role of reading corners and foster a stronger reading literacy skills from an early age.

Limitation

This research was limited to a single class in one elementary school and focused only on qualitative data. The results may not represent broader trends in different school contexts or education systems. The reading habits observed might also be influenced by specific classroom cultures and teacher styles.

Recommendation

Future research should investigate the long-term effects of reading corner programs across multiple schools and age groups using mixed-method approaches. Schools are encouraged to collaborate with local libraries and publishers to diversify book collections and incorporate digital reading tools. More interactive literacy activities such as group storytelling, peer reviews, and thematic reading challenges can help engage less-motivated students.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in writing and publish this research.

Declaration of Generativ AI-asisted Technologies

This manuscript was prepared with the assistance of Generative AI (ChatGPT) for language refinement and content organization. All intellectual contributions, critical analyses, and final

revisions were conducted by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the content presented in this work.

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