

**The Role of Educators in Fostering Reading Interest Among
Students as Creators of a Conducive Learning Environment**

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Abstract

This research explores the crucial role of educators in shaping students' interest in reading with a focus on creating a conducive learning environment. A conducive learning environment is a key factor in stimulating students' reading interest and assisting them in developing sustainable reading habits. In this context, the role of teachers as primary facilitators in creating a stimulating and supportive learning environment for reading interest becomes highly significant. This study outlines strategies and practices that educators can employ to create a conducive learning environment for the development of students' reading interest. Through this approach, a significant increase in students' participation in reading activities and improvement in their overall literacy is expected.

Keywords: *Role, Educator, Interest*

A. Introduction

Reading has an important meaning for anyone, by reading someone can obtain information and even increase their knowledge. Reading is one of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) that is important for every language user to learn and master. Therefore, efforts to teach children how to read are very important. (Kasani et al., 2020)

Reading can also be considered as a process of understanding what is implied from what is written, seeing the thoughts contained in written words. The level of relationship between the meaning that the writer wants to express and the reader's interpretation also determines the accuracy of

reading.(Kumar, 2020) The meaning of reading does not lie on the written page but is in the reader's mind. This is supported by Nurhadi's opinion that reading is a very complex activity that involves various factors coming from within the reader and outside.(Pham et al., 2022) It can be said that reading activity is a process of understanding reading that is seen by a person's or individual's motor system. Reading is a very complex skill, naturally many students don't like reading activities because reading includes and involves a series of smaller skills.(Mpungose & Khoza, 2022) In the Koran it is very clear that reading is recommended. As stated in the Koran surah Al-Alaq verses 1-5:

إِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (١) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (٢) إِقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ
الْأَكْرَمُ
(٣) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ (٤) عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (٥)

"Read by (mentioning) the name of your God who created, He has created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the Most Merciful. The one who teaches (man) with the medium of the pen. He teaches people what they do not know." (Al-Alaq: 1-5).

In the sentence above the word *Iqra* which means read until repeated twice, this proves that reading plays a very important part in life.(Hengami et al., 2022) Reading makes someone gain knowledge. Reading makes someone know many things. Realizing how important reading activities are, it is necessary to improve reading habits so that later interest in reading activities will arise.

Interest in reading is a form of behavior that is directed towards carrying out reading activities as a strong level of pleasure because it is fun and provides value.(Jogezai et al., 2018) Darmono further stated that interest in reading is a mental tendency that encourages someone to do something about reading. Interest in reading is shown by a strong desire to carry out reading activities.

The rapid development of information technology today makes it possible for everyone to get access to the information they want. So that the development of existing information can always be accommodated, interest and ability to read are very important. As an illustration, Theodore Roosevelt read three books a day while in the White House and John F. Kennedy had a reading speed of 1,000 wpm (words per minute). Developed nations are generally nations that like to read, for example the Japanese, Americans and several other European countries. They also have great creative works, for

example various types of cars from Europe and America, sophisticated computers or telephones from Japan.

According to World Bank report no. 16369-IDN and IAEA studies (*International Achievement Education Association*) in 1992 in East Asia, the lowest level of children's reading was held by Indonesia with a score of 51.7, below the Philippines (score 52.6), Thailand (score 65), Singapore (score 74.0), and Hong Kong (score 75.5). Not only that, the ability of Indonesian children to master reading material is also low, only 30 percent. Other data also states, as written by Ki Supriyoko (quoted by Yardi, 2003), it is mentioned in the UNDP document in *Human Development Report 2000*, that the adult literacy rate in Indonesia is only 65.5 percent. Meanwhile, Malaysia has reached 86.4 percent, and developed countries such as Australia, Japan, England, Germany and the United States have generally reached 99.0 percent. (Mershad & Wakim, 2018)

The data above shows how low interest in reading is in Indonesia. Awareness about the importance of reading activities comes from each individual. However, this awareness can also arise through stimulation or influence from the surrounding environment, for example the family, community environment and even school.

As one of the foundations for the progress of a nation, education in schools has an important role in producing a quality young generation. This includes helping to grow and increase students' interest in reading. Because at school every day students will be faced with activities that require them to read. (Gamede et al., 2021)

With regard to education and schools, these two things cannot be separated from someone who takes an important role in these activities, namely the teacher. According to Law no. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, the definition of teachers is professional teaching staff who have the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing and evaluating early childhood education students through formal primary and secondary education channels. Currently, the world of education really needs educators with character. School can be said to be a second home for students and teachers are also their second parents. As someone who has a lot of interactions with students at school, teachers have an important role in achieving educational goals. An important principle of character formation consisting of physical and mental values in education.

Teachers as educators have a very big role in educating students to become quality human beings. One way to make this happen is by getting students to love reading activities.

B. Literature Review

1. Teacher Concept

Teachers or also known as educators are adults who are responsible for providing guidance or assistance to students in their

physical and spiritual development so that they reach maturity, able to carry out their duties as creatures of Allah, caliphs on the surface of the earth, as social creatures and as individuals who are able to stand alone.(Hashemikamangar & Gholampourdehaki, 2021) Another term commonly used for education is teacher. These two terms have the same meaning, the difference is that the term teacher is often used in formal environments, while educator is used in formal, informal and non-formal environments. In a non-formal environment, parents are the main educators for children, supported by the family who live together in the house, while in a formal environment, the educational responsibility is continued by the teacher.(Clark, 1999)

The responsibility of teachers as educators is very large in accordance with the mandate and responsibility they bear is also very large. The path taken by teachers is not easy and their task is not light. Because they are able to carry out their trust. A teacher is essentially the executor of the mandate from parents as well as the mandate of Allah SWT, the community's mandate and the government's mandate. Carrying out this accepted mandate is realized by the teacher's efforts to become a professional teacher in his field. With the professionalism of teachers, it is hoped that the future of the world of education can be better.(Bao, 2020)

Apart from that, the definition of a teacher, according to Ngalim Purwanto, is a person who has provided knowledge to someone or a group of people. Teacher here means not only someone who "is" providing knowledge, but also applies to people who "have" provided knowledge.(Kasim & Khalid, 2016) Meanwhile, according to Dri Atmaka, an educator or teacher is a person who is responsible for providing assistance to students in their physical and spiritual development. From Dri Atmaka's opinion, we can understand that a teacher is a person who carries out the task of being an intermediary between knowledge and students. Where knowledge is channeled not only for physical development, but also spiritual development of students.

So, from the opinions above we can conclude that a teacher or educator is a person who is responsible for providing guidance to students both physically and spiritually. However, it also needs to be underlined that a teacher or educator is a person who has provided knowledge. This means that even though a student has completed his education at a certain level, the teacher who taught him will always be his teacher.

2. Teacher's Role

Currently, the world of education really needs educators with character. Talking about roles, of course there will be lots of theories related to roles. One of them is the role theory put forward by Linton which states that role theory describes the social interactions of actors who play according to what has been determined by culture. (Alduraywish et al., 2022) According to this theory, Linton states that a person has a certain role, for example doctor, student, parent, woman and so on, with the expectation that the person will behave in accordance with that role.

Based on what Linton stated, this means that every human being has their own role. For example, a child acting as a child, a mother acting as a mother, a father acting as a father and so on. With the hope that later these people will play their role as they should. For example, a father will behave as a father would, not a father who behaves like a child.

Meanwhile, the word role according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, is what is done, a task, something that has a big influence on an event. According to Soejono Soekanto, role is a dynamic aspect of position (status), if someone carries out their rights and obligations in accordance with their role, then they are carrying out a role. (Alshammari, 2020)

What has been stated by Soejono Soekanto provides the understanding that a role is a position or status that is always changing and experiencing development. This means that a person may not only carry out one role at a time, but more than that because it is clear that if a person carries out his rights and obligations in accordance with his role, then he is carrying out a role. (Houshmandi et al., 2019) For example, a mother may fulfill the dual role of being both mother and father due to changing circumstances.

Based on the understanding and theory above, teachers in schools are actors who play the role of a teacher and are expected to be able to act like teachers. Not only the role of someone who teaches various kinds of knowledge, but also educates students to become dignified human beings.

3. Reading Interest Survey

Mappiare explains that interest is a set consisting of a mixture of feelings, hopes, education, fear or other tendencies that move individuals to a certain choice. Mappiare also believes that a person's interest is influenced by environmental background, economic level, social status and experience.

The theory put forward by Mappiare indicates that a person who determines a choice comes from a mixture of feelings which are the

driving force in making that choice. But then, interest in certain things can be influenced by various things. For example, environmental background, someone whose environment or family is a doctor will probably also be interested in the same thing. Economic level also influences interests, for example someone who lives with wealth will certainly be interested in expensive goods/*branded*. Apart from that, other things that can influence interest are social status and experience.(Benzaghta et al., 2021)

Linguistically, interest means "the highest inclination of the heart towards something." Interest is a relatively permanent trait in a person. Interest has a huge influence on a person's activities because with interest he will do something he is interested in. On the other hand, without interest it is impossible for someone to do something.(Kwon et al., 2021)

The definition of interest in terms has been put forward by many experts, including those put forward by Mikarsa, et al in their book on children's education in elementary school, defining the meaning of interest as follows: "Interest is a drive from within a person or a factor that gives rise to interest or selective attention which causes the choice of an object or activity that is profitable, enjoyable and over time will bring satisfaction to him, conversely if satisfaction decreases, then a person's interest will also decrease."

Interest here is defined as something that causes interest. And from that interest, someone finally chooses an object or activity that they like. When someone has determined an interest in one or several things, that activity will become something enjoyable and bring satisfaction. When the level of satisfaction is high, interest will increase and vice versa. When the level of satisfaction is low, interest will also decrease.(Walsh, 2018)

Hurlock defines interest as a source of motivation that will direct a person to what they will do if given the freedom to choose. If they see that something has meaning for them, then they will be interested in that something which will ultimately lead to satisfaction for them Based on the definition of interest conveyed by Hurlock, this means that interest is an impulse within oneself which, if given the freedom to choose without anything limiting, the choice will be determined based on what is meaningful to a person so that what is done can bring satisfaction.

According to Slameto (2003) interest is a feeling of preference and a feeling of attachment to a thing or activity, without anyone telling you to. In line with what Hurlock stated, Slameto believes that interest will

arise by itself based on liking or being interested in something without anyone telling you to. This means that interest cannot be forced. And for interest to arise, a person must be given the freedom to choose something they like. Meanwhile, according to Djaali (2008), interest is related to the style of movement that encourages a person to face or deal with people, objects, activities and experiences that are stimulated by the activity itself. (Ssekakubo et al., 2011)

If some of the opinions above state that interest is a feeling of liking or an urge that ultimately causes a person to carry out an activity, then Djaali's opinion is slightly different, he states that it is the force of movement that drives a person to do something. Where the encouragement arises because of the stimulation that comes from the activities carried out. This means that an activity can stimulate someone to carry out an activity. (Ebrahim, 2015)

According to Gie (1995), interest means being busy, interested, or fully involved in an activity because you are aware of the importance of that activity. This means that when someone realizes that an activity is very important, their focus will be fully directed towards that activity. Furthermore, Djamarah (2010) explained that an interest can be expressed through a statement that shows that students prefer one thing over another. Muhibbin Syah in his book psychology of learning defines interest as a tendency and high excitement or a great desire for something.

Based on the definition above, interest is not just a matter of action in doing something. However, when someone states that he prefers one thing over another, it can be said that he has an interest in that thing. (Chanprasitchai & Khlaisang, 2016)

In the world of education, especially in developing better human character, of course there are several things that are key concerns for those who specialize in being involved in the world of education. (Kadir et al., 2017) Of course, one of the main goals in the world of education is how to produce people with character and brilliant achievements. However, to achieve good performance apart from intelligence, what must also be considered is interest. Because without interest, all activities will be carried out less effectively and efficiently. (Hightower et al., 2011) In everyday conversation the meaning of attention is confused with interest in the exercise of attention as if we emphasize the function of the mind, whereas in interest it seems as if we emphasize the function of feeling, but in reality what attracts interest also causes us to pay attention, and what causes our attention to attract interest. also join us. (Alturki & Aldraiweesh, 2021)

From the definition above, it gives the understanding that interest causes attention, where interest seems to highlight the function of feeling and attention seems to highlight the function of the mind. This confirms that what attracts interest causes us to pay attention, we are interested, interest also accompanies it, so there is a relationship between interest and attention.(Abedi et al., 2022)

Interest is as a cause, namely the driving force that forces someone to pay attention to certain people, situations or activities and not others, or interest as a result, namely effective experiences stimulated by the presence of a person or an object, or by participating in an activity(Costello et al., 2023)

From the many definitions above, we can draw the conclusion that interest is a feeling of being interested in something. Where this feeling of interest causes someone to be encouraged or motivated to do something or an activity. Interest will arise if someone is given the freedom to choose things they like, like, without any orders.(Ippakayala & El-Ocla, 2017) Based on the explanation above, the elements of interest are people who have a motive or reason for doing something, attention that is focused consciously on a particular object, the presence of inner will and feelings.

C. Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative method, namely an intensive search using scientific procedures to produce narrative conclusions, both written and verbal, based on analysis of certain data with the aim of describing objects, revealing the meaning behind phenomena and explaining the phenomena that occur. The population in this study consisted of 21 teachers and 145 students of Madrasah Aliyah Raudhatul Islamiyah, Sungai Tabuk District, Banjar Regency. Because the numbers were quite large, samples were drawn from 2 teachers and 23 students in class X1 of Madrasah Aliyah Raudhatul Islamiyah, Sungai Tabuk District, Banjar Regency. Data collection in this research was taken by observation, interviews and documentaries. After the data is collected, it is then processed through editing, coding, categorization and interpretation, then analyzed qualitatively descriptively.

D. Research Results and Discussion

1. The Role of Teachers in Increasing Reading Interest of Madrasah Aliyah Raudhatul Islamiyah Students

It has been explained previously that a teacher is a person who is responsible for providing guidance or assistance to students in their physical and spiritual development in order to reach maturity. Talking about the role of a teacher in the world of education, of course a teacher's job is not only to

educate and teach, but more than that. Soejono Soekanto believes that a role is a dynamic aspect of position (status), which means that if someone carries out their rights and obligations in accordance with their role, then they are carrying out a role. This means that someone can play more than one role. This is in line with teachers who carry out dual roles. An important principle of character formation consisting of physical and mental values in education.

Djamarah believes that among these roles are teachers as motivators, inspirers, initiators, demonstrators, mediators, correctors, informators, organizers, facilitators, class managers, mentors, supervisors and evaluators. Therefore, the question arises as to what role teachers play in increasing students' interest in reading at Madrasah Aliyah Raudhatul Islamiyah. Based on the research results presented above, there are four roles for teachers in increasing students' reading interest, namely as follows:

a. Teachers Act as Motivators

Based on research results, teachers often provide motivation or encouragement to students to read more books. This is based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers. The teacher stated that he did provide motivation and reminded students to read lots of books and students also stated that they had been and were often given motivation. Apart from that, it is true that teachers act as motivators. Like the theory put forward by Djamarah.

Providing motivation is also an important thing in increasing students' interest in reading. With continuous motivation, at least students will become aware that reading is indeed a beneficial activity for them. Apart from raising awareness, motivation will also raise students' enthusiasm for reading books.

b. Teachers Play a Role as Mentors

Based on the research results mentioned above, teachers also play a role as mentors. This means that teachers do not only carry out one role, but it turns out that teachers carry out multiple roles. This is in accordance with the opinion expressed that each person has more than one role.

What has been stated by Soejono Soekanto provides the understanding that a role is a dynamic position or status that is always changing and experiencing development. This means that a person may not only carry out one role at a time, but more than that because it is clear that if a person carries out his rights and obligations in accordance with his role, then he is carrying out a role. This is in line with the dual role played by teachers.

In this role the teacher guides students to read more through assignments related to reading. Starting from reading articles, short stories, drama texts, novels and others. Apart from that, guidance is also provided through the provision of time given to students to read. Hopefully this will be a form of habituation for students. Because through habituation, a person's interest can arise and even increase.

A teacher who acts as a guide is the right thing. Based on what Djamarah stated about the role of teachers as mentors.

c. Teachers Play a Role as Informators

Based on the research results stated above, teachers bring and suggest to students various kinds of books or reading in order to increase students' interest in reading. In this case the teacher acts as an informant who provides information.

The books or reading suggested by the teacher are not books that contain inappropriate stories. However, it is precisely here that teachers as providers and filters of information will of course suggest books that will provide benefits for students.

Madrasah aliyah students are not elementary school students who have not yet mastered technology, they actually master it very well. For this reason, teachers try to suggest books whose contents have of course been reviewed so that the information or reading that students receive is worthy for them to read. Recommended books include history books, motivational books, etc.

d. The teacher acts as a class manager

The research results show that teachers choose to be in the classroom more often when students are given reading activities as a form of supervision so that students maximize their time during these activities. As stated in the interview, sometimes when students are left behind, they lose their focus because of the invitation to talk from their classmates. Class management carried out by teachers aims to ensure that the activities carried out run conductively and provide maximum results. This is in accordance with what was expressed by Djamarah (in Yustisia, 2016).

2. Factors that Influence the Role of Teachers in Increasing Reading Interest of Madrasah Aliyah Raudhatul Islamiyah Students

As one of the intermediaries in realizing educational goals, teachers will of course make every effort to provide teaching and education to students. One of them is an effort to increase students' reading interest.

Apart from the role played by a teacher, of course there will be things that are factors in the teacher's efforts to increase students' interest in reading. Soetminah believes that factors that influence a person's interest in reading include internal factors which include character or talent, gender, health condition, mental state and habits. External factors include books or reading materials and the child's needs. As well as environmental factors, namely the family environment and school environment. Based on this, the question arises as to what factors influence the role of teachers in increasing students' reading interest at Madrasah Aliyah Raudhatul Islamiyah.

The research results show that there are three factors that influence the role of teachers in increasing students' reading interest, namely as follows:

a. Factors in the presence or absence of students' willingness and interest in reading activities

Based on the research results above, the factors that influence the teacher's role in increasing students' reading interest are factors within the students themselves. This can be seen from the results of interviews

conducted by researchers. Only a few students said they liked reading activities, the rest said they were normal or even didn't like it.

This shows that apart from the need for external factors such as teachers, the school environment and so on to increase interest in reading, a factor that is no less important is the students themselves. Even if students are encouraged in various ways, if students do not have the will to change or develop then their interest will not arise, let alone increase.

With regard to the explanation above, we can say that when a desire arises, interest will arise. Apart from the desire that comes from the student, what is also important is the student's habit of reading books. Data generated from interviews shows that many students take time to read at home, while others say that sometimes they never do. Soetminah revealed that habits influence interest in reading.

If a student does not have the habit of reading, then reading will only be a normal thing for him, not a significant need. Because for people who are used to doing something, they will feel empty when they don't do that thing. However, on the other hand, if something is not something that matters, is only done occasionally, then even if he abandons it or misses it, it is not a problem for him.

This reading habit also influences a person's reading intensity. The data produced regarding the maximum time students use for reading is that many students use the maximum time depending on whether there are friends or whether there is a teacher. This is due to the lack of reading habits.

In line with what Soetminah stated, the intensity of reading is different for people who like reading and people who don't like reading. People who like to read will make the most of their time because reading is an activity they like. Meanwhile, for people who don't like reading, of course they don't use their time optimally, they will be easily distracted by the factors around them.

b. Factors of the Absence of a Library

Based on the research results above, the absence of a library also causes the teacher's role in increasing students' reading interest to encounter obstacles. The absence of a library has resulted in limited books and reading materials. In fact, libraries are one of the important factors that influence reading interest. With a library, students have a special place where they go to read. Apart from that, teachers can also use the library to invite students to read books at certain times.

c. Environmental Factors

Based on the research results, there were no public libraries or shops selling reading books in the student's neighborhood. Apart from that, parents and the community are also busy working in the fields because the majority work as farmers. So it is very difficult to find activities, habits and other stimuli that can help teachers increase students' interest in reading. Meanwhile, the family and community environment have a big influence in

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generating and increasing students' interest in reading. Because external stimulus or stimuli can influence the formation of a person's personality. This is in line with what Edward Thorndike stated regarding behavioristic theory.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research on the role of teachers in increasing students' interest in reading at Madrasah Aliyah Raudhatul Islamiyah, it can be concluded that the role of teachers in increasing students' interest in reading is that information is obtained, namely as a motivator in carrying out this role, the teacher provides motivation for students to read more books, the teacher acts as a guide. In carrying out this role, the teacher provides guidance to students so that they read a lot by giving tasks related to reading and providing time for students to read books during the learning process. The teacher acts as a natural informant. Carrying out this role, the teacher brings and suggests books to students as a form of providing information to students reading books that provide benefits for them, the teacher acts as a class manager in carrying out this role the teacher manages the class during reading activities, so that the class continues to run conductively with the aim of ensuring that students make maximum use of time when reading activities. The factors that influence the teacher's role in increasing students' interest in reading are the student's willingness and interest in reading activities, the absence of a library at school and environmental factors. In the neighborhood where students live there are no libraries or bookstores. Apart from that, people and parents are busy working so it is very difficult to find activities, habits or other stimuli that can help teachers increase students' interest in reading.

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