



SCHOOL LITERACY MOVEMENT PROGRAM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE STUDENTS READING INTEREST AND READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract: This study explores the implementation of the School Literacy Movement Program (SLMP) and its impact on students' reading interest and reading comprehension at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach with an exploratory sequential design, the research combined qualitative methods (interviews, observations, documentation) and quantitative methods (questionnaires and tests). The findings revealed that SLMP was systematically implemented through three stages: habituation, development, and learning. Students exhibited a high level of reading interest, especially in pleasure, attention, and participation aspects. In addition, the reading test results showed that most students achieved strong performance in literal comprehension. These outcomes suggest that the SLMP has significantly enhanced students' motivation to read and their capacity to understand texts. The study recommends continuous provision of diverse reading materials, professional development for teachers, and school community collaboration to sustain and optimize the program's impact.

Keywords: literacy, school literacy movement program, reading interest, reading comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a crucial competency for lifelong learning, critical thinking, and active participation in society. In the 21st century, literacy refers not only to the ability to read and write, but also to the capacity to analyze, evaluate, and utilize information across contexts. UNESCO (2017) highlights that literacy empowers individuals to make informed decisions and to engage meaningfully in democratic processes and economic activities. However, literacy development in Indonesia remains a serious challenge. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results in 2018 placed Indonesian students at 72nd out of 77 participating countries in reading literacy, indicating a widespread problem in understanding and interpreting texts (OECD, 2019).

This literacy gap is exacerbated by students' low reading interest. Many students perceive reading as an obligation rather than a need, resulting in limited engagement with texts beyond what is required in school (Suyatmini & Mustofa, 2020). Reading activities are rarely sustained outside the classroom, and students struggle to grasp main ideas, analyze textual structures, and build vocabulary. The situation calls for comprehensive interventions that not only introduce literacy instruction but also instill a culture of reading as a habitual and meaningful activity.

To address this issue, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture launched the School Literacy Movement Program (SLMP) through Ministerial Regulation No. 23 of 2015. The SLMP is a nationwide policy initiative aimed at developing reading habits and improving literacy skills through three progressive stages: (1) the habituation stage, which encourages students to read silently for 15 minutes daily before lessons begin; (2) the development stage, which promotes deeper engagement through activities such as book journaling, book reviews, and library visits; and (3) the learning stage, which integrates literacy into curriculum and classroom instruction across subjects (Kemendikbud, 2016).

Prior research has shown that school-based literacy programs have the potential to improve students' reading motivation and text comprehension. For instance, Fitriyani, Zulela, and Sofyan (2021) reported that the application of literacy-based thematic learning in primary schools significantly enhanced students' engagement and reading habits. Similarly, a study by Izza and Munawir (2021) emphasized that reading interest plays a pivotal role in influencing students' comprehension outcomes. However, most existing studies focus on urban schools or public institutions and do not sufficiently represent rural or private religious-based schools, such as SMPK Immaculata Ruteng.

Furthermore, studies utilizing mixed-methods approaches remain limited. A comprehensive understanding of how SLMP is implemented, and how it impacts both reading interest and comprehension, requires a methodological framework that captures both qualitative insights and quantitative outcomes. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), a mixed methods design is particularly appropriate when a phenomenon needs to be explored in-depth before being measured systematically.

Based on the context above, this study was conducted to address two main research questions:

1. How is the School Literacy Movement Program implemented at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng?
2. How does the implementation of the program impact students' reading interest and literal reading comprehension?

Accordingly, the objectives of this research are: (1) to systematically describe the implementation of SLMP at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng, and (2) to analyze its influence on students' reading interest and literal comprehension. This study is expected to contribute practically to the enhancement of literacy programs in schools and serve as a reference for educators, school leaders, and policymakers in formulating effective literacy-based educational strategies.

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on several key concepts: literacy as the ability to access, interpret, and produce information critically (UNESCO, 2017); reading interest as a motivational construct encompassing pleasure, attention, and engagement (Izza & Munawir, 2021); literal comprehension as defined by Barrett (1981), involving the ability to understand explicit meanings in texts; and SLMP as a structured government initiative for cultivating a literate culture in schools (Kemendikbud, 2016).

METHOD

This study employed a mixed methods approach with a sequential exploratory design, combining qualitative and quantitative methods conducted in two distinct phases. This design was selected based on the rationale proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), who argue that sequential exploratory design is particularly suitable when researchers aim to explore a phenomenon in depth through qualitative inquiry before validating or generalizing the findings quantitatively. The use of this approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the School Literacy Movement Program (SLMP) and its influence on students' reading interest and literal reading comprehension.

The research was conducted at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng, a private Catholic junior high school that had implemented the SLMP in a structured and consistent manner. The qualitative phase involved five teachers, comprising Indonesian and English subject teachers who were selected purposively due to their direct involvement in the planning and implementation of the literacy program. In the subsequent quantitative phase, 37 seventh-grade students were selected as respondents based on their active participation in school literacy activities. The selection of both teacher and student participants was conducted purposively to

ensure that the data reflected the authentic implementation and outcomes of the SLMP.

Data collection employed a variety of techniques appropriate to each research phase. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers to explore their perspectives on the program, its implementation strategies, and observed impacts. Classroom observations were also carried out to capture the dynamics of literacy activities, including silent reading, text responses, and vocabulary exercises. In addition, documents such as reading schedules, students' journals, and book summaries were analyzed to support triangulation and deepen the contextual understanding. In the quantitative phase, data were collected through a reading interest questionnaire and a literal reading comprehension test. The questionnaire, adapted from Izza and Munawir (2021), measured three dimensions of reading interest: pleasure, attention, and participation. Responses were rated on a four-point Likert scale. Meanwhile, the literal comprehension test was constructed based on Barrett's (1981) taxonomy and guided by the framework of Brassell and Rasinski (2008), focusing on students' abilities to identify main ideas, understand detailed information, interpret vocabulary in context, and draw literal conclusions from texts.

The qualitative data were analyzed using qualitative analyses as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994), involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Codes were developed inductively from interview transcripts and observation notes, which were then grouped into broader themes such as literacy strategies, teacher involvement, and program challenges. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores and percentages, to assess students' levels of reading interest and comprehension.

The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods in this research provided both depth and breadth in examining the

implementation and outcomes of the SLMP at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng. The methodological rigor applied throughout the study ensured the credibility of findings and their relevance for future literacy initiatives in similar educational settings.

RESULTS

This research answers two main problems: how is the implementation of the School Literacy Movement (SLMP) Program at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng, and how does it impact on students' reading interest and literal comprehension. This section presents the findings of the study, organized according to the two main research questions. The first part describes how the School Literacy Movement Program (SLMP) is implemented at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng. This includes the description of the stages of implementation, supporting elements, and challenges encountered. The second part explains the impact of the program on students' reading interest and literal reading comprehension. The findings are derived from qualitative data (interviews, observations, documentation) and quantitative data (questionnaires and test results) and are presented in an integrated manner to ensure clarity and coherence.

1. The Implementation of SLMP at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, the implementation of the School Literacy Movement Program (SLMP) at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng is conducted systematically and adheres to the three-stage framework formulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2016). These stages are: habituation, development, and learning. Each stage is designed to gradually cultivate students' reading habits and integrate literacy into school culture and academic instruction.

In the habituation stage, students engage in silent reading for 15 minutes before formal lessons begin each day. This routine is

not only a daily practice but also a policy institutionalized by the school principal. Supporting elements that sustain this stage include a structured reading schedule, accessible reading corners in each classroom, and the active supervision of teachers. This routine is aimed at building reading as a daily habit and creating a literacy-rich environment from the start of the school day.

The development stage deepens students' engagement with reading through a variety of literacy-based activities. These include writing book summaries or reading journals, participating in group discussions about books, and utilizing classroom reading corners. Teachers are equipped with schedules and guidelines to facilitate these activities, which aim to enhance students' critical thinking and reflective reading skills. This stage also encourages students to express their understanding of texts in creative ways, thereby strengthening their personal connection to reading.

The learning stage integrates literacy practices directly into the teaching and learning process, especially within Indonesian and English language subjects. Activities in this stage include responding to reading texts, completing comprehension exercises, engaging in vocabulary tasks, and participating in literacy-based assessments such as quizzes. Lesson plans are designed to incorporate reading strategies and textual analysis as part of the regular curriculum, ensuring that literacy is not seen as a separate subject but as a foundational skill across disciplines.

Despite its structured implementation, the SLMP at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng faces several challenges. Among these are the limited variety of book collections available for students, which can restrict their exposure to diverse genres and reading levels. Additionally, a lack of specific training for teachers in literacy instruction hampers the optimal delivery of literacy activities, particularly in designing differentiated reading tasks and responding to students' varied reading abilities. These challenges highlight the need for ongoing institutional support and

professional development to sustain and enhance the program’s effectiveness.

The implementation of SLMP at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng reflects a serious institutional commitment to promoting literacy. The presence of structured routines, teacher involvement, and literacy-focused classroom environments indicates alignment with national policy guidelines. However, to maximize its impact, further efforts are needed to enrich resources and strengthen teacher capacity in literacy education.

Table 1 SLMP Implementation Framework

Stage	Key Activities	Supporting Elements
Habituation	Daily reading routine	Literacy policy, Reading corners
Development	Book reports, writing dilly journals	Literacy schedules, teacher guides
Learning	Text analysis, vocabulary tasks in English	Integrated lesson plans

2. The Impact of the Program on Students' Reading Interest and Literal Reading Comprehension.
 - a. Impact on the Students Reading Interest

The results of the questionnaire on students' reading interest show that most students demonstrated a high level of interest across several aspects. In the pleasure aspect, which reflects students’ enjoyment in reading activities, 18 students strongly agreed and 13 agreed that they enjoyed reading. The mean score for this aspect was 3.7, indicating that reading is perceived as a pleasurable and engaging activity by the majority of students. In the attention aspect, which measures students’ ability to focus during reading, 16 students strongly agreed and 14 agreed that they could concentrate fully while reading. The mean score was 3.6, showing that students were generally attentive and focused

during reading sessions. Meanwhile, in the participation aspect, 15 students strongly agreed and another 15 agreed that they actively took part in reading related activities such as borrowing books and joining discussions. This aspect also showed a mean score of 3.6, reflecting consistent involvement in literacy practices. These findings collectively demonstrate that the implementation of the School Literacy Movement Program (SLMP) at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng has successfully fostered students' positive attitudes toward reading, as reflected in their enjoyment, attention, and active participation in literacy activities.

Table 2 Reading Interest Survey Results (n = 37)

Aspect	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Pleasure	18	13	4	2	3.278
Attention	16	14	5	2	3.056
Participation	15	15	5	2	3.417

b. Impact on The Students Reading Comprehension

As for the reading comprehension aspect, the test results showed that most students had achieved a good to excellent level of literal comprehension. The literacy test, which measured students' ability to identify main ideas, recall specific details, and understand vocabulary in context, indicated that the majority possessed strong foundational reading skills.

A total of 28 out of 37 students (75.7%) were categorized as "Excellent" (score 91–100). This category reflects students who demonstrated an exceptional ability to comprehend texts literally. They were consistently able to locate key information, recognize explicit details, and accurately interpret vocabulary without difficulty. These students showed fluent decoding and comprehension, and were able to answer questions with precision and confidence.

Meanwhile, 7 students (18.9%) fell into the "Good" category (score 81–90). Students in this category exhibited strong reading

comprehension skills, although not yet at the highest level. They were generally capable of identifying important information in the text and understanding word meanings, but may have struggled slightly with longer or more complex passages. Their performance shows solid literacy competency with potential for further improvement through targeted practice.

Only 2 students (5.4%) were in the “Fair” category (score 71–80), indicating basic literal comprehension. These students were able to answer some comprehension questions correctly, especially on simple facts, but had difficulty identifying key ideas or understanding nuanced vocabulary. They require additional support, particularly in strengthening vocabulary knowledge and developing more consistent comprehension strategies.

Importantly, no student fell into the “Needs Improvement” category (≤ 70), which indicates that all students reached at least the minimum expected standard of literacy competency. This overall result illustrates the effectiveness of the School Literacy Movement Program (SLMP) in supporting the development of students’ reading comprehension at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng.

Table 3 Categories of Students Literacy Test Results

Score Range	Category	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
91 – 100	Excellent	28	75.7%
81 – 90	Good	7	18.9%
71 – 80	Fair	2	5.4%
≤ 70	Needs Improvement	0	0%

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide strong evidence that the systematic implementation of the School Literacy Movement Program (SLMP) at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng has had a positive impact on students’ reading interest and literal reading comprehension. This supports the proposition that structured

literacy interventions, when implemented consistently and contextually, contribute significantly to improving students' foundational literacy skills.

From a theoretical perspective, the results align with Wigfield and Guthrie's (1997) motivation and engagement theory, which emphasizes the role of a supportive environment and meaningful reading tasks in enhancing students' reading motivation. The SLMP, through daily silent reading, book discussions, and text-based assignments, successfully created a literacy rich environment where students are exposed to regular and purposeful reading experiences. The fact that most students reported enjoying reading, maintaining attention, and actively participating in reading activities confirms the theoretical assumption that motivation and engagement are fostered when literacy is integrated into students' authentic school experiences.

Moreover, the improvement in students' literal comprehension skills with over 75% achieving an "excellent" score in the reading test supports Barrett's taxonomy of reading comprehension (1981). Barrett identifies literal comprehension as the foundational level of understanding that enables learners to recall explicit information, recognize main ideas, and grasp the meaning of vocabulary within context. The integration of comprehension exercises and vocabulary tasks into language subjects at SMPK Immaculata reflects effective alignment with this theory, reinforcing the notion that repeated exposure to text-based tasks enhances students' ability to process and extract information accurately.

Practically, these findings offer valuable implications for school level literacy initiatives. First, the structured implementation of SLMP at SMPK Immaculata guided by the three official stages of habituation, development, and learning demonstrates a scalable model for literacy promotion in similar school settings. The program's success indicates that building reading habits and comprehension skills does not require separate programs but can be embedded within the existing curriculum and

daily school routines. This is particularly important for schools with limited time and resources, as it allows for literacy enhancement without disrupting the overall academic schedule. Second, the study highlights the critical role of teacher involvement and school leadership. Teacher supervision during reading sessions, the availability of reading materials, and school policies that prioritize literacy were key enablers of the program's success. This finding is consistent with prior research by Brassell and Rasinski (2008), which emphasizes that teachers' active participation and meaningful instructional practices are essential in cultivating students' reading fluency and comprehension.

In comparison with other studies conducted in Indonesian contexts, the findings resonate with those of Fitriyani, Zulela, and Sofyan (2021), who found that literacy-based learning models improve students' engagement and critical thinking. However, unlike previous research which often focused on large urban schools or public institutions, this study contributes new insights by examining a private, religious-based school in a rural setting. It demonstrates that literacy improvement is achievable across diverse school contexts when supported by consistent implementation and community involvement.

The study also indirectly confirms the structural nature of Indonesia's literacy challenges. Despite national initiatives, students' reading motivation and comprehension remain areas of concern, as reflected in Indonesia's low PISA rankings. The results from this research show that when national programs like SLMP are operationalized faithfully at the school level, they can yield measurable improvements. Thus, this study reaffirms the importance of localizing national literacy policies, ensuring that schools have the autonomy, support, and resources to adapt and apply literacy strategies effectively.

In a broader sense, this study contributes to ongoing global discussions on the role of literacy in empowering learners and enhancing educational equity. By showing that even in a small school setting, with modest resources, structured literacy programs

can build students' confidence, autonomy, and engagement with texts, it echoes Freire's (1970) concept of literacy as a tool for liberation. Literacy is not merely a technical skill but a transformative force that enables learners to access knowledge, engage critically with their environment, and become active citizens.

Despite the encouraging outcomes, this study is limited in scope, focusing only on reading interest and literal comprehension. The impact of SLMP on higher-order thinking skills such as inferential and evaluative comprehension or on students' writing and reflective capacities remains unexplored. Future studies should investigate these dimensions to provide a more holistic understanding of literacy development. In addition, longitudinal research is needed to assess the long-term sustainability of the program's impact, especially after students transition to higher grades.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study it can be concluded that the structured implementation of the School Literacy Movement Program (SLMP) at SMPK Immaculata Ruteng has a positive and measurable impact on students' reading interest and literal reading comprehension. Through its three stage framework habituation, development, and learning the program successfully fosters students' motivation, engagement, and understanding of texts. These findings emphasize the importance of embedding literacy practices within daily school routines and classroom instruction, supported by committed teachers and leadership. The results also highlight the potential of literacy programs to be effectively implemented in diverse educational contexts, including private, religious-based schools in rural areas. This research underscores the need for sustained, contextualized, and well supported literacy interventions to strengthen students' foundational reading competencies and promote equitable learning outcomes.

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