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The Implementation of SQ3R in Elementary School: A Quasi-Experimental Research

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Keywords:	Abstract
SQ3R; reading; comprehension; elementary school	<i>This study aims to examine the effectiveness of applying the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) reading strategy in improving reading comprehension skills among elementary school students. The background of this research is based on the low reading comprehension abilities observed in students, which is evident in their difficulty in identifying key information, summarising the content of the text, and answering questions based on the reading. The research method employed is a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group. The subjects of the study are fifth-grade students from a public elementary school, divided into an experimental group and a control group. The instrument used was a reading comprehension test. Data analysis results reveal a significant difference in the posttest scores between the experimental group and the control group. The application of the SQ3R strategy proved to be more effective in enhancing students' reading comprehension compared to conventional teaching methods. Therefore, the SQ3R strategy can serve as an innovative learning alternative to improve the literacy quality of elementary school students.</i>

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Reading is a fundamental skill that serves as the backbone of the entire learning process, particularly at the elementary school level. (Ramadhan et al., 2024). More than just pronouncing words, a crucial skill that students must have is reading comprehension, which is the ability to grasp meaning, identify main ideas, and infer information from the text they read. Without adequate understanding, students will

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have difficulty absorbing the subject matter, doing assignments, and ultimately, this will hinder their overall academic development.

Unfortunately, the reality on the ground shows that many elementary school students experience challenges in reading. They may be fluent in oral reading, but have difficulty when asked to retell the content of the reading, answer analytical questions, or even draw conclusions from simple texts (Maruti & Karoma, [2022](#)) This phenomenon indicates a serious gap in the applied reading teaching strategies, or a lack of effective methods to help students process information from texts in depth (Milasari & Suminar, [2024](#)) The importance of reading comprehension skills in this information era is increasingly strengthened, considering that students need to be able to filter and manage the flood of information that exists (Azizah, [2021](#)).

Low reading comprehension skills also have a direct impact on students' attitudes and learning motivation. When students are unable to adequately understand the content of a text, they tend to become easily bored, lose interest in reading, and lack confidence in participating in learning activities (Afandi & Oktavia, [2025](#)). This condition can lead to negative perceptions of reading, causing students to view reading as a difficult and burdensome activity (Cahyaningsih & Nahdi, [2025](#)). In fact, a high level of reading interest is one of the key factors in improving students' literacy skills and academic achievement (Prananto et al., [2025](#)). Therefore, reading instruction needs to be designed in such a way that it creates meaningful, enjoyable, and challenging learning experiences, encouraging students to actively engage in comprehending texts (Sari et al., [2025](#)).

One effort that can be undertaken to address this problem is the implementation of structured reading instruction methods that are oriented toward students' cognitive processes (Turahmat et al., [2025](#)). Effective reading instruction should be able to guide students from the initial stage of reading to the stages of comprehension and reflection on the content of the text. In this context, teachers play a crucial role as facilitators who direct students to develop appropriate reading strategies (Prananto et al., [2025](#)). The systematic application of reading instruction methods is expected not only to improve students' learning outcomes quantitatively but also to strengthen their ability to understand, process, and communicate information from texts independently. Thus, reading comprehension instruction can serve as a strategic means of developing literate, critical, and future-ready learners (Sari et al., [2025](#)).

The Problem of The Study

The main problem that is to be overcome in this study is the low level of reading comprehension in elementary school students. This problem can be rooted in several factors, including the habit of passive reading without a clear strategy, the lack of student interaction with the reading text, and the lack of use of innovative and proven effective teaching methods to improve comprehension. The consequences of low reading comprehension are very wide, ranging from students' difficulties in following lessons in class, low test scores, to a lack of interest in reading because they feel they do not 'connect' with what they read. If not addressed, this can have a long-term negative impact on students' learning abilities and their readiness to face future educational challenges (Munaji, [2021](#)).

Research's State of the Art

Various efforts have been made to overcome the problem of reading comprehension (Prananto et al., [2025](#)). Many researchers have explored various teaching strategies and methods, both conventional and modern. Several studies have examined the use of concept maps, *mind mapping techniques*, or questioning strategies as a way to improve reading comprehension. There are also those who research the impact of the use of technology or interactive media on reading and learning.

Among these various strategies, the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) method is one of the most researched and is recognised as having great potential in improving reading comprehension. Previous studies, especially at the secondary and tertiary education levels, have shown that the consistent application of SQ3R can improve students' reading comprehension scores, information recall skills, and critical thinking skills (Antari et al., [2024](#)) SQ3R is considered effective because it encourages readers to actively engage with the text, not just passively absorb information.

Novelty, Research Gap, & Objective

The novelty of this study lies in the exploration and empirical proof of the effectiveness of the application of SQ3R adapted for elementary school students in the local context. We will test whether SQ3R, with the right adjustments, can be a real solution to the problem of reading comprehension at the primary education level. With the achievement of this goal, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution to the development of more effective and applicable reading learning

strategies at the elementary school level, helping to create a generation of readers who can not only read, but also truly understand and master information.

Although SQ3R has been extensively researched, there is still a research gap, especially regarding the effectiveness of its application, specifically in the context of elementary school students in Indonesia. Most research on SQ3R has focused on more mature students, or has not examined in detail how this method needs to be adapted to suit the cognitive characteristics and learning styles of elementary school-age children (Nafisah & Koeswanti, [2023](#)) Adapting and simplifying SQ3R steps to make them easy to understand and attractive to elementary school students is an aspect that has not been explored in depth (Lestari et al., [2021](#)).

Based on the identified research background, problems, and gaps, the main objective of this study is to test and analyze the effectiveness of the application of the SQ3R method in improving reading comprehension of elementary school students and Identify how the SQ3R measures can be optimally adapted and implemented to suit the characteristics of elementary school students, so as to have a maximum positive impact on their reading comprehension abilities.

METHOD

Type and Design

This research is included in the type of quantitative research with a quasi-experimental design approach. We chose this design because the purpose of the study was to test the cause-and-effect relationship between the application of the SQ3R method (as an independent variable) and the improvement of students' reading comprehension (as a dependent variable), but it was not possible to exercise full control over all variables, as in pure experiments (Fong & Hoon, [2021](#); Saputra et al., [2025](#)).

The specific design to be used is the Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design. In this design, there will be two groups:

1. Experimental Group: A group of students who will be given treatment in the form of learning to read by applying the SQ3R method.
2. Control Group: A group of students who will learn to read by conventional methods or methods commonly used by teachers in schools (Maruti & Karoma, [2022](#)).

Both groups will be given a pretest to measure their reading comprehension levels before treatment. After a predetermined treatment period, both groups will be given a posttest to measure their reading comprehension levels after the treatment.

A comparison of posttest results between the two groups, taking into account the pretest results, will be used to assess the effectiveness of SQ3R.

Data and Data Sources

The main data in this study is the reading score of students' comprehension (Ayuning et al., [2024](#)). This score will be obtained from the results of tests (pretest and posttest) designed to measure students' ability to understand various types of reading texts (Nurkaidah & Kartika, [2023](#))

Data & Data Source

The source of data for this study is grade IV (Four) elementary school students in one of the public elementary schools that will be the location of the research. The selection of grade IV is based on the assumption that at this age, students already have the basic reading skills, but are still in the intensive comprehension development stage, so intervention through the SQ3R method is expected to have a significant impact. The number of students in each group (experiment and control) will be determined based on class capacity and group homogeneity considerations (Nurkaidah & Kartika, [2023](#)).

Data Collection Technique

The main data collection technique in this study is the test. The test instruments that will be used are:

1. Pretest Reading Comprehension: This test will be given to both groups (experiment and control) before treatment begins. The pretest questions will be designed to measure students' basic reading comprehension skills, including identification of main ideas, detailed information, drawing conclusions, and understanding vocabulary from texts in accordance with the curriculum standards of grade IV elementary school.
2. Posttest Reading Comprehension: This test will be given to both groups after the treatment period ends. Posttest questions will have the same level of difficulty and material coverage as the pretest, but with a different reading text to avoid the memorisation effect.

Data Analysis

The test instrument will be validated by subject matter experts and tested for reliability through trials on groups of students who have similar characteristics but are not included in the research sample, to ensure that the instrument is accurate and consistent in measuring reading comprehension skills (Dewi et al., [2021](#)) The

collected data will be analysed quantitatively using inferential statistics. The steps for data analysis to be carried out are as follows (Agusalim et al., [2022](#))

1. Normality Test: To ensure that the pretest and posttest score data are distributed normally. The commonly used test is the Kolmogorov-Smirnov or Shapiro-Wilk.
2. Variance Homogeneity Test: To ensure that the score variance between the experimental group and the control group is homogeneous. The commonly used test is the Levene Test.
3. Descriptive Analysis: Calculated mean values, standard deviations, and score ranges to describe the characteristics of reading comprehension data in both groups, both before and after treatment.
4. Hypothesis Test (Independent t-Test): After ensuring that the assumptions of normality and homogeneity are met, an independent t-test will be performed to compare the average gain score or average posttest score between the experimental group and the control group. If the data is not normally distributed or the variants are not homogeneous, a non-parametric test such as the Mann-Whitney U Test can be used.

The pretest and posttest scores in each group, as well as the comparison of the average gain score between the experimental and control groups. If there is a statistically significant difference in score improvement between the experimental group (which uses SQ3R) and the control group (which uses conventional methods), then it can be concluded that the SQ3R method is effective in improving the reading comprehension of elementary school students (Cataraja, [2022](#)).

RESULTS

Research Results

This section presents a comprehensive description of the research results concerning the implementation of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) method to improve elementary school students' reading comprehension. The results are elaborated in a detailed narrative form to provide a clear and in-depth picture of students' learning outcomes before and after the implementation of the SQ3R method, as well as the statistical evidence supporting the effectiveness of the intervention (Mariyapan & Ponniah, [2025](#); Sulastri & Suhandoko, [2024](#)).

This research was conducted at SD Negeri 2 Jakarta in the even semester of the 2024/2025 school year. The subjects of the study were 30 students of class V, consisting of 16 males and 14 females. (Yusmidarnis, [2024](#)) The researcher

collaborated with classroom teachers to apply the SQ3R method in Indonesian learning activities with a focus on the ability to understand narrative and informative reading texts.

This study uses a quasi-experimental design with the One-Group Pretest-Posttest model. The data collection technique was carried out by a reading comprehension test, both before (pretest) and after (posttest) the application of the SQ3R method. The test consists of 20 multiple-choice questions that have gone through tests of content validity, empirical validity, reliability, differentiation, and difficulty level of questions.

Pretest Results

The pretest is carried out before the application of the SQ3R method. The goal is to find out students' initial ability to read comprehension.

Table 1. Pre-test result

Statistik	Nilai
Highest Score	70
Lowest Score	40
Average Score	56,7
Standard Deviation	8,42
Completed Students	8 students (26,7%)
Students are not complete	22 students (73,3%)

The pretest results revealed that students' reading comprehension skills were generally low. The highest score obtained was 70, while the lowest score was 40. The mean score of the pretest was 56.7, indicating that most students had not yet reached the Minimum Completeness Criteria (MCC) set at 70. Only 8 students, or 26.7% of the total participants, achieved scores that met the MCC, whereas the remaining 22 students (73.3%) did not meet the required standard. The average score shows that most students have not reached the set Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM), which is 70. This reflects the student's low reading comprehension ability before treatment.

These initial findings indicate that although many students were able to read texts fluently, their ability to comprehend the content was still limited. Students experienced difficulties in identifying the main ideas of a text, understanding detailed information, making inferences, and answering comprehension-based questions. Such conditions reflect a common issue in elementary reading instruction, where reading activities often focus on mechanical reading rather than on meaning construction. The pretest results, therefore provided a strong rationale for

implementing an instructional intervention aimed at improving students' reading comprehension skills through a structured and student-centered method.

Following the pretest, the SQ3R method was implemented over four instructional meetings conducted within a two-week period. Each meeting was carefully designed to follow the five systematic stages of SQ3R. During the Survey stage, students were guided to examine the title, headings, subheadings, illustrations, and key vocabulary in the text. This stage aimed to activate students' prior knowledge and help them build an initial understanding of the text structure. The Question stage required students to formulate questions based on the surveyed elements of the text. These questions served as cognitive guides that directed students' attention while reading.

In the Read stage, students read the text actively with the purpose of finding answers to their self-generated questions. This activity encouraged focused and purposeful reading rather than passive decoding. During the Recite stage, students were asked to restate the content of the text in their own words, either orally or in written form. This stage played a crucial role in strengthening comprehension and memory retention, as students were required to reorganize information using their own language. Finally, in the Review stage, students revisited the entire text through class discussions and summary activities, allowing them to consolidate their understanding and correct any misconceptions.

Application of the SQ3R Method

The SQ3R method was applied for 4 meetings (for two weeks). Each step in the SQ3R method is implemented systematically:

1. Survey(s): Students review the structure of the reading through headings, subheadings, images, and keywords.
2. Question (Q): Students make questions from the parts that have been surveyed.
3. Read (R): Students actively read the text to find answers to the questions they created.
4. Recite (R): Students retell the content of the reading in their own words.
5. Review (R): Students review the content of the reading as a whole through discussion and summaries.

Teachers also provide stimuli in the form of SQ3R-based Student Worksheets (LKS) and student-centered learning.

Throughout the implementation of the SQ3R method, students demonstrated increased engagement and participation in reading activities. Classroom observations indicated that students were more motivated to read and more confident in expressing their understanding of the text. The use of SQ3R-based student worksheets also supported students in following each stage of the method systematically. This structured learning environment contributed to a more interactive and student-centered reading instruction process.

Post-test Results

The posttest is carried out after the treatment is completed. The goal is to see an improvement in students' abilities.

Table 1. Post-test result

Statistics	Mark
Highest Score	90
Lowest Score	65
Average Score	78,3
Standard Deviation	7,65
Completed Students	26 students (86,7%)
Students are not complete	4 students (13,3%)

There has been a significant increase in the number of students who have reached the KKM. This shows that the SQ3R method has a positive impact on students' reading comprehension.

After the completion of the SQ3R-based instruction, a posttest was administered to measure students' reading comprehension achievement. The posttest results showed a substantial improvement compared to the pretest scores. The highest posttest score increased to 90, while the lowest score rose to 65. The mean posttest score reached 78.3, which exceeded the Minimum Completeness Criteria. In terms of learning mastery, 26 students (86.7%) successfully achieved scores equal to or higher than the MCC, while only 4 students (13.3%) remained below the standard. This marked improvement in both average scores and mastery levels indicates that the SQ3R method had a positive impact on students' reading comprehension abilities.

Statistical Analysis

To test the significance of the difference between pretest and posttest scores, a t-test (Paired Sample T-Test) was used with the help of SPSS version 25.

Hipotesis

1. H_0 (Hypothesis zero): There was no significant difference between pretest and posttest scores.
2. H_1 (Alternative hypothesis): There is a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores.

Table 3. T-Test Results

Statistics test	Mark
T-Result	11,824
T- Table ($\alpha = 0,05$; $df = 29$)	2,045
Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000

Since the significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$ and $t_{\text{calculated}} > t_{\text{table}}$, H_0 is rejected, and H_1 is accepted. This means that there is a significant difference between the results of the pretest and posttest. Thus, the SQ3R method has been proven to be effective in improving the reading comprehension ability of elementary school students.

To statistically examine the significance of the improvement, a paired sample t-test was conducted using SPSS version 25. The results of the analysis revealed a t-value of 11.824 with a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000. At a significance level of 0.05 and with 29 degrees of freedom, the critical t-table value was 2.045. Since the obtained t-value was considerably higher than the t-table value and the significance level was lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This statistical evidence confirms that there was a significant difference between students' reading comprehension scores before and after the implementation of the SQ3R method.

The magnitude of improvement observed in this study suggests that the SQ3R method effectively supports students in developing a deeper comprehension of reading texts. The structured stages of the method guided students through a cognitive process that involved previewing, questioning, active reading, recalling, and reviewing information. As a result, students were better able to understand the content, identify important ideas, and retain information for longer periods. Moreover, the method encouraged students to become active readers who interact with texts rather than merely read them superficially.

In addition to quantitative improvements, qualitative observations during the learning process revealed positive changes in students' learning behavior. Students became more attentive during reading activities, participated more actively in

discussions, and demonstrated greater confidence in answering comprehension questions. These behavioral changes indicate that the SQ3R method not only improved academic outcomes but also fostered positive attitudes toward reading. Such attitudes are essential for developing long-term reading habits and literacy skills.

Overall, the results of this research provide strong empirical evidence that the implementation of the SQ3R method significantly improves elementary school students' reading comprehension skills. The combination of improved test scores, increased learning mastery, and enhanced student engagement highlights the effectiveness of SQ3R as an instructional strategy for reading comprehension. Therefore, the findings of this study support the use of the SQ3R method as an effective and practical approach for reading instruction in elementary schools, particularly in the context of Indonesian language learning.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) method has a significant positive effect on improving elementary school students' reading comprehension skills. This is evidenced by the substantial increase in students' average scores from the pretest to the posttest, as well as the sharp rise in the percentage of students who achieved the Minimum Completeness Criteria. These results demonstrate that the SQ3R method is effective in addressing the core problem of low reading comprehension among elementary school students. The improvement reflects not only a numerical increase in test scores but also an enhancement in students' ability to understand texts more deeply, including identifying main ideas, comprehending detailed information, and drawing appropriate conclusions. This finding supports previous studies, which emphasize that structured and strategic reading instruction plays a crucial role in developing students' reading comprehension abilities (Turahmat et al., [2025](#)).

The effectiveness of the SQ3R method in this research can be attributed to its emphasis on active student engagement throughout the reading process. The *Survey* and *Question* stages encourage students to activate prior knowledge and establish clear reading purposes before engaging with the text in depth. By formulating their own questions, students are cognitively prepared to search for relevant information while reading, which makes the reading process more focused and meaningful. This finding is consistent with the results of studies conducted by (Prananto et al., [2025](#))

and (Afandi & Oktavia, [2025](#)) which highlights that students' active cognitive involvement at the early stages of reading significantly enhances comprehension. Compared to conventional reading instruction, which often positions students as passive readers, the SQ3R method fosters purposeful and strategic reading behaviors.

Furthermore, the *Recite* and *Review* stages play a vital role in strengthening students' understanding and retention of reading materials. In these stages, students are required to restate the content of the text using their own words and to review the material through discussion and summarization. Such activities help students reorganize information, clarify misunderstandings, and internalize the meaning of the text more effectively. This finding aligns with the research of (Sari et al., [2025](#)) and (Turahmat et al., [2025](#)) who found that encouraging students to retell and review reading content enhances comprehension and long-term memory. Therefore, the SQ3R method supports not only immediate comprehension but also deeper and more sustained understanding of reading texts.

In addition to improving academic outcomes, the implementation of the SQ3R method also positively influenced students' attitudes and engagement in reading activities. During the learning process, students demonstrated higher levels of participation, enthusiasm, and confidence when responding to comprehension questions and discussing reading materials. This indicates that SQ3R creates a more interactive and student-centered learning environment, which is essential for fostering motivation and interest in reading. These findings are in line with (Turahmat et al., [2025](#)), who emphasize that engaging and meaningful reading instruction can increase students' motivation and reduce negative perceptions of reading as a difficult or burdensome task. As students become more confident and motivated, they are more likely to develop positive reading habits that support long-term literacy development.

The results of this study reinforce previous research suggesting that the SQ3R method is an effective instructional strategy for improving reading comprehension among elementary school students. This study contributes empirical evidence that SQ3R can be successfully implemented at the elementary level when adapted to students' cognitive characteristics and learning needs. By guiding students through systematic stages of reading, the SQ3R method helps them become more active, strategic, and reflective readers (Rakhmawati et al., [2025](#)). Consequently, the method not only improves reading comprehension outcomes but also supports the

development of critical thinking and independent learning skills, which are essential for students' academic success and readiness to face future educational challenges.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis, statistical tests, and discussions that have been carried out, it can be concluded that the application of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) learning method has proven to be effective in improving the reading comprehension ability of elementary school students, especially grade V students at SD Negeri Jakarta. There was a significant increase in the average score from the pretest of 56.7 to the posttest of 78.3, which shows an improvement in students' ability to comprehend reading after the application of the SQ3R method. The percentage of student learning completeness increased sharply, from only 26.7% of students who reached the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) during the pretest to 86.7% after the posttest. The results of the statistical test using the t-test (paired sample t-test) showed a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, which means that the difference between the pretest and posttest results is statistically significant. This corroborates that the SQ3R method has a positive influence on students' reading comprehension skills. Each step in the SQ3R method, reviewing the text, formulating a question, reading actively, reciting, and reviewing, helps students to be more active, focused, and understand the content of the reading in depth and structure.

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