

IMPROVING PUPILS' RELIGIOUS LITERACY THROUGH THE READING CORNER PROGRAMME AT MI MATALIBUL HUDA MLONGGO

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Abstract

Religious literacy is an important competency in madrasah ibtidaiyah (elementary Islamic school) education, especially in text-based religious subjects. However, the religious literacy skills of MI students are still relatively low, as indicated by their lack of interest in reading and difficulty in understanding religious texts. This study aims to examine the implementation of the reading corner programme and its role in improving the religious literacy of students at Matholibul Huda Mlonggo MI. The research used a qualitative approach with an in-depth case study through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, as well as data analysis using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model. The results showed that the reading corner programme was implemented continuously with the support of facilities, teachers, and madrasah policies, and was utilised as part of learning through regular reading habits. This programme contributed positively to improving students' religious understanding, especially through narrative and visual readings, although the improvement was not yet evenly distributed among all students. Therefore, a variety of reading materials and teacher assistance are needed to optimise the improvement of students' religious literacy.

Keywords : *Religious literacy, Reading corner, Religious Education, In-depth case studies*

Abstrak

Literasi keagamaan merupakan kompetensi penting dalam pendidikan madrasah ibtidaiyah (MI), terutama pada mata pelajaran keagamaan berbasis teks. Namun, kemampuan literasi keagamaan siswa MI masih relatif rendah, sebagaimana ditunjukkan oleh kurangnya minat mereka dalam membaca dan kesulitan dalam memahami teks-teks keagamaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pelaksanaan program sudut baca dan perannya dalam meningkatkan literasi keagamaan siswa di MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi kasus mendalam melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, serta analisis data menggunakan model Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program sudut baca dilaksanakan secara berkelanjutan dengan dukungan fasilitas, guru, dan kebijakan madrasah, serta dimanfaatkan sebagai bagian dari pembelajaran melalui kebiasaan membaca yang teratur. Program ini memberikan kontribusi positif terhadap peningkatan pemahaman keagamaan siswa, terutama melalui bacaan naratif dan visual, meskipun peningkatan tersebut belum merata di antara seluruh siswa. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan variasi bahan bacaan dan bimbingan guru untuk mengoptimalkan peningkatan literasi keagamaan siswa.

Kata Kunci: *Literasi keagamaan, Sudut baca, Pendidikan agama, Studi kasus mendalam*

Introduction

Religious literacy is a key foundation for improving the quality of education in madrasahs, particularly at the primary level such as madrasah ibtidaiyah. Religious literacy is not merely understood as the technical ability to recite texts, but encompasses the ability to comprehend meaning, interpret information, connect the content of the text with prior knowledge, and reflect on it in daily life. This ability is a crucial prerequisite for successful learning, as almost all subjects are based on the activities of reading and understanding texts. Various studies indicate that low levels of religious literacy lead to weak critical thinking skills, low student participation in learning, and limited learning outcomes (Muti'ah et al., 2025). This situation is exacerbated by a lack of a reading culture within school and family environments, as evidenced by various national reports which place Indonesia's student religious literacy index below the global average (Nasrullah & Asmarini, 2024). Therefore, strengthening religious literacy through habit formation and the creation of a literacy-rich learning environment has become an urgent need that must be addressed by educational institutions, including madrasah.

However, the reality on the ground shows that the religious literacy skills of MI pupils remain relatively low. Based on the results of initial observations of 15 Year 3 pupils at MI Matalibul Huda Mlonggo, the researchers found that pupils tended to lack an interest in reading, experienced difficulties in understanding the content of texts, and were not yet accustomed to reading independently outside formal learning activities. This has a negative impact on their comprehension. In the current digital era, students are increasingly exposed to short-form digital content that may reduce sustained reading habits and critical comprehension skills. Therefore, the reading corner programme becomes increasingly relevant as an effort to cultivate deep reading habits, strengthen students' religious understanding, and balance the influence of digital media consumption among young learners. The abundance of digital information also requires students to develop critical religious literacy in order to distinguish reliable religious knowledge from misinformation circulating on social media platforms. According to Habiballah & Susanti (2022), enjoyment in learning is a key determinant of literacy success. Students who read books voluntarily tend to absorb information more easily and achieve better learning outcomes, whereas a lack of interest hinders comprehension and lowers academic performance. The cause is none other than the fact that religious education is still dominated by lecture-based methods and the use of textbooks, meaning that reading has not yet become an integrated habit within the learning process. This situation highlights the need for innovative strategies capable of fostering a love of reading whilst simultaneously improving students' religious literacy skills.

One relevant alternative is the implementation of a reading corner programme in the classroom as a means of fostering a contextual and sustained reading habit. Research by Ulwiyah et al. (2022) and Ningsih & Setiawati (2024) demonstrates that a consistently managed reading corner programme is capable of enhancing

reading interest, student engagement, and understanding of the subject matter in religious education. Therefore, this study is important to conduct an in-depth examination of the improvement in students' religious literacy through the reading corner programme at MI Matalibul Huda Mlonggo, in order to provide an empirical contribution to the development of literacy-based religious learning and the strengthening of a reading culture within the madrasah ibtidaiyah environment.

Although several previous studies have discussed literacy culture and reading corner programmes in elementary schools and madrasahs, most studies primarily focused on improving general reading interest and learning achievement. Limited studies specifically examine how reading corner programmes contribute to strengthening pupils' religious literacy in madrasah ibtidaiyah contexts, particularly through sustained literacy habituation integrated into Islamic Religious Education learning. Furthermore, previous studies rarely explore the contextual challenges faced by students in understanding conceptual religious materials and the role of teacher assistance in overcoming these difficulties. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by providing an in-depth exploration of the implementation of the reading corner programme and its contribution to improving pupils' religious literacy at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on religious literacy improvement through a classroom-based reading corner programme in an Islamic elementary school context. Unlike previous studies that generally discuss literacy culture in broader educational settings, this research specifically highlights how narrative and visual Islamic reading materials, teacher mentoring, and routine literacy habituation contribute to strengthening students' understanding of religious concepts and shaping religious attitudes simultaneously.

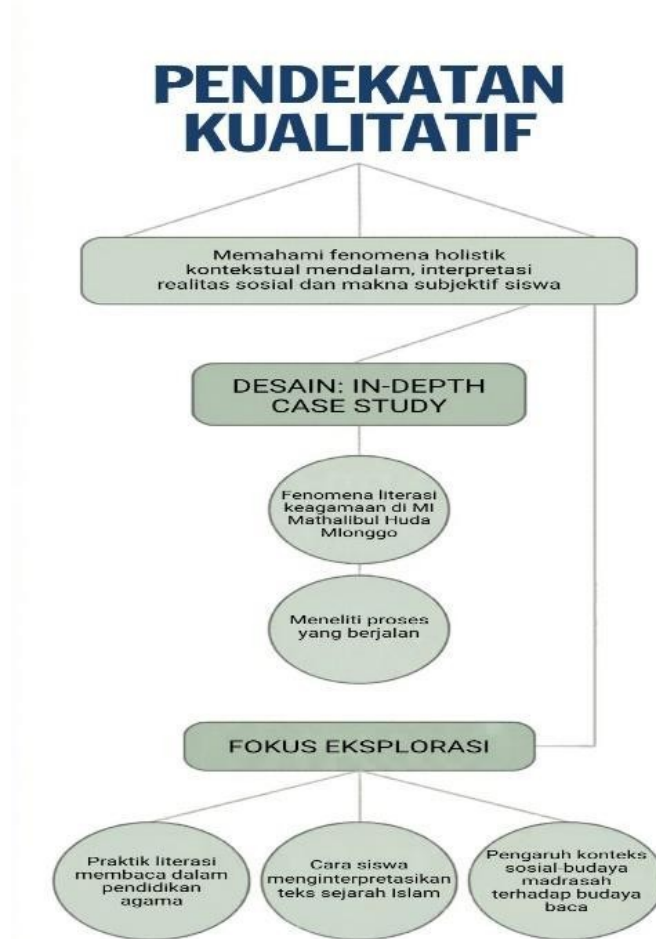
Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of an in-depth case study. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to understand social phenomena holistically, contextually and in depth within the natural environment in which they occur, rather than to measure or test relationships between variables in the form of statistical figures. Qualitative research emphasises the interpretation of social reality, interaction processes, subjective experiences, and the dynamics occurring in the field. Therefore, this approach is considered appropriate for exploring in depth the understanding, experiences, and perceptions of pupils regarding religious literacy at MI Matholibul Mlonggo. Through this approach, the researcher can comprehensively capture how reading literacy is practised in religious education, how students interpret the activity of reading Islamic historical texts, and how the social and cultural context of the madrasah influences this process (Fadli, 2021).

In the context of this research, an in-depth case study was applied to examine in detail the phenomenon of student reading literacy in one specific context, namely religious learning in an elementary madrasah educational unit. The case study allows researchers to examine a complex and unique case in depth, encompassing the dynamics of the learning process, literacy strengthening strategies implemented by teachers, interactions between teachers and students, and contextual factors such as the school environment, availability of reading materials, and student learning habits (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023). This approach focuses not only on the final learning outcomes but also on the ongoing process, thus providing a comprehensive picture of efforts to improve reading literacy in religious learning. Furthermore, the in-depth case study allows for the use of a variety of rich and complementary data collection techniques, such as learning observations, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, and documentation in the form of learning tools and student work. Through this data triangulation, this research is expected to produce credible, contextual findings and provide a deep understanding of reading literacy practices in religious learning at MI Mathalibul Mlonggo.

This study employed three data collection techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Selecting a data collection technique is a crucial step in conducting any research. Therefore, the researcher sought to carefully observe and collect highly credible data in the field through the three selected data collection techniques.

Overall, the data analysis process in this study followed the framework of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which emphasizes that qualitative data analysis is conducted interactively, cyclically, and continuously throughout the research process. Analysis was not conducted only after all data had been collected, but continued from the data collection stage through the writing of the research report. This approach allowed the researcher to continuously reflect on the findings, deepen their understanding of the phenomenon of student reading literacy, and produce contextual and scientifically sound conclusions.



Gambar 1. Bagan Research Method

Findings And Discussion

In this section, the author separates the research results presented by including the data obtained and analyzed, and the discussion section, which presents a logical interpretation of the research results and links them to relevant reference sources.

Table 1. Students' Religious Literacy Improvement

Indicator	Before Reading Corner Programme	After Reading Corner Programme

Interest in reading religious books	Low	Moderate-High
Understanding of Islamic stories	Limited	Improved
Ability to answer religious questions	Less accurate	More accurate
Participation in literacy activities	Passive	Active
Religious attitude in classroom	Inconsistent	More consistent

Results

1. Implementation of the Reading Corner Program at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo

The reading corner program at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo has been consistently implemented over the past five years as a concrete step by the madrasah to foster a culture of religious literacy from an early age. Technically, on the ground, this facility is provided in every classroom by utilizing a corner of the room that is considered strategic, easily accessible, and has adequate lighting and air circulation. This conducive spatial arrangement is designed so that students can interact with books more closely, comfortably, and without coercion in a pleasant learning atmosphere. The collection of reading materials provided is quite varied yet focused, dominated by books that support the strengthening of students' spiritual values, such as Islamic-themed children's stories, tales of the prophets and messengers, guides on moral conduct, and supplementary books for the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum.

In the daily dynamics of the classroom, teachers play a central role as active facilitators who not only organize books but also guide students in selecting appropriate reading materials and integrate the content of those books into formal lesson plans. This program is scheduled twice a week, during which students are given a dedicated 10-minute reading period before core instructional activities begin. To gauge the extent of students' comprehension, teachers employ simple reflection methods after the reading activity concludes, such as asking students to retell the book's content or facilitating a light discussion on the moral messages within. The visual approach of the provided print media has proven to be the primary catalyst in capturing students' attention, as expressed by one classroom teacher during an interview: "Students become more enthusiastic when they read illustrated Islamic storybooks because the material is easier for them to understand." (Teacher Interview, April 2026).

The long-term sustainability of this reading corner program is closely tied to the structural support provided by the Principal of MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo, who facilitates logistical needs, ranging from the provision of adequate bookshelves to the regular updating of reading materials. In addition to ensuring physical facilities, the Head of the Madrasah also performs a supervisory role through periodic evaluations of the program's implementation in each classroom to monitor students' reading interest and level of religious understanding in real-time. Regarding this commitment to facilitation and oversight, the Madrasah Principal emphasized in an interview: "We are fully committed to continuously updating the book collection and monitoring the effectiveness of these reading corners in every classroom, so that this program does not merely serve as a room decoration, but truly becomes a measurable evaluation tool to enhance the children's religious understanding." (Interview with the Madrasah Principal, April 2026). The results of this monitoring are then used by the madrasah as baseline data to formulate policies for the development of reading corners in the next period..

2. Improving Students' Religious Literacy Through the Reading Corner Program

Based on interview data collected from teachers and students, the implementation of the reading corner program at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo has had a tangible impact on improving students' religious literacy within the madrasah. Most students confirmed that the availability of books in the reading corner made it easier for them to absorb religious materials that were initially considered complex. The use of simple language and the inclusion of engaging visual illustrations in these books are key factors that help students construct their understanding of religious concepts. This fact is reinforced by a statement from one student during a field interview: "I like reading stories about prophets because the pictures help me understand the lesson better." (Student Interview, April 2026). This indication of success is also directly recorded in the madrasah's official assessment documents, where students' religious comprehension scores fall within the range of 80 to 90, which is quantitatively categorized as good to very good.

In comparison, teachers reported significant differences in academic performance and behavior between groups of students who actively used the reading corner and those who were less active. Students with high reading intensity consistently demonstrated superior mastery of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum material, were able to respond more accurately to teachers' questions during lessons, and exhibited more disciplined religious attitudes in their daily activities at the madrasah. One classroom teacher emphasized this clear difference in an interview: "The kids who regularly visit the reading corner are noticeably different in class; they grasp religious material faster when asked and recite their readings much more fluently compared to their peers who rarely read." (Teacher Interview, April 2026). This field observation indicates that independent reading activities in the classroom corner

directly contribute to strengthening students' cognitive development while simultaneously fostering their religious character.

Nevertheless, field data also indicates variations in students' levels of understanding, with some children reportedly still struggling to grasp conceptual and procedural material, such as the details of the valid conditions for prayer and the meanings of the Asmaul Husna. This difficulty was echoed by one student who admitted to being overwhelmed by abstract memorization material: "When reading a fiqh book about the requirements for prayer or memorizing the many meanings of the Asmaul Husna, I still often get confused and can't quite remember." (Student Interview, April 2026). In response to these challenges, teachers took tactical steps in the classroom by integrating the reading corner into enrichment strategies. Teachers provided additional support through re-explanations, initiated small-group discussions, and specifically guided students to find relevant literature in the reading corner. Through these direct interventions, the reading corner has transformed into an adaptive medium that supports active learning in addressing students' learning difficulties.

3. Challenges in Improving Religion Literacy Through the Reading Corner Program

Although the reading corner program at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo has been running continuously, field data indicates significant challenges regarding the updating and limited variety of religious books available in each classroom. Over time, the frequency of students' visits to the reading corner has tended to decline due to boredom with the same reading materials that have been read repeatedly. The madrasah's limited budget and the lack of a structured book rotation system between classes hinder the provision of popular religious books. This issue of student boredom was directly confirmed by one student during a field interview: "I've already finished reading all the illustrated books about the prophets, Sis. So now, when I go to the reading corner, I'm confused about what to read next because the books are still the same as last semester." (Student Interview, May 2026).

The next challenge stems from internal factors among students, namely a gap in reading ability and varying levels of focus when utilizing the 10 minutes before the main lesson. Teachers in early grades (lower grades) report that some students still require intensive guidance in spelling and understanding religious vocabulary of loanword origin, so the available time often runs out before students can grasp the essence of the text. Additionally, overcrowded classrooms sometimes reduce the effectiveness of the reading corner, as noise and the movement of other students often disrupt the concentration of children who are reading. One classroom teacher described the dynamics of these challenges: "The biggest challenge is keeping the children focused. The 10-minute reading time is sometimes ineffective because the room is often noisy, and since the children's reading abilities vary, the teacher must divide their attention between monitoring the class and guiding students who are not yet fluent readers."

(Teacher Interview, May 2026).

From a managerial and structural oversight perspective, the challenges faced include ensuring consistent administrative management of the reading corners and the dual burden borne by classroom teachers as the direct supervisors. Due to the absence of dedicated staff or librarians to assist in each classroom, the recording of book circulation and monitoring of students' reading progress are often not properly documented due to the time constraints faced by teachers who must meet formal curriculum targets. School management recognizes this administrative weakness as one of the obstacles in assessing the program's effectiveness on a broader scale. The Principal of MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo acknowledged these management challenges during an interview: "We observe that book administration and maintenance in the reading corners remain disorganized because teachers' workloads in the classroom are already extremely heavy. Moving forward, we must find a new approach, perhaps involving the parent association or student-led literacy groups to help maintain and manage this reading corner." (Interview with the Madrasah Principal, May 2026).

Discussion

1. Implementation of the Reading Corner Program at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo

Based on the research findings, a deeper analysis reveals that the implementation of the reading corner program at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo has successfully integrated fundamental elements within the school literacy ecosystem. These include the availability of ergonomic physical facilities, the multidimensional active involvement of teachers, and structural policy support from the madrasah management. Field phenomena demonstrate a transformation in the function of the reading corner; the area is no longer merely a passive classroom display or decoration, but has been optimized as a pedagogical instrument closely embedded within daily learning processes. This empirical finding strongly correlates with and expands upon research by Musthofa (2024), which underscored that the success of accelerating a school literacy culture is deterministically shaped by the synergy between structural support, the commitment of teachers as literacy agents, and the creation of a conducive academic atmosphere. Across both research loci, a common thread emerges, showing that the optimization of a reading corner can only be achieved when physical facilities are brought to life through programmed, measurable reading activities integrated into the classroom curriculum.

The dimension of habituating a 10-minute reading activity, executed consistently twice a week, reflects a systematic behavioristic approach by teachers to instill a reading habit in students from an early age. The spatial design of the reading corner, which focuses on comfort parameters such as utilizing good natural ventilation, adequate macro lighting, and placing books within the physical reach of children has proven to significantly eliminate students' perception of reading as a burden or a tedious instructional task. This conducive

learning environment acts as an external stimulus that triggers students' intrinsic motivation to explore reading materials voluntarily. This sociological track record aligns with the theses put forward by Widya et al. (2025) as well as Ningsih and Setiawati (2024), which state that short-term literacy time management ranging from 10 to 15 minutes, combined with spatial design oriented toward children's psychological comfort, can exponentially boost student engagement in literacy activities. This reinforces the premise that consistency in implementation rhythm and the quality of classroom ergonomics are pivotal variables for the success of literacy programs, both in public elementary schools and Islamic elementary schools that possess distinct local religious characteristics.

Despite facing tangible challenges in its journey, such as a limited variety of book genres and stagnant updates of the religious collection, the implementation performance of the reading corner at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo can be categorized as running optimally and sustainably. The sustainability of this program is driven by the flexibility of classroom teachers in integrating meaningful illustrated Islamic storybooks with formal teaching materials, thereby mitigating logistical limitations at the classroom level. This field fact complements the research perspective of Ulwiyah et al. (2022), whose findings identified that a scarcity of supporting facilities and a lack of ongoing incentives for managers are often primary factors degrading the quality of a school's literacy culture. Differences in educational unit typologies, the sociocultural structure of the madrasah environment, and disparities in material resource allocation provide the argumentative foundation for why the management of the reading corner at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo still requires strengthening in the future. This is particularly true regarding the decentralization of administration and the rotation of book collections between classes to eliminate potential reading fatigue among students.

Viewed through the paradigm of constructivist learning theory, the independent and guided activities in the reading corner at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo provide space for students to act as active knowledge-seeking subjects who construct their own religious understanding. This meaning-making process occurs when students engage in an internal dialogue with the text, which is subsequently contextualized through real interactions with their daily spiritual experiences at the madrasah. This cultural reality aligns with the sociocultural principles advanced by Vygotsky, wherein higher-order thinking processes in children are continuously mediated by social interaction and adaptive ecological support, otherwise known as scaffolding. Through light discussion methods and teacher instructions for students to retell the stories of the prophets they have read, the reading corner shifts in function from a mere static-physical facility into a dynamic social learning environment. It is within this environment that the process of negotiating meaning, internalizing moral values, and decoding religious symbols occurs collectively among peers, which in turn effectively enhances their religious literacy capacity holistically.

2. Improving Students' Religious Literacy Through the Reading Corner Program

The empirical evidence gathered from the field demonstrates that the improvement in students' religious literacy is directly evident in their heightened understanding of Islamic religious learning materials, particularly when mediated through narrative and visual-based readings. In the context of primary-age learners, abstract theological or historical concepts often present a cognitive hurdle; however, the strategic provision of religious storybooks enriched with contextual illustrations effectively translates these abstract notions into concrete, relatable paradigms. This specific finding aligns with and reinforces the research conducted by Bethan (2023), which posited that literacy-based religious learning environments significantly amplify students' enthusiasm and conceptual grasp of Islamic Religious Education. Across both studies, the intersection of narrative-driven religious storybooks and structured classroom reading corners serves a dual purpose: it decodes complex historical trajectories of Islam and contextualizes core spiritual values, allowing students to internalize them not as static dogmas, but as dynamic, living principles relevant to their developmental stage.

Furthermore, a comparative analysis of student behavior reveals a pronounced dichotomy: students who actively and consistently utilized the classroom reading corners demonstrated a significantly superior mastery of religious materials compared to their less active peers. This performance gap underscores the fact that reading corners function not merely as passive repositories of text, but as active, high-yield learning support media that facilitate independent retrieval, review, and cognitive deepening of classroom lessons. Within this framework, religious literacy is conceptualized not merely as the mechanical ability to decode religious texts, but as a broader, multi-faceted capacity to interpret, synthesize, and actively apply these religious values to navigate daily life within the madrasah and the wider community. This empirical reality strongly mirrors the foundational work of Ulwiyah et al. (2022), which demonstrated that sustained reading and writing literacy initiatives play a vital role in elevating academic achievement and conceptual clarity in religious subjects. The data from MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo reinforces this view, demonstrating that the reading corner acts as an ecosystem for self-paced reinforcement and distributed repetition, which are critical for long-term memory retention in young learners.

However, a critical nuance emerged from this study: the observed improvements in religious literacy were not uniformly distributed across the entire student demographic, displaying noticeable stagnation when encountering highly conceptual or procedural material, such as the jurisprudential requirements of valid prayer or the metaphysical nature of the Asmaul Husna. This particular finding departs slightly from mainstream previous literatures, which often reported relatively uniform upward trends in learning outcomes across literacy interventions. This variance can be attributed

to the unique cognitive developmental threshold of elementary madrasah students, who remain heavily reliant on concrete operational thinking and still require intensive, structured scaffolding to process highly abstract content. Furthermore, the existing structural limitation regarding the variety and cognitive alignment of the reading materials exacerbates this gap. Consequently, the insights gained from this investigation highlight a crucial pedagogical implication: the mere physical provision of a reading corner is insufficient. To bridge this intra-classroom disparity and ensure equitable literacy gains, educational institutions must implement deliberate, subsequent strategies such as guided reading frameworks, tailored teacher-led interventions, and regular interactive feedback loops thereby ensuring that the advancement of religious literacy becomes an inclusive achievement for all students.

3. Challenges in Improving Religion Literacy Through the Reading Corner Program

The empirical findings concerning student boredom driven by the stagnation of book collections at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo demonstrate that the long-term sustainability of a reading corner program is heavily contingent upon the psychological principle of the novelty effect within reading materials. When students have completely exhausted the limited selection of illustrated Islamic storybooks available in their respective rooms, their intrinsic drive to engage with the reading corner naturally undergoes a sharp decline. The constraints of the madrasah's budget, which directly halt the acquisition of new titles, underscore how logistical and financial vulnerabilities frequently become primary bottlenecks in sustaining a consistent literacy culture within primary education. This systemic decay aligns with the broader literacy ecosystem theory, which posits that a diverse, continually refreshed repository of texts is a non-negotiable prerequisite for maintaining deep, longitudinal student reading engagement (Pratiwi, 2022). Without a dynamic collection management strategy such as an institutionalized monthly book rotation policy across different grade levels the reading corner space risks functional obsolescence, devolving into a static physical ornament that loses both its hedonic appeal and its targeted pedagogical utility for developing minds (Sari & Wijaya, 2023).

On a secondary level, institutional challenges manifest as instructional hurdles rooted in the clear disparity in students' reading proficiencies, compounded by structural time constraints in the field. The allocation of a 10-minute reading window prior to core instructional hours routinely loses its efficacy in lower-grade classrooms, where a significant cluster of early learners is still grappling with rudimentary decoding skills and syllable recognition. This mechanical literacy friction is further intensified by the linguistic complexity of religious reading materials, which are heavily saturated with loanwords and specialized theological terms derived from Arabic; consequently, the brief time frame is often fully depleted before students can move past phonetic decoding to perform semantic extraction or meaning-making. Furthermore, the crowded, high-stimulus nature of contemporary classrooms acts as a significant distractor

that degrades children's visual attention capacity. From a psycholinguistic standpoint, young learners require a highly stabilized, quiet environment to foster deep reading habits; a constantly disruptive classroom atmosphere forces educators to continuously fragment their focus between active classroom behavior management and individualized reading scaffolding, ultimately reducing the depth of students' internalizing of core religious values (Fitriani & Rahmawati, 2025).

From a managerial and administrative standpoint, the profound role overload experienced by classroom teachers who operate as the sole, unassisted curators of these literacy spaces serves as a primary institutional barrier to systematic program documentation. The complete absence of specialized school librarians or dedicated literacy aides at the classroom level means that vital administrative tasks, such as tracking circulation logs, cataloging book maintenance, and executing individualized formative monitoring of student reading trajectories, are systematically sidelined in order to meet the pressing demands of the core national curriculum. This lack of robust documentation results in a critical deficit of empirical tracking data, rendering it exceptionally difficult for the madrasah administration to execute evidence-based policy evaluations or data-driven program adjustments. Accordingly, the proactive strategic plan voiced by the Madrasah Principal to decentralize governance by mobilizing parent-teacher associations and training students as classroom literacy ambassadors emerges as a highly relevant structural intervention. Transitioning toward a collaborative, partnership-based management framework has been shown to effectively alleviate teacher burnout, safeguard physical book assets through shared responsibility, and cultivate a collective sense of communal ownership over the religious literacy mission of the institution (Hidayat & Utami, 2023).

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion presented, it can be concluded that the implementation of the reading corner program at MI Matholibul Huda Mlonggo has been quite optimal and sustainable. This program is supported by the availability of literacy resources, active teacher involvement, and support from madrasah policies. The reading corner not only functions as a supplementary classroom facility but is utilized as part of the learning process through the promotion of regular reading habits integrated with teaching and learning activities. A comfortable learning environment and an attractive reading corner layout contribute to fostering students' interest in reading.

This study contributes theoretically by enriching the discourse on religious literacy development in Islamic elementary education through literacy habituation strategies. Practically, this research provides recommendations for madrasahs and teachers regarding the effective implementation of classroom-based reading corners as literacy support facilities integrated into Islamic Religious Education learning.

Furthermore, the reading corner program has been shown to have a positive impact on improving students' religious literacy. Students who actively utilize the reading corner demonstrate a better understanding of religious material, particularly through narrative and visual reading. Religious literacy not only improves students' cognitive understanding but also supports the formation of religious attitudes in daily life. However, the improvement in religious literacy has not been fully distributed among all students, particularly in conceptual and abstract religious material. Therefore, this study confirms that the reading corner program is a relevant and effective strategy for improving religious literacy in elementary school students, but still requires reinforcement through varied reading materials, teacher mentoring, and guided reading strategies. With more systematic and sustainable management, the reading corner has the potential to become a strategic tool for developing literacy-based religious learning and strengthening a reading culture in elementary school environments.

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