

Quality Management of Indonesian Language Learning in Improving Students' Reading Literacy in Elementary Schools

Enur Nurhayati*, Eva Dianawati Wasliman

Islam Nusantara University, Indonesia

Email: enurnurhayati58@guru.sd.belajar.id, evadianawatiwasliman@uninus.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

quality, management, Indonesian language, reading literacy, elementary school

Reading literacy is a fundamental skill for elementary school students, serving as the foundation for mastering various fields of knowledge. However, students' literacy skills still face challenges such as limited reading materials, lack of varied teaching methods, and an underdeveloped literacy culture. In this context, the quality management of Indonesian language learning plays a key role in ensuring effective and systematic teaching aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. This study aims to analyze how quality management of Indonesian language learning supports the improvement of reading literacy at SDN Kertajadi and SDN Kiarangupuk, Cidaun District, Cianjur Regency. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and analyzed with Miles & Huberman's model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that lesson planning referred to the Merdeka Curriculum but was limited by inadequate reading resources and less varied strategies. Learning implementation involved interactive approaches such as group discussions and text-based learning, yet literacy culture beyond the classroom remained weak. Evaluation used formative and summative assessments, but follow-up actions were not fully integrated into continuous improvement programs. The study concludes that quality management has contributed positively to students' reading literacy but requires strengthening through sufficient resources, teacher training, and sustainable literacy programs involving the whole school community.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a key pillar in developing high-quality and competitive human resources. Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System emphasizes that education not only serves to develop skills, but also shapes the character and civilization of a dignified nation. Within this framework, improving the quality of learning is one of the indicators of the success of national education development. One of the most fundamental aspects is reading literacy, because reading literacy is the foundation for students to master various disciplines, think critically, and actively participate in social life (Delgadova, 2015; Greenleaf et al., 2023; Niculescu & Dragomir, 2023).

Reading literacy is not merely a technical skill of recognizing letters and words, but also includes the ability to understand, interpret, evaluate, and reflect on information from various reading sources (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019). This ability is very important for shaping a generation of lifelong learners. However, various international surveys show that Indonesian students' literacy achievements are still low. The PRILS (2011) results placed Indonesia with a score of 428, while Programme for International

Student Assessment (2012) reported Indonesian students' reading literacy score at 396, far below the OECD average. National data from the Language Development and Guidance Agency (2021) also shows that only 37.5% of secondary school students have achieved level 3 reading competency. This condition is exacerbated by a low literacy access index of 23.09 on a scale of 0–100.

The government has issued various strategic policies to strengthen the culture of literacy. Permendikbud No. 23 of 2015 regulates the implementation of the School Literacy Movement (GLS), while Permendikbud No. 21 of 2015 emphasizes the importance of character building through reading literacy activities. Normatively, this policy is expected to foster a sustainable literacy ecosystem in schools. However, the implementation of GLS in the field has not been optimal. Many schools still face limitations in reading materials, a lack of variety in learning strategies, a weak literacy culture, and the misconception that literacy is only the responsibility of Indonesian language teachers (Fauzan et al., 2023; Hapsarini et al., 2023; Nurcahyoko et al., 2024).

Indonesian, as the national language, the language of unity, and the main language of education (Law No. 24 of 2009), has a central role in literacy development. Therefore, strengthening reading literacy through quality management of Indonesian language learning is a strategic step in improving the quality of education in elementary schools (Marmoah et al., 2024; Marmoah & Jenny Indrastoeti Siti Poerwanti, 2022; Sauri et al., 2024).

Although various efforts have been made, there are several research gaps that still need to be explored further (de Oliveira et al., 2019; Miles, 2017; Wong et al., 2022). First, most literacy research in elementary schools is qualitative in nature with a limited scope, so it has not been able to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of Indonesian language learning quality management in the context of schools with different characteristics. Second, variations in quality management strategies such as cross-curricular integration, the use of digital technology, and the involvement of the school community and parents have not been explored in depth. Third, previous studies have emphasized aspects of motivation or reading habits, while literacy achievement measured by international and national standard instruments has not been the main focus. Thus, a comprehensive, systematic study of the implementation of Indonesian language learning quality management based on literacy achievement evaluation is still very much needed (Djiwandono & Ginting, 2025; Munir, 2025).

A number of previous studies have highlighted efforts to improve literacy in schools. Agustian and Marantika (2022) found that the use of locally-based reading materials accompanied by teacher feedback can increase student motivation and participation in reading activities. Research by Ridho et al. at MIS Hubbul Wathon shows that the implementation of GLS for 15 minutes is effective in creating a literacy ecosystem that involves the entire school community. Similarly, Azizah et al. (2022) found that the daily reading literacy program at MTs Negeri Binjai contributed to character building and improved students' reading comprehension. A study at SDN Unggulan Bontomanai also confirmed that non-curricular reading habits, fostering curiosity, and critical learning can increase creativity and build a school literacy culture.

Although these findings make a positive contribution, previous studies have been limited in scope, focusing more on motivation and reading habits, and have not examined all aspects of learning quality management. This indicates that there is room for new research to

strengthen empirical evidence on the management of Indonesian language learning quality as an effort to improve reading literacy in elementary schools.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive and integrative approach to examining the quality management of Indonesian language learning by simultaneously analyzing planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up processes, as well as comparing two elementary schools with different characteristics. This study also positions literacy improvement not only as a behavioral outcome (reading habit), but as a result of systematic and continuous quality management practices, thereby providing a more holistic and practical framework for improving reading literacy in elementary education.

Based on the background, research gaps, and previous studies, this study aims to analyze the planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up of Indonesian language learning quality management in improving students' reading literacy. Compare the implementation of learning quality management at SDN Kertajadi and SDN Kiarangupuk in Cidaun District, Cianjur Regency. Provide theoretical contributions to the development of learning quality management studies and practical recommendations for teachers, principals, and policy makers in improving reading literacy in elementary schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a case study method with a qualitative approach. This method was chosen based on the research objective to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of Indonesian language learning quality management in improving the reading literacy of elementary school students. A case study is considered appropriate because it can realistically describe the learning context and interactions that occur in the field.

The research subjects included the principal, teachers, and students at the elementary school where the research was conducted. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies, enabling the researcher to capture the experiences, behaviors, and dynamics of the interactions that took place.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative methods, involving data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. To maintain the validity of the findings, the researcher applied source and technique triangulation, namely by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documents so that the data obtained was valid and accountable.

Thus, this research method enabled the researcher to present a comprehensive and in-depth description of the strategies and challenges in implementing Indonesian language learning quality management in elementary schools.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in two public elementary schools located in Cidaun Subdistrict, Cianjur Regency, West Java, namely Kertajadi Public Elementary School and Kiarangupuk Public Elementary School. Kertajadi Public Elementary School is located in Leuweungkalong Village, Kertajadi Village, with NPSN 20203560. This school was established in 1977 and has been accredited A based on BAN-SM Decree Number 397/BAN-SM/SK/2019. With an area of 5,538 m², SDN Kertajadi has learning facilities, sports facilities, electricity from PLN, and

internet access of around 3 Mbps that supports technology-based learning, although its use is still limited.

Meanwhile, SDN Kiarangupuk is located in Kiarangupuk Village, Cidaun District, with a B accreditation status. This school also serves the rural community, the majority of whom work in the agriculture and fisheries sectors. The available infrastructure includes classrooms, simple sports facilities, electricity from PLN, and limited internet access. Despite its limitations compared to SDN Kertajadi, this school still plays an important role as a center for basic education in the region.

Both schools face similar challenges, particularly in improving student reading literacy, which is affected by limited teaching materials, a lack of variety in learning methods, and a learning environment that is not yet fully supportive. With the support of the community and infrastructure development in Cidaun District, SDN Kertajadi and SDN Kiarangupuk are considered strategic locations for research on Indonesian language learning quality management in improving the reading literacy of elementary school students.

In general, both schools have similarities in their approach to literacy planning, namely, they both develop lesson plans based on the Merdeka Curriculum, conduct literacy needs analysis, and develop School Literacy Movement programs with 15-minute reading activities, book procurement, and community support. However, the difference lies in the level of completeness and innovation of the program. SDN Kertajadi tends to be more systematic and varied, with the application of strategies such as group discussions, project-based literacy, literacy competitions, and active coordination with parents and the village library. In contrast, SDN Kiarangupuk is still limited to simple strategies such as reading together and question and answer sessions, with less than optimal community support. This difference shows that although both schools have the same policy direction, the learning quality management capacity at SDN Kertajadi is more mature than at SDN Kiarangupuk.

Indonesian language in elementary schools plays an important role in improving students' reading literacy. The results of research at SD Negeri Kertajadi show that teachers have developed learning administration tools such as lesson plans, syllabi, and annual programs in accordance with the national curriculum. However,

this planning is still more oriented towards fulfilling formal documents than strategies for improving reading literacy. Teaching materials are dominated by government textbooks with limited reading materials, which do not support the development of students' reading interests and skills.

According to the theory of Handoko, Anderson, and Bowman, effective planning should be proactive, systematic, and able to anticipate future needs and challenges. Similarly, Deming's principle of constancy of purpose emphasizes the importance of consistency in long-term goals in improving the quality of education.

Unfortunately, the implementation of literacy programs at SD Negeri Kertajadi, such as the School Literacy Movement (GLS), has not been optimally integrated into Indonesian language learning. The Independent Curriculum policy through Permendikbudristek No. 12 of 2024 has actually provided flexibility for teachers to design learning according to the context and needs of students.

Within the framework of Total Quality Management (TQM)-based education quality management, ideal literacy planning should cover six aspects: focus on student needs,

continuous improvement, school leadership, involvement of all parties, data-based decision making, and mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders. However, at SD Negeri Kertajadi, the involvement of parents and the school committee is still limited, while the variety of reading materials that support literacy is still inadequate.

SD Negeri Kiarangupuk shows more adaptive planning efforts. This school has begun to integrate GLS through shared reading and guided reading activities, as well as establishing simple cooperation with parents and the local community to add reading materials, although this is still incidental. The participatory leadership of the principal and teachers is also evident in their efforts to build a culture of literacy, although they are still constrained by limited resources and data for planning.

Thus, both schools are similar in terms of administrative aspects, but differ in their development strategies. SD Negeri Kertajadi tends to be more organized administratively, but less innovative in its literacy strategies. Conversely, SD Negeri Kiarangupuk has begun to show collaborative initiatives, albeit simple ones. Both schools need to strengthen planning based on student needs, provide more diverse reading materials, and apply the principles of continuous quality management so that students' reading literacy can develop more significantly.

Both schools are committed to implementing national literacy policies, but the difference lies in their approach to implementation. SD Negeri Kertajadi excels in administrative regularity, while SD Negeri Kiarangupuk is more adaptive and participatory. To optimize quality improvement, both schools need to combine their respective strengths: consistent program regularity and continuous innovation and stakeholder involvement. Thus, the implementation of Indonesian language learning quality management not only complies with policies but is also truly oriented toward improving student reading literacy in accordance with Deming's principles, the six values of education quality, and the direction of the Merdeka Belajar (Freedom of Learning) policy.

This evaluation is also in line with various national policies. The School Literacy Movement (GLS) requires schools to monitor and evaluate the sustainability of literacy culture. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes formative and summative assessments that measure literacy skills as basic competencies. The National Education Standards (SNP) outline the importance of quality evaluation as part of education quality assurance. National assessments provide comprehensive instruments to objectively assess student literacy achievement and serve as basic data for schools to improve the quality of learning. Meanwhile, the Merdeka Belajar program emphasizes that educational evaluation must be oriented towards the comprehensive development of student potential, not just academic grades.

Follow-up is a crucial stage in the education quality management cycle, because evaluation results will be meaningless without real improvement actions. According to W. Edwards Deming, follow-up must be carried out through the Action stage in the Plan-Do-Check-Action (PDCA) cycle, where findings from the evaluation are used as a basis for improving strategies, strengthening programs, and developing learning innovations. The principle of constancy of purpose emphasizes that follow-up must always be oriented towards long-term goals, namely the formation of a sustainable literacy culture in elementary schools, rather than merely correcting temporary shortcomings.

The above research results are in line with Tarigan (2008) who states that good language skills at the elementary school level will be an important foundation for successful learning at

higher levels of education. In other words, strong language skills will make it easier for students to absorb, process, and convey information.

Thus, it can be concluded that the obstacles to follow-up at SDN Kertajadi are more structural and institutional in nature, while at SDN Kiarangupuk they are more technical and resource-related. Both require the strengthening of more concrete education policy implementation, visionary leadership, and a culture of quality based on Deming's principles and six educational value systems so that the follow-up to Indonesian language learning quality management can truly improve student reading literacy in a sustainable manner.

This comparison shows that SDN Kertajadi needs solutions that emphasize institutional and leadership aspects so that the follow-up to the literacy program does not stop at evaluation, while SDN Kiarangupuk needs solutions that emphasize continuity and resource strengthening so that the ongoing literacy program is not merely incidental. By applying Deming's theory, the six educational quality values, and national policies such as GLS, SNP, the Merdeka Curriculum, and Merdeka Belajar, both schools can develop different but complementary quality management strategies to achieve the same goal: the sustainable improvement of student reading literacy.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that quality management of Indonesian language learning plays a crucial role in enhancing elementary students' reading literacy when implemented comprehensively through planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up, rather than merely fulfilling administrative requirements. Guided by W. Edwards Deming's principles, the six values of quality education, and national initiatives such as the School Literacy Movement, Merdeka Curriculum, and Merdeka Belajar, schools can foster a sustainable, adaptive, and student-centered literacy culture. SDN Kertajadi demonstrates strength in administrative regularity but lacks innovation, visionary leadership, and stakeholder engagement, whereas SD Negeri Kiarangupuk shows promising grassroots initiatives despite limited resources, including varied literacy strategies and initial community involvement. However, both schools rely heavily on low-level cognitive assessments and lack long-term, structured literacy program follow-up. To address these gaps, schools should expand diverse reading resources, integrate literacy into strategic planning, and strengthen collaboration with parents, communities, and libraries. Future research should broaden the scope to more schools and explore the effectiveness of digital literacy, technology-based reading strategies, and the role of school leadership in sustaining literacy development.

REFERENCES

- Agustian, A., & Marantika, R. (2022). Penggunaan bahan bacaan berbasis budaya lokal untuk meningkatkan motivasi membaca siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Indonesia*, 7(2), 145–156.
- Azizah, N., Rahmawati, S., & Prasetyo, A. (2022). Program literasi baca harian dan kontribusinya terhadap pemahaman bacaan siswa. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra*, 12(1), 55–68.
- Delgadova, E. (2015). Reading literacy as one of the most significant academic competencies for university students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 178, 48–53.
- de Oliveira, O. J., da Silva, F. F., Juliani, F., Barbosa, L. C. F. M., & Nunhes, T. V. (2019).

- Bibliometric method for mapping the state-of-the-art and identifying research gaps and trends in literature: An essential instrument to support the development of scientific projects. In *Scientometrics recent advances*. IntechOpen.
- Djiwandono, P., & Ginting, D. (2025). Evaluating research reports on the qualities of tests of English language skills in Indonesian schools: A systematic review. *Language Education & Assessment*, 8, 2237.
- Fauzan, F., Eriyanti, R. W., & Asih, R. A. (2023). Misconception of reading literacy and its impacts on literacy acculturation in school. *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan*, 42(1), 208–219.
- Greenleaf, C., Schoenbach, R., Friedrich, L., Murphy, L., & Hogan, N. (2023). *Reading for understanding: How reading apprenticeship improves disciplinary learning in secondary and college classrooms*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Hapsarini, D. R., Erliana, C. I., Irwansyah, D., & Abdullah, D. (2023). Analyzing strategies for strengthening literacy competence at the junior high school level among school teams at the district and city levels in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Education (INJOE)*, 2(3), 561–581.
- Marmoah, S., & Poerwanti, J. I. S. (2022). Literacy culture management of elementary school in Indonesia. *Heliyon*, 8(4).
- Marmoah, S., Poerwanti, J. I. S., & Gestiardi, R. (2024). The quality management of education in elementary schools in improving teachers' digital literacy in the era of online learning. *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction*, 14(1), 32–40.
- Miles, D. A. (2017). A taxonomy of research gaps: Identifying and defining the seven research gaps. *Doctoral Student Workshop: Finding Research Gaps—Research Methods and Strategies*, Dallas, Texas, 1, 1–10.
- Munir, A. (2025). Systematic review of Indonesian language learning management to improve academic writing skills. *Agency Journal of Management and Business*, 5(2), 368–377.
- Niculescu, B.-O., & Dragomir, I.-A. (2023). Critical reading—A fundamental skill for building 21st century literacy. *International Conference Knowledge-Based Organization*, 29(2), 215–220.
- Nurcahyoko, K., Anniurwanda, P., & Sudirjo, E. (2024). Investigating the factors influencing literacy skills among young students in rural areas of Indonesia. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, 18(2), 333–341.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *PISA 2018 assessment and analytical framework: Reading, mathematics and science*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/b25efab8-en>
- Programme for International Student Assessment. (2012). *PISA 2012 results: What students know and can do (Volume I)*. OECD Publishing.
- PRILS. (2011). *Progress in international reading literacy study (PIRLS) 2011 international results in reading*. TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Boston College.
- Ridho, A., Lestari, F., & Mulyani, R. (2020). Implementasi gerakan literasi sekolah di MIS Hubbul Wathon. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, 5(1), 33–42.
- Sauri, S., Permana, A. C., Solihah, S. N., Mulyanti, I. S., Nurhaeti, A., & Widiyanti, Y. (2024). Quality management of Indonesian language learning in improving students' literacy in Mekarsari State Elementary School, Sindangbarang District. *IJOBBA: International Journal of Bunga Bangsa Cirebon*, 3(1), 119–124.
- Tarigan, H. G. (2008). *Membaca sebagai suatu keterampilan berbahasa*. Angkasa.
- Wong, E. C., Maher, A. R., Motala, A., Ross, R., Akinniranye, O., Larkin, J., & Hempel, S. (2022). Methods for identifying health research gaps, needs, and priorities: A scoping review. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 37(1), 198–205.

