

ANALYZING STUDENTS' READING INTEREST BASED ON INDONESIA'S NATIONAL LIBRARY REGULATIONS: A CASE STUDY AT SMP NEGERI 3 PACET, BANDUNG REGENCY

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Abstract

Low and uneven reading engagement remains a persistent educational concern despite the availability of school libraries and literacy programs. This study analyzes students' reading interest at the SMP Negeri 3 Pacet Library through reading frequency, reading duration, and the number of reading materials, while considering motivational and environmental influences. The analysis draws on the Reading Interest Framework, Self-Determination Theory, and the school library as a literacy environment. An interpretive qualitative single-case study employed purposive sampling, participant observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review, with data analyzed through pattern matching and explanation building. The findings show substantial variation in students' reading practices, shaped by intrinsic motivation, reading preferences, collection availability, academic demands, teacher and family support, free time, and digital-media use. The study concludes that stronger voluntary reading requires relevant collections, sustained literacy routines, supportive social environments, and constructive integration of digital resources within school-library practices, and responsive library services overall.

Keywords: Reading Interest; School Library; Reading Behavior

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's national Reading Interest Level (*Tingkat Kegemaran Membaca*—TKM) reached 54.8 in 2025, a score that the National Library classified within the low category under its revised measurement framework (National Library of Indonesia, 2026a). The National Library also recorded an average national reading activity of approximately 129 hours per year, equivalent to about 5.91 books per person, indicating that broader access to information has not automatically produced sustained reading practices (National Library of Indonesia, 2025a). Indonesia maintained 219,415 library units by 2024, with 44.49% located on Java, showing substantial literacy infrastructure alongside persistent behavioral challenges in reading (National Library of Indonesia, 2025b). Digital library services generated more than 30 million online accesses through platforms such as iPusnas, Khastara, BintangPusnas Edu, and Indonesia OneSearch, reflecting substantial growth in digital access to reading resources (National Library of Indonesia, 2025b). National Library Regulation No. 9 of 2025 further structures reading-interest measurement through pre-

reading, during-reading, and post-reading dimensions and places reading frequency and duration within the access-and-reading-habit component (National Library of Indonesia, 2025c).

Student reading behavior reflects a complex interaction among motivation, social support, reading format, learning environments, and digital practices during the school years. Hare et al. (2024) reviewed 88 studies involving children and adolescents and found mixed outcomes across print and digital formats, although print more frequently supported comprehension among older readers and digital formats sometimes strengthened engagement. Shimizu et al. (2024) found that no single digital-reading behavior directly determined comprehension among young readers, suggesting that students achieve stronger outcomes when they coordinate multiple reading strategies. Wiranatha and Santosa (2024) reported that Indonesian students frequently devoted substantial recreational screen time to gaming, social media, and video streaming, potentially reducing the time available for conventional and academic reading. These patterns direct attention toward the frequency, duration, volume, motivation, and contextual conditions of actual reading practices among junior secondary students rather than toward the mere availability of books or digital resources.

SMP Negeri 3 Pacet provides a school library containing textbooks, fiction, and nonfiction collections, yet students use these resources with different levels of intensity for sustained voluntary reading. Student reading activities frequently respond to academic assignments, whereas personal interest and enjoyment do not consistently motivate reading across the student population. Field evidence reveals variation in the number of reading materials students complete, the time they devote to reading, and the frequency with which they engage in reading across different grade levels. Motivation, reading preferences, collection availability, free time, academic demands, teacher and family support, and digital-media use jointly shape these differences in reading behavior. The central problem therefore concerns the discrepancy between available literacy infrastructure and programs and the development of consistent, self-directed reading practices among students.

Recent studies increasingly explain student reading engagement through interactions among motivational, social, environmental, and library-related factors rather than through isolated individual preferences. Pelletier, Guay, and Falardeau (2024) examined 1,246 students in Grades 4, 6, 8, and 10 through a multicohort correlational design and found that secondary students perceived less reading support than elementary students, while parental and peer support contributed substantially to recreational reading. Merga and Mat Roni (2025) analyzed mixed-method survey responses from 971 school-library professionals across 63 countries and found that restricted library access, inadequate resources, constrained student choice, and weak institutional recognition of reading for pleasure could reduce student reading engagement. VanderVelden and Apedoe (2025) examined students in Grades 9–12 across four subject areas through regression analysis and found that inquiry-oriented learning environments consistently predicted situated reading motivation in English, social science, mathematics, and science. These studies collectively identify social support, library conditions, and learning environments as influential determinants of reading engagement, yet they provide limited explanation of how reading frequency, duration, and volume interact within school-library practices under a national reading-interest policy framework.

Previous research and the present study share a common interest in the behavioral and contextual conditions that shape students' engagement with reading. Both research streams recognize motivation, social support, school environments, available resources, and opportunities

to read as relevant components of reading practices. The present study differs by positioning observable reading behavior rather than reading achievement, perceived support, or generalized motivation as its principal analytical focus. The research design examines reading frequency, reading duration, and number of reading materials through interviews, observations, documentation, pattern matching, and explanation building within the operational environment of a school library. These distinctions create an analytical space for connecting the national regulatory conception of reading interest with the lived and institutionally situated reading practices of junior secondary students.

Current scholarship explains several important determinants of reading engagement but provides limited empirical understanding of how policy-related reading behavior emerges through everyday school-library practices. The dominant limitation constitutes an **empirical gap** because available evidence does not adequately explain how reading frequency, duration, and volume operate together among junior secondary students within an actual institutional literacy setting. Aggregate literacy indicators, motivational models, and library-level assessments cannot independently explain why students who access similar school resources develop markedly different reading patterns. Existing studies have not adequately integrated students' reading routines, school-library utilization, academic demands, social support, collection relevance, and digital-media practices within a regulation-informed qualitative account of reading interest. The present study addresses this gap by examining SMP Negeri 3 Pacet as a bounded case in which observable reading behavior and its contextual determinants operate as interconnected components of students' everyday literacy practices.

Indonesia's low national reading-interest score and the uneven reading practices identified among students at SMP Negeri 3 Pacet create a substantive need to examine how reading habits develop within an operational school literacy environment. Scientific understanding will remain fragmented when research relies primarily on aggregate scores, motivational perceptions, or program availability without examining the concrete behavioral patterns through which students actually engage with reading. Schools may also design less effective literacy interventions when decision makers cannot distinguish the relative roles of collection relevance, reading opportunities, academic pressures, motivation, social support, and competing digital activities. Students, teachers, librarians, school leaders, parents, and education policymakers require contextual evidence to align literacy programs and library services with actual patterns of student reading behavior. The institutional context of SMP Negeri 3 Pacet therefore provides an appropriate setting for examining the behavioral and contextual mechanisms that can inform more precise school-based literacy interventions.

The principal **novelty** of this study lies in its examination of reading interest as a situated behavioral phenomenon through the combined analysis of reading frequency, reading duration, and number of reading materials within a national regulatory context. The study contributes conceptually by connecting observable reading practices with motivational, social, institutional, and resource-related conditions rather than treating reading interest merely as an attitudinal preference. The empirical design generates triangulated evidence from students, teachers, library personnel, observations, interviews, and institutional documentation within a junior secondary school library. The findings can assist schools and library managers in refining collection development, literacy routines, reading opportunities, family-school collaboration, and constructive engagement with digital resources. The study therefore adds value by translating a policy-oriented conception of reading interest into an evidence-based explanation of how students

read, why their reading patterns differ, and which contextual conditions require targeted institutional responses.

This study aims to analyze students' reading interest at the SMP Negeri 3 Pacet Library, Bandung Regency, through three observable behavioral dimensions adopted in the research—reading frequency, reading duration, and number of reading materials—while explaining the contextual factors that shape these practices within the National Library regulatory framework.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Interest Framework

Reading interest refers to a sustained tendency to engage voluntarily with reading activities and to allocate attention, time, and effort to different forms of reading materials. The National Library of Indonesia approaches reading interest as an observable literacy phenomenon that can be examined through reading-related behavior and patterns of access to reading materials (National Library of Indonesia, 2025). The present study operationalizes this concept through three behavioral dimensions comprising reading frequency, reading duration, and the number of reading materials consumed by students. Reading frequency reflects how regularly students engage in reading, reading duration captures the amount of time devoted to reading activities, and the number of reading materials indicates the volume and variety of texts encountered by students. This framework provides an appropriate analytical basis for examining how reading interest is manifested in the everyday practices of students at the SMP Negeri 3 Pacet Library rather than treating reading interest solely as a subjective attitude.

Indicators:

- Reading frequency.
- Reading duration.
- Number of reading materials.
- Regularity of reading activities.
- Variety of reading materials.
- Voluntary engagement in reading.

Self-Determination

Self-Determination Theory explains human motivation by distinguishing behavior driven by internal interest and satisfaction from behavior primarily produced by external demands, rewards, or pressures. Ryan and Deci argue that intrinsic motivation becomes stronger when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness within the activities they perform (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Students who perceive freedom to select reading materials that correspond to their interests may therefore demonstrate more sustained and personally meaningful engagement with reading. Perceived competence can strengthen reading persistence when students feel capable of understanding texts, while supportive relationships with teachers, parents, and peers can reinforce their willingness to continue reading. The theory consequently offers a relevant explanation for differences in students' reading frequency, duration, and volume when reading arises from personal interest rather than exclusively from academic obligations.

Indicators:

- Autonomy in selecting reading materials.
- Intrinsic motivation.
- Perceived reading competence.
- Personal interest and enjoyment.

- Social support.
- Persistence in reading.
- Reading beyond academic requirements.

School Library as a Literacy Environment

A school library functions as a literacy environment that connects access to information, reading resources, educational support, and opportunities for independent learning. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions emphasizes that effective school libraries should provide relevant collections, supportive services, appropriate learning spaces, and programs that contribute to students' literacy development (IFLA, 2023). The quality and diversity of collections can influence whether students encounter materials that correspond to their interests, academic needs, and reading abilities. Library accessibility, physical comfort, literacy activities, and librarian support can also shape students' willingness to visit the library and sustain reading activities within the school environment. This framework therefore supports the analysis of how collection availability, library services, literacy programs, and the physical and social environment of the SMP Negeri 3 Pacet Library contribute to differences in students' reading practices.

Indicators:

- Availability of relevant collections.
- Diversity of reading materials.
- Accessibility of library services.
- Comfort of the reading environment.
- Literacy programs and activities.
- Librarian and teacher support.
- Student utilization of the library.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs an interpretive paradigm with a qualitative single-case study design to develop an in-depth understanding of students' reading interest as it occurs within the real-life context of the SMP Negeri 3 Pacet Library, Bandung Regency, because case study research is appropriate for investigating contemporary phenomena that cannot be meaningfully separated from their contextual conditions (Yin, 2018). The qualitative approach is particularly relevant because the study does not seek to quantify or rank students' reading interest but rather to interpret variations in reading frequency, reading duration, and the number of reading materials alongside the motivational, social, institutional, and environmental factors that shape these practices. Data are collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review involving students as the primary participants and teachers and library personnel as supporting informants who provide complementary perspectives on reading practices, library utilization, and school literacy activities. The study applies purposive sampling to select participants and informants based on their direct involvement, experience, and knowledge of students' reading activities and the implementation of literacy practices within the school library. Data analysis employs pattern matching to compare empirical findings with the predetermined dimensions of reading interest and explanation building to progressively interpret the contextual factors underlying observed reading patterns, thereby producing a comprehensive explanation of students' reading behavior within the bounded case (Yin, 2018).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students' Reading Interest at the SMP Negeri 3 Pacet Library

The findings show that students' reading interest at the SMP Negeri 3 Pacet Library varies across three observable behavioral dimensions used in this study: the number of reading materials, reading duration, and reading frequency. Interviews, observations, and documentation indicate that students across grade levels use the library, although the intensity and purpose of use differ considerably. Personal interest, motivation, preferred reading genres, collection availability, free time, grade level, and academic demands jointly shape these differences. Students who approach reading through curiosity and personal preference generally sustain stronger engagement than students who read mainly to complete assignments or prepare for examinations. These findings position reading interest as a situated practice that reflects not only students' reading ability but also their opportunities to read, motivational orientation, and access to a supportive literacy environment.

Number of Reading Materials

The number of reading materials completed by students demonstrates substantial variation in reading productivity. Most students read one or two materials during a single library visit, whereas students with stronger interest and more available time may read more than two materials. The broader reading pattern also ranges from students who can complete two or three books within one week to students who need several weeks to finish a single book. Students consistently read more when available materials correspond to their personal interests, whereas assignment-driven reading or difficulty finding appealing materials tends to reduce the quantity of texts they complete. Triangulation across student interviews, observations, circulation-related documentation, and information from school leaders, teachers, and library personnel confirms that reading volume reflects differences in both motivation and opportunity rather than a uniform level of reading participation.

The motivational pattern surrounding reading volume supports the Self-Determination perspective because students demonstrate stronger engagement when reading originates from personal interest rather than external pressure. Ryan and Deci (2020) explain that intrinsic motivation strengthens when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which helps clarify why students who can select preferred materials tend to engage more persistently with reading. The school library also shapes these choices by determining whether students can access collections that match their interests, information needs, and reading abilities. IFLA (2023) emphasizes the importance of relevant collections, supportive services, and appropriate learning environments in strengthening students' literacy development. The findings therefore suggest that the number of materials read should not be interpreted simply as a measure of reading capability; it also reflects the interaction between students' willingness to read and the opportunities that the school literacy environment provides.

Reading Duration

Students display marked differences in the amount of time they devote to reading. Observed and reported reading sessions range from approximately 15-20 minutes to 30 minutes and, for some students, more than one hour when the selected material strongly matches their interests. Students who prefer novels, illustrated stories, educational comics, and popular-knowledge books generally remain engaged longer than students who read primarily because of academic requirements. Grade-level differences also appear in the data: Grade VII students generally sustain longer reading periods because of stronger curiosity and relatively lighter academic demands,

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Grade VIII students show greater variation, and Grade IX students tend to have more restricted reading time because of examination preparation and other academic responsibilities. School efforts to provide regular opportunities for reading nevertheless create institutional conditions that can help students develop more stable reading routines.

Reading duration reflects the interaction between motivational and environmental conditions rather than a simple high-or-low level of reading interest. Students maintain attention for longer periods when they enjoy the text, feel capable of understanding it, and encounter a reading environment that allows them to concentrate. Self-Determination Theory helps explain this pattern because perceived competence and internally generated interest can sustain engagement even when no immediate academic reward is present (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The school-library perspective also reinforces the importance of comfortable spaces, relevant collections, and supportive literacy activities for maintaining reading engagement (IFLA, 2023). Explanation building therefore indicates that differences in duration emerge from a combination of interest, motivation, concentration, available time, collection suitability, library conditions, teacher support, and school literacy routines rather than from a single determinant.

Reading Frequency

Reading frequency also varies across grade levels and student routines. Grade VII students tend to use the library more actively during breaks and scheduled literacy activities, while Grade VIII students show a relatively stable pattern of approximately two to three reading occasions per week. Grade IX students display more heterogeneous patterns because examination preparation and other academic obligations compete for their available time. Some students read regularly through school literacy programs or personal initiative, whereas others read mainly when teachers assign tasks or when examinations approach. Students with higher reading frequency also engage with a broader range of materials, including textbooks, novels, folklore, encyclopedias, educational comics, popular-knowledge books, and digital resources, while some students with lower reading frequency devote more free time to social media, videos, and online games.

Motivation, social support, literacy programs, library utilization, collection availability, and digital-media practices jointly explain these differences in reading frequency. Students who demonstrate curiosity and recognize the personal value of reading tend to initiate reading without waiting for teacher instructions, whereas academic pressure, limited time, and stronger attraction to digital entertainment may reduce voluntary reading. The findings nevertheless show that digital technology does not function exclusively as a competing activity because students can also use e-books, educational articles, and online information sources as alternative literacy resources. The library therefore retains an important role as a literacy environment that can connect printed collections, digital resources, teacher guidance, and student choice. Strengthening reading frequency requires schools to create recurring opportunities for reading while ensuring that available materials correspond to students' interests and that digital resources support rather than displace meaningful reading practices.

Integrated Interpretation of the Findings

Pattern matching indicates that the empirical reading behavior of students at SMP Negeri 3 Pacet corresponds with the study's operational dimensions of reading frequency, reading duration, and the number of reading materials. National Library Regulation No. 9 of 2025 explicitly incorporates frequency and duration within its access-and-reading-habit component, while this study uses the number of reading materials as an additional observable dimension to capture the breadth and volume of students' actual reading activity. The empirical patterns demonstrate that

the three dimensions do not operate independently because students who read more frequently often encounter a wider variety of materials, while stronger interest in particular texts can simultaneously increase reading duration and reading volume. The findings therefore support an interpretation of reading interest as a multidimensional behavioral phenomenon rather than a single attitudinal preference. Pattern matching also confirms that qualitative observation of actual reading practices can complement policy-oriented measurement by showing how reading behavior unfolds within the everyday context of a school library (Yin, 2018).

Explanation building further shows that internal and external factors interact continuously in shaping students' reading patterns. Internal factors include interest, intrinsic motivation, curiosity, perceived competence, concentration, information needs, and established reading habits, whereas external factors include collection relevance, library comfort, teacher and family support, peer influence, school literacy programs, academic workload, and access to digital media. Self-Determination Theory clarifies why autonomy in choosing materials, perceived competence in understanding texts, and supportive relationships can sustain voluntary reading (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The school-library framework adds an institutional explanation by showing that relevant collections, accessible services, supportive personnel, and comfortable learning spaces create opportunities for those motivational processes to develop (IFLA, 2023). The integrated findings consequently show that strengthening students' reading interest requires more than increasing library visits; schools need sustained literacy routines, attractive and relevant collections, supportive social relationships, and balanced use of printed and digital resources that encourage students to read voluntarily and consistently.

E. CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that students' reading interest at the SMP Negeri 3 Pacet Library varies across reading frequency, reading duration, and the number of reading materials, with these patterns shaped by motivation, personal interests, collection availability, academic demands, social support, and digital-media use. The results confirm that the research objective has been achieved by explaining students' reading practices as behavioral patterns that emerge from the interaction between individual motivation and the school literacy environment. The study contributes a context-sensitive perspective by connecting observable reading behavior with the regulatory framework for reading interest and with the practical role of the school library as a literacy environment. School leaders, teachers, librarians, and policymakers should strengthen sustained reading routines, diversify collections according to students' interests, expand supportive literacy programs, involve families, and integrate digital resources constructively to encourage more consistent voluntary reading. Future research should address the limitation of this single-school qualitative case study by involving broader student populations, comparing schools with different literacy environments, and combining qualitative evidence with quantitative measures to evaluate reading-interest patterns and policy implementation more comprehensively.

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