

# The Effectiveness Of Picture Storybooks In Increasing Elementary School Students' Interest In Reading

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## Abstract

Constructivist learning positions the teacher as a facilitator who encourages contextual, collaborative, and reflective activities, as well as the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In this context, reading is a fundamental skill in primary education; however, many students still struggle to develop this ability. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of using picture storybooks to enhance students' interest and reading skills in primary schools. The method used is a literature review with a descriptive quantitative approach and thematic synthesis technique. A total of 15 articles published between 2021 and 2025 were analyzed, with 7 selected for in-depth examination. The results show that picture storybooks consistently improve students' reading interest and comprehension through the combination of engaging texts and visual illustrations. These findings indicate that visual media such as picture storybooks are an effective strategy for supporting the development of basic literacy skills in primary school students.

## 1. Introduction

Reading is one of the basic skills that is very much in the learning process in elementary school. This skill is not only about being able to pronounce words from the text, but also about understanding the content of the reading, thinking about its meaning, and assessing the information available. According to Tarigan (2008), reading is a fairly complicated process because it involves sight, thoughts, feelings, and language simultaneously. Therefore, students who have good reading skills will usually find it easier to follow lessons and think critically.

National data shows that the reading literacy ability of elementary school students in Indonesia is still at an alarming level. Based on results According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018 released by the OECD, Indonesian students' reading literacy scores are ranked 72nd out of 79 countries, with most students only able to understand information literally and have difficulty interpreting or evaluating more complex reading content. In addition, the results of the 2021 National Assessment (AN) from the Ministry of Education and Culture show that more than 50% of elementary school students have not reached the minimum competency in reading literacy. This fact reinforces the importance of appropriate interventions, including through the use of innovative learning media such as picture story books.

However, in elementary school students, their reading ability is still in the developmental stage and has not been maximized. This can happen for various reasons, both from within students such as interest and enthusiasm for learning, and from outside such as the family environment and learning atmosphere at school. According to Slameto (2010) there are two types of factors that affect learning, namely internal factors (from within) and external factors (from outside). Students' low reading ability is influenced by two main factors, namely internal factors such as individual ability and motivation, as well as external factors such as family conditions, economic conditions, and living environment. Both factors have an influence on the process of developing students' reading skills.

One strategy that is quite effective to improve students' reading skills is to optimize the use of relevant learning media, such as picture storybooks. Picture storybooks are learning media that harmoniously combine text and visual illustrations. Image media is one example of effective media by combining clear facts and ideas through the use of words and images for learning. This medium

clarifies abstract concepts, and facilitate meaningful learning. By utilizing image media, students not only become passive recipients of information, but can also actively interact with the media through the various interactive features available. According to Sulistyono et al., (2022), the use of visual learning media such as picture storybooks has been proven to significantly increase students' understanding of concepts and learning interests.

Some previous studies have shown that picture storybooks are very helpful in learning to read. Research from (Nurhasanah & Widodo, 2021) shows that picture storybooks can increase students' interest in reading and make it easier for them to understand texts. Another study by (Handayani, 2022) also states that colorful illustrations make students more active when reading. Meanwhile, research (Rahmawati & Hadi, 2023) proves that picture storybooks that are appropriate for students' ages and abilities can improve their critical reading skills.

Even so, picture storybooks are still not used optimally as a learning medium. The main challenge is how to create a book that is not only interesting, but also suitable for the needs and character of the students. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research to develop and test picture storybooks that are truly effective in improving students' reading skills.

This research aims to develop and evaluate the use of picture storybooks as an effective learning medium in increasing the interest and reading skills of elementary school students. It is hoped that this research can contribute to the development of reading learning practices and become a reference in the creation of interactive learning media in the future.

## 2. Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a systematic literature review method. This method was chosen to examine the effectiveness of picture storybooks in improving the reading skills of elementary school students based on the results of previous research. Literature studies allow researchers to identify, analyze, and synthesize a wide range of relevant empirical findings in a systematic and objective manner.

The data collection process was carried out by browsing scientific articles from several online databases, namely Google Scholar, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and Garuda. The article sought must meet several selection criteria to be relevant to the focus of the study. The selection process is carried out systematically with steps summarized in the following table:

**Table 1. Literature Selection Strategy**

Aspects	Information
Types of Research	Systematic Literature Review (SLR)
Data Source	Google Scholar, DOAJ, Garuda
Keywords	"picture storybook", "visual media", "reading skills", "elementary school students"
Year Range	2021 – 2025
Number of Initial Articles	15 Articles
Number of Articles Filtered	7 main articles analyzed in depth
Analytical Techniques	Descriptive content analysis and thematic synthesis

After filtering based on the title, abstract, and content of the article, as many as 15 relevant articles were obtained. Of these, 7 main articles were selected for in-depth analysis based on their methodological quality and suitability with the research topic. The analysis technique used is content *analysis* in a descriptive manner. The articles were synthesized based on the main themes, such as the methods used (quasi-experiments, PTK, observation), the benefits of picture storybooks (increased reading interest, understanding of the text, and active participation of students), and implementation limitations (short implementation time, limited book variation, and differences in students' initial abilities). This synthesis is used to obtain a

comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of picture storybooks in the context of reading learning in elementary schools.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis of the literature study that has been carried out, there are seven selected scientific articles, it can be concluded that all of these articles consistently state that the use of learning media in the form of illustrated stories helps students quickly understand to read. The search was conducted through Google Scholar with a publication range of 2021 to 2025, out of a total of 15 articles found, 7 articles were selected because they were considered the most relevant to the research focus of elementary school students with picture storybook learning media to increase reading interest. This selection process is carried out carefully and systematically, considering the suitability of the title, content, research method, and the relevance of the findings to the topic discussed.

The selected articles were categorized based on the use of picture storybook learning media to increase reading interest relevant to the research title, then presented in the form of Table 2 to provide a more structured and easy-to-understand picture. This table will present the results of the analysis of articles that are considered relevant and have a strong relationship with the research topic, namely the Analysis of the Use of Picture Storybooks in Increasing Reading Interest in Elementary School Students. This analysis contains methods, findings and relevance to relevant topics from each article. This presentation is expected to be able to provide a strong theoretical and empirical foundation in discussing the Use of Picture Story Books in Increasing Reading Interest in Elementary School Students

**Table 2. Analysis of the Use of Picture Storybooks in Increasing Reading Interest in Elementary School Students**

No.	Article	Method	Findings	Related to the Topic
1	Dessiane & Hardjono (2020)The Effectiveness of Illustrated Stories or Comics Learning Media for Elementary School Students	Meta analysis (Literature 10 studies	Based on a meta-analysis of 10 studies, it was found that the use of illustrated story media and comics provided an average increase in learning effectiveness by 43.50%. This media has been proven to make it easier for students to understand the material and increase focus during learning.	This article is particularly relevant because it shows how visual media such as comics and illustrated stories can improve the effectiveness of learning in general, which includes aspects of students' interest and understanding of the reading material. Although some of the studies analyzed emphasized more on learning outcomes in general, many also touched on the positive impact on students' motivation and engagement in reading. This reinforces the premise that picture storybooks are not only a visual aid, but also a trigger for active engagement in literacy activities.
2	Damayanti (2021). Increased Interest in Reading Using	Classroom Action Research (PTK)	This classroom action research showed an increase in students' reading interest from 40% to 88.35% after the use of	This article has a very strong topic because it directly discusses the impact of the use of illustrated story media on increasing the reading

No.	Article	Method	Findings	Related to the Topic
	Illustrated Story Media		illustrated story media. Students become more active in reading and show a high curiosity about the content of the story.	interest of elementary school students. The results show a significant spike in students' interest in reading, which means that this medium is not only visually appealing, but also effective in building early reading habits and enjoyment. This article strengthens the argument that picture storybooks can be a concrete strategy to motivate elementary school students to be more diligent in reading.
3	Luluk Istito'ah, Eka Sari Setianingsih, Mila Karmila (2022). Analysis of the Utilization of Picture Story Books in Increasing the Reading Interest of Grade I Students of SDN2 Purwosari Kendal	Qualitative (Field)	Based on observation, interview, and questionnaire data, the use of picture storybooks can increase students' interest in reading. The results of the observation showed a high frequency in reading activities independently and with friends.	This article has a direct connection to the topic because it illustrates how picture storybooks are used in real life in the classroom to increase elementary school students' interest in reading. Data from various methods show that storybooks with attractive illustrations are able to attract students' attention, foster curiosity, and encourage them to read independently. This shows that this medium is suitable as part of an early literacy learning strategy.
4	Fauziah et al. (2022). Increasing Reading Interest of Grade III Students Through Picture Story Books	Development Research (Hannafin & Peck Model)	Picture storybooks developed using the Hannafin & Peck model are declared valid and interesting. Its use has been shown to increase students' enthusiasm as well as their daily reading frequency.	This article supports the topic specifically because it not only examines existing illustrated story media, but also develops its own products that are directly tested on elementary school students. The results showed that the media was able to significantly increase students' enthusiasm and reading frequency. This proves that well-designed visual media can be an effective learning tool to increase children's literacy engagement.
5	Putri Rahma Khalisa, Encep Andriana, Siti Rokmanah (2022). Analysis of the Use of Picture Storybook Media on the Reading	R&D (4D)	Picture storybooks are very valid, practical, and effective in increasing interest and reading skills. Reading interest validation reached 96.9%. Students' reading skills also improve in comprehension and pronunciation.	The connection of this article to the topic is very strong because it not only discusses the interest in reading, but also shows that picture storybooks have a great influence on reading skills as a whole. High validation of reading interest shows that

No.	Article	Method	Findings	Related to the Topic
	Skills of Grade 3 Students at SDN Sinaba			this medium is able to capture students' attention and encourage them to read more often and more deeply. This is concrete evidence that pictorial story media directly contributes to improving the literacy of elementary school students.
6	Fauziah et al. (2022). Increasing Reading Interest of Grade III Students Through Picture Story Books	Development Research (Hannafin & Peck Model)	Picture storybooks developed using the Hannafin & Peck model are declared valid and interesting. Its use has been shown to increase students' enthusiasm as well as their daily reading frequency.	This article supports the topic specifically because it not only examines existing illustrated story media, but also develops its own products that are directly tested on elementary school students. The results showed that the media was able to significantly increase students' enthusiasm and reading frequency. This proves that well-designed visual media can be an effective learning tool to increase children's literacy engagement.
7.	Fika Nuralifah & Siti Masyithoh (2024). The Influence of the Use of Picture Storybook Media in Increasing Reading Interest in Elementary School Children	Studi Literature	Picture storybook media is effective in increasing the interest and motivation of elementary school children's reading. Combining narrative and visual illustrations improves student understanding and engagement.	This article strongly supports the topic because it emphasizes how visual and narrative elements in picture storybooks can encourage the motivation and interest in reading of elementary school-age students. By combining text and illustrations, children find it easier to understand the context of the story and feel interested in continuing reading. This shows that picture storybooks are not just reading materials, but also an important means of shaping reading culture from an early age.

To clarify the patterns that emerged from the seven articles, a thematic analysis was carried out by grouping the research results based on three main themes: research methods, media use benefits, and identified limitations. The results of this synthesis are presented in Table 2.

**Table 3. Thematic Synthesis of Articles on the Use of Picture Storybooks in Increasing Reading Interest**

Tema Utama	Related Articles	Summary of Findings
Research Methods	Damayanti (2021), Badryah et al (2024), Istito'ah et al (2022), Khalisa et al (2022), Fauziah et al (2022)	The majority use PTK and R&D to prove the effectiveness of pictorial story media in increasing reading interest.

Tema Utama	Related Articles	Summary of Findings
Benefit	All articles	Media helps increase student engagement, improve reading comprehension, and encourage students to read independently.
Limitations	Dessiane & Hardjono (2020), Fauziah et al (2022)	Several articles noted that this media needs teacher assistance to stay focused, as well as limited access for all students.

From the table, it can be seen that the use of pictorial story media is most effectively applied in the lower grades (grades I–III), because students at this level tend to be more easily interested in simple visual and narrative aspects. Data from Istito'ah et al. (2022) show that: *"Grade I students seem very enthusiastic whenever the teacher shows them the picture storybook, even before the teacher starts reading the contents of the story."*

Based on the results of the analysis of seven articles, it shows that the use of picture storybook media has a significant impact on increasing the reading interest of elementary school students. In general, picture storybooks are considered an effective medium because they are able to combine visual elements with interesting narratives, thus creating a more enjoyable and meaningful reading experience for students.

Research by (Damayanti, 2021) and (Badryah et al., 2024) shows a drastic increase in students' reading interest after the application of illustrated story media. Damayanti recorded a surge in reading interest from 40% to 88.35%, while Badryah et al. showed an increase from 0% to 80.95%. This fact indicates that visual media is able to reach students who were previously less motivated to read, making them more interested, active, and enthusiastic in literacy activities.

Similar findings were also revealed by (Istito'ah et al., 2022) and (Fauziah et al., 2022) which stated that students showed high enthusiasm when given access to picture storybooks. Interesting illustrations and stories that are in accordance with children's cognitive development make it easier for them to understand the content of reading and are encouraged to read independently. This shows that in addition to encouraging interest, this media also plays a role in building reading habits.

Furthermore, research by (Khalisa et al., 2022) and (Nuralifah & Masyithoh, 2024) emphasizes that this medium not only increases reading interest but also strengthens students' reading skills and imagination. Story visualization makes it easier for students to understand the meaning of the text, imagine the storyline, and connect between images and narratives. This reinforces the idea that picture storybooks are able to be a bridge between aesthetic aspects and educational functions in learning to read.

The use of meta-analysis studies conducted by (Dessiane & Hardjono, 2020) also showed that of the various types of learning media, picture stories and comics have the highest effectiveness in increasing student involvement. Although it does not only focus on the reading aspect, these finding are still relevant because they show that image-based media is indeed generally more interesting and effective in supporting the learning process.

From these findings, it can be concluded that picture storybooks are not only visual aids, but also a strategic medium in fostering students' interest and reading skills. This media is able to change students' perception of reading activities from what was originally considered boring to a fun and anticipated activity. Therefore, the development and use of picture storybooks needs to be encouraged, especially at the elementary education level as the initial stage of forming a student literacy culture.

### 3.1. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis of 7 scientific articles that discuss the use of picture storybooks in elementary school learning, it can be concluded that this media has a significant positive impact on increasing students' reading interest and reading skills. The integration between text and illustration has been shown to be effective in attracting attention, strengthening

comprehension, and encouraging students' active involvement in reading activities. The use of this media has also succeeded in overcoming the obstacle of low reading motivation in children, making literacy activities more fun and meaningful.

The studies analyzed, such as those conducted by Damayanti (2021) and Badryah et al. (2024), show a significant increase in the indicators of student reading interest after the application of illustrated story media. In addition, the results of other research also confirm that picture storybooks not only function as a visual aid, but also as a strategic means to build a literacy culture from an early age. However, the limitations of the studies analyzed, such as limited participant coverage and short duration, suggest the need for further research. Further research is recommended to be carried out over a longer period of time and with a larger number of participants so that the results can be applied more generally. In addition, the exploration of the use of picture storybooks in digital format and the adaptation of content to the socio-cultural context of students is also important to strengthen its effectiveness in learning.

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