

# The Role Of The Habit Of Reading Books At Home On The Cognitive Development Of Elementary School Students

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**Abstract.** Reading books plays a very important role in the cognitive development of elementary school students. Reading activities are not only about getting information, but can also stimulate critical thinking skills, improve vocabulary, and strengthen memory and understanding. This study aims to determine the role of reading habits at home on the cognitive development of elementary school students. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative research using a phenomenological approach. The determination of the subjects in this study was carried out using a nonprobability sampling technique in the form of purposive sampling so that a sample of 10 students was obtained. The results of the analysis showed that 2 students often read books at home and 5 students very rarely, even 3 of them never read books at home. Students who have a habit of reading regularly at home showed higher scores on cognitive tests compared to students who rarely read. In addition, the type of book read also has an effect, where books with educational themes and high-quality fiction have a greater positive impact. This study concludes that improving cognitive abilities through appropriate learning methods can contribute to the development of good reading habits among elementary school students. Recommendations for parents and educators include creating an environment that supports reading interests and providing easy access to a variety of reading materials.

**Keywords:** Book Reading Habits, Cognitive Development, Elementary School Students

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## INTRODUCTION

In the world of education, cognitive development is one of the important aspects in the growth and development of children, especially at the elementary school age stage. At this time, children not only learn basic skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also develop critical thinking skills, solve problems, and improve memory and concentration. In simple terms, cognitive is understood as a child's ability to think more complexly and the ability to reason and solve problems (Desmita, 2010).

Reading is an activity that is not only useful for obtaining information, but also has a significant impact on brain development, especially in improving students' cognitive abilities. Research conducted (Snow, 2010); (Anderson and Nagy, 1992); (Marzano, 2003); (Gibson and Levin, 1975); (Car, 2010); (Mar, 2006); (Willingham, 2009); (Billington et al, 2012) shows that reading books can stimulate various cognitive functions such as attention, memory, language skills, and creativity. Through books, students are introduced to various ideas, concepts, and perspectives that can broaden their horizons and improve their logical and critical thinking skills.

Facts on the ground show that in 2020 the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) noted that only around 10% of the Indonesian population was diligent in reading books, a report from UNESCO also showed that the reading interest of the Indonesian people was only 0.001%, and the

results of PISA in 2020 showed that around 70% of students in Indonesia have low reading skills in Indonesia, although there have been many efforts to improve literacy in children, the challenges faced are still quite large, such as limited access to quality books, low interest in reading, and lack of support in getting students used to reading regularly.

The development of reading interest continues to be improved in order to form a society with a reading culture (Kartika, 2004: 115). If students are accustomed to reading, then the habit will be carried out continuously. In addition, the hobby of reading has a positive impact on the students. It is very unfortunate if students do not like to read or their interest in reading is low due to the limited knowledge that students have. Therefore, parents need to provide quality reading materials in each family so that children do not only read at school but reading activities are also carried out at home. So that reading activities are carried out routinely and in a directed manner, which is useful so that students can obtain significant benefits in their intellectual development which will be useful throughout their lives.

In line with the initial observations made by researchers on one of the elementary schools in Cirebon City, it shows that the reading interest of students in the school is very concerning, especially high-grade students, namely students in grades 4, 5, and 6. Seeing this problem, the researcher took a sample of the formal operational stage. This is in line with what Piaget put forward that, at this stage individuals begin to think about concrete experiences, and think about them more abstractly, idealistically, and logically. The abstract quality of formal operational thinking is clearly seen in verbal problem solving. Concrete operational thinkers need to see concrete elements A, B, and C to draw logical conclusions that if  $A = B$  and  $B = C$ , then  $A = C$ . Conversely, formal operational thinkers can solve problems even though the problem is only presented verbally. In addition to having the ability to abstract, formal operational thinkers also have the ability to idealize and imagine possibilities. At this stage, children begin to think speculatively about the ideal qualities they want in themselves and others. The formal operational concept also states that children can develop deductive hypotheses about how to solve problems and reach conclusions systematically. (Marinda, 2020).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research is a qualitative research using a descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research uses an inductive approach by building theories/concepts derived from empirical data in the field so that conclusions can be drawn (Harahap, 2020). This type of qualitative research

is phenomenology, where researchers identify the nature of human experience as a subject of research on certain phenomena. the data produced in this study is descriptive in nature, namely in the form of words or sentences related to the role of the habit of reading books at home on the cognitive development of students in elementary schools which are then analyzed using inductive reasoning.

This study was conducted on elementary school students at one of the elementary schools in Cirebon City. Determination of subjects in this study was carried out using a nonprobability sampling technique in the form of purposive sampling. According to Sugiyono (2023: 153) the purposive sampling data source sampling technique is based on certain considerations. The population in this study were all 6th grade students totaling 30 students. Based on these considerations, the population selected as a sample was 10 students. Data collection used primary sources, namely data sources that were directly provided by participants to researchers without any intermediaries.

The data collection technique used was a structured interview with research participants acting as sources. In the interview technique, communication occurs between two parties which is carried out face to face where one party acts as an interviewer and the other party acts as an interviewee with a specific purpose (Fadhallah, 2021). Structured interviews in this study were conducted informally. Each respondent was given the same questions and the researcher recorded them. The questions asked were about vocabulary development and language comprehension, improving reading skills and text comprehension, critical and analytical thinking skills, memory and concentration skills, social and emotional development, and the role of the home environment in reading.

## RESULTS

In a study conducted by researchers on the role of parents in getting used to reading books at home, researchers found a lot of information provided by participants to get answers to a problem. The problem is about:

### 1. Read from an early age

Based on information obtained from 10 families, it was found that parents introduced reading books since children were 3 years old and began to be independent to read by themselves at the age of 5 years. In this case, parents always discipline their children to always read every day either independently or reading together with other family members. In addition, children are always taught to tell stories and discuss as a concept to train communication skills.

### 2. Parental involvement

The results obtained from parental involvement in reading activities are that parents always give sufficient attention and affection to their children, support every positive activity carried out by their children, accompany their children in reading or when there are activities and can be parents as well as friends for the comfort of their children at home which influences the character of the child.

### 3. Access to books

Access to books experienced by 10 families is not yet considered good because several factors that hinder access to books are difficult to obtain. For example, at home there is a family library but only a few books are available. This is because the village is far from the city so that to buy reading books you have to wait for a bazaar at school. Likewise with libraries that only rely on school libraries because the public library is far away. This does not reduce parents from remaining disciplined in reading books. Sometimes parents deliberately buy newspapers to be their children's reading material.

### 4. Replica of parents' reading style

The replica of literate parents begins with the habit of parents reading which is then followed by their children. Over time when children start to get bored with the reading method, parents always change the method or way of literacy especially for children so that they remain consistent in reading. The methods used by parents include making literacy trees, reading in videos, watching videos then children explain the contents of the video and so on.

### 5. Parental behavior towards education

Based on interviews conducted on the importance of education, parents revealed that education is very important for the survival of their children. The education that parents provide to their children until now has not been maximized because according to them, even when children are adults, education must be upheld. So far, parents educate their children to go with the flow, not too strict and not too spoiled. Parents place their position where they must be strict and pay more attention to their children. That way, it is hoped that children can grow up honestly, independently and responsibly.

### 6. Monitoring

The results of this monitoring, in essence parents evaluate what their children do in reading. Some evaluate every day and some evaluate once a week with the aim of doing better in the future. Parents also evaluate how children learn effectively so that it is hoped that reading in the family can be an inspiration for themselves and others.

This study was conducted on 10 elementary school students in one of the schools in Cirebon city. The researcher gave 14 open-ended questions that were answered alternately so that the researcher could make a conclusion from the 10 students who had been interviewed. The following are the indicators and question items used in this study.

**Table 1.** Question Indicators

INDICATOR	QUESTION ITEM
Reading Habits	How often do you read books at home?
	What type of books do you read most often?
Influence on Language	When you are taking part in class, do you actively speak and restate what the teacher has said?
	Do you feel like your vocabulary has improved after reading a book?
Thinking Ability	Does reading books at home make it easier for you to complete your schoolwork?
	How do you use information from books in your daily life?
Memory and Information Retention	How well do you remember stories or information from books you have read at home?
	Is there a particular method you use that helps you remember the information in a book?
Expression of Creativity	Does reading a book inspire you to write or draw?
	Can you give an example of how a story gave you an imagination?
Critical Thinking and Analysis	Does reading books at home make you more critical of information received from other sources?
	How do you analyze characters or themes in the books you read?
Parental Support	To what extent do your parents support the habit of reading books at home?
	Are your parents involved in discussion about the book you read?

### A. Reading Habits

The first indicator to find out how big the role of reading habits at home is on students' cognitive development is reading habits which are divided into two question items. Based on students' reading habits at home, the results show that the majority of students rarely read books at home, and some students do not read books at all in a week. The books they often read are mostly story books such as comics and fairy tales. In addition, there are some students who read textbooks such as Indonesian, science, religion, history, mathematics, and English. This certainly requires evaluation, because if students are not under parental supervision in terms of reading books, students will easily access readings that they should not read.

### B. Influence on Language

The second indicator that is discussed about the role of reading habits at home on students' cognitive development is the influence on language which is divided into two question items. Based on the influence on language, the results show that the majority of students who often read books at home are more active in speaking and restating what the teacher has conveyed during class. And students' vocabulary has increased after they read books. Of course, this has a good influence on students' language skills.

### **C. Thinking Ability**

The third indicator that is discussed about the role of reading habits at home on students' cognitive development is thinking skills which are divided into two question items. In terms of thinking skills in how to use information from books in everyday life, the majority of students answered by practicing the good things contained in the books they read. In addition, the majority of students can complete school assignments more easily. Although this affects students' thinking skills, the role of parents at home is also very necessary, so that students' reading is more controlled so that they are practicing good things in their daily lives.

### **D. Memory and Information Retention**

The fourth indicator that is discussed about the role of reading habits at home on students' cognitive development is memory and information retention which is divided into two question items. Based on the memory and information retention indicators, students find it easy to remember stories or information from books they have read at home. In addition, students have certain ways that they use to help them remember the information in the book, namely the majority of students read more often on certain pages and record the results of the summary.

### **E. Expression of Creativity**

The fifth indicator that influences the role of reading habits at home on students' cognitive development is seen from the expression of creativity which is divided into two question items. Reviewed from the indicator of creativity expression, the majority makes students feel inspired to write and draw after they read books.

The majority of students can give examples of how a story gives them an imagination, one example of a student's answer is when reading a story about an adventure in the forest, students are able to imagine walking among the trees.

### **F. Critical Thinking and Analysis**

The sixth indicator that influences the role of reading habits at home on students' cognitive development is seen from how students think critically and analytically, this indicator is divided into two question items. The first item is that the majority of students are more critical of information received from other sources. So that this is done in their daily lives, an example of a student's answer is when they get information from their friends, they will not immediately believe it. However, they will ask directly to friends who have been discussed and not spread information that is not necessarily true. The second question item is how students analyze characters or themes in the books they read. During the interview, students' answers varied. However, the majority of students read the entire story from beginning to end about the characters in a story, then conclude it

### **G. People Support Old**

The seventh indicator that influences the role of reading habits at home on students' cognitive development is seen from the extent to which parents support their children's reading habits at home. Parents strongly support the habit of reading books at home, mostly through textbooks distributed by the school. However, there are still few parents who support by providing other reading books besides the textbooks distributed by the school. And the majority of parents are involved in discussing the reading books read by their children when they are at home.

## DISCUSSION

### A. The Role of Home Reading Habits on the Cognitive Development of Elementary School Students

Based on research conducted by researchers on 10 child samples, it shows that reading habits carried out at home can accelerate and deepen children's cognitive development. Factors that influence the extent to which this role can be achieved include:

#### 1. Vocabulary Development

This is very important because a wide vocabulary is directly related to a child's ability to understand more complex texts, both at school and in everyday life.

In elementary school students, a richer vocabulary will make it easier for them to understand teacher instructions, answer exam questions, and also communicate effectively. Reading books that are appropriate for their age and interests also allows children to learn how to use words in the right context, thereby improving overall language skills. Based on the interview process conducted with 10 students, only 2 students often read books at home so that when the discussion process in the classroom, the two children were more active than the 8 students who rarely read books at home.

#### 2. Improve Reading and Comprehension Skills

Regularly reading books at home can improve students' reading skills in terms of reading fluency and text comprehension. Children who are accustomed to reading outside of school hours tend to recognize words faster and understand the storyline or information in the reading. This not only improves their reading skills, but also provides a stronger foundation in understanding more difficult texts in the future.

The ability to understand more complex texts in elementary school children is very important in various subjects, such as mathematics, science, and Indonesian. Both students who have a habit of reading at home tend to be better at connecting ideas, identifying important information, and drawing conclusions from the texts they read.

#### 3. Sharpen Memory and Concentration

Reading requires good memory, especially when children have to remember characters, storylines, or facts in books. This can train their brains to be more focused and involved in

deeper thinking processes. When reading, children also have to focus their attention on the text, which improves their ability to concentrate. The ability to remember information and organize ideas from the books they read also stimulates the development of long-term memory.

#### 4. Improving Critical Thinking Skills

Reading is not just about absorbing information, but also about how children analyze and evaluate the content of the reading. Books containing fiction or nonfiction stories provide opportunities for children to think critically, construct arguments, and draw conclusions based on the information they read. Books also teach children to think about multiple perspectives, resolve conflicts, and solve problems, all of which contribute to their critical thinking skills.

#### 5. Enhance Creativity and Imagination

Books, especially story books and fiction, open up a world of imagination for children. They can imagine new places, unique situations, and fantastic characters. This imaginative activity stimulates their creativity, which is very useful not only for solving problems but also for creating innovative solutions in various aspects of life. Reading books develops imagination skills that play an important role in brain development and emotional intelligence of children.

#### 6. Improving Problem Solving Skills

Books often introduce children to problems or challenges that characters in the story have to face. Children will tend to analyze and think about how the characters solve the problem, which can improve their ability to face and solve problems in real life. Nonfiction books also provide practical knowledge about how to solve problems that can be directly applied in everyday life.

#### 7. Encouraging Independence in Learning

Reading at home can also increase children's independence in the learning process. When children read on their own, they learn to search for information, understand reading, and find answers to their questions. This increases their confidence and skills in independent learning, which is very useful when they face tasks at school or in their lives later.

#### 8. Improving Academic Achievement

Children who read frequently tend to have better reading skills, which directly affects their ability to comprehend lessons in school. They can read faster, understand subject matter better, and respond to academic tasks more efficiently. Good reading habits from an early age can improve a child's academic achievement in the long run.

#### 9. Introducing Positive Values

Many books contain moral messages and life values that are important for the development of children's character. Books can teach children about honesty, hard work, courage, friendship, and other values that can shape positive attitudes and behaviors. By reading, children not only gain academic knowledge, but also learn to be good and responsible individuals.



## **B. Stages of Cognitive Development**

The stages of human cognitive development are divided into several phases. Piaget divides the development of human cognitive abilities according to age into 4 stages (Marinda, 2020). Namely:

### **1. Sensory Stage (Sensory Motor)**

This stage of cognitive development occurs at the age of 0-2 years. The keyword for this stage of cognitive development is the process of "decentration". This means that at this age, babies cannot separate themselves from their environment. They are "centered" on themselves. Only in the next stage do they experience decentering on themselves. At this sensory stage, babies move from instinctive reflex actions at birth to the beginning of symbolic thinking. Babies build an understanding of the world by coordinating sensory experiences with physical actions.

### **2. Preoperational Stage**

This phase of cognitive development occurs in the age range of 2-7 years. At this stage, children begin to represent the world with words and pictures. These words and pictures show an increase in symbolic thinking and go beyond the relationship of sensory information and physical actions. The way children think at this level is unsystematic, inconsistent, and illogical.

### **3. Concrete Operational Stage**

The concrete operational stage occurs in the age range of 7-11 years. At this stage, children will be able to think logically about concrete events and classify objects into different forms. The ability to classify something already exists, but cannot solve abstract problems.

### **4. Formal Operational Stage**

The formal operational stage is in the age range of 11 years-adulthood. This phase is also known as adolescence. Adolescents think in a more abstract, logical, and more idealistic way. The formal operational stage, ages eleven to fifteen. At this stage individuals have begun to think about concrete experiences, and think about them in a more abstract, idealistic and logical way.

In this study, research was conducted on students who are at the formal operational stage because at this stage, student development is more ready because students' way of thinking is more abstract, logical, and more idealistic so they are very suitable to be used as samples.

## **CONCLUSION**

The role of reading books at home in improving students' cognitive abilities in this study shows that it is very influential. Of the ten students, four of them read books at home more often and the other six students rarely read books at home. So that the four students find it easier to understand vocabulary, help them understand texts in a reading more easily, remember and concentrate more easily in a reading, they tend to think critically, their imagination is much more developed, they find it easier to solve a problem, are more independent in learning, they tend to excel, introduce them to positive values such as honesty, hard work, courage, and other values. In addition, in this study according to the confessions of the ten students who were interviewed that the four students who often read books at home, they not only read textbooks but both of their parents facilitate non-subject reading books at their homes, although there are two students who are given reading book facilities at home. However, these students rarely read books at home. However, both of their parents often discuss the books they read together. One student whose parents are illiterate, and three students whose parents do not provide them with reading books at home and never discuss the reading they read with their parents.

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