



EXPLORATION OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN USING DIGITAL STORYBOOKS TO INCREASE INTEREST IN READING AT SMP NEGERI 1 TONGAUNA

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Abstract The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in the world of education, including in the provision of reading materials that are more interactive and flexible. One of the innovations utilized in increasing students' interest in reading is the use of digital storybooks. This study aims to explore students' experiences in using digital storybooks and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in increasing interest in reading. This study used a qualitative approach, which was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Tongauna involving 25 students of class VIII A as research subjects. Data collection techniques included observation, questionnaires, documentation, and data triangulation through interviews with teachers. The results showed that most students felt a more interesting, comfortable, and enjoyable reading experience through digital storybooks compared to printed books. Supporting factors include attractive visual displays, ease of access, interactive features, and support from teachers and school infrastructure. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include technical constraints, distractions from social media, and physical discomfort such as eyestrain. The findings suggest that digital storybooks have great potential to increase students' interest in reading if supported by a conducive learning environment and appropriate technology utilization strategies.

Keywords: digital storybooks, reading interest, student experience, digital literacy

Abstrak. Perkembangan teknologi digital telah membawa perubahan signifikan dalam dunia pendidikan, termasuk dalam penyediaan bahan bacaan yang lebih interaktif dan fleksibel. Salah satu inovasi yang dimanfaatkan untuk meningkatkan minat membaca siswa adalah penggunaan buku cerita digital. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman siswa dalam menggunakan buku cerita digital dan mengidentifikasi faktor pendukung dan penghambat dalam meningkatkan minat membaca. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, yang dilakukan di SMP Negeri 1 Tongauna dengan melibatkan 25 siswa kelas VIII A sebagai subjek penelitian. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, kuesioner, dokumentasi, dan triangulasi data melalui wawancara dengan guru. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa merasa pengalaman membaca melalui buku cerita digital lebih menarik, nyaman, dan menyenangkan dibandingkan dengan buku cetak. Faktor pendukung meliputi tampilan visual yang menarik, kemudahan akses, fitur interaktif, dan dukungan dari guru dan infrastruktur sekolah. Sementara itu, faktor penghambat meliputi kendala teknis, gangguan dari media sosial, dan ketidaknyamanan fisik seperti kelelahan mata. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa buku cerita digital memiliki potensi besar untuk meningkatkan minat membaca siswa jika didukung oleh lingkungan belajar yang kondusif dan strategi pemanfaatan teknologi yang tepat.

Kata Kunci : buku cerita digital, minat baca, pengalaman siswa, literasi digital

Background

Advances in digital technology over the past few decades have brought about significant changes in various aspects of life, including education. Digitalization has transformed the way people access information, communicate, and acquire knowledge. Technological advances have enabled learning methods to be interactive, flexible, and innovative. One of the innovations that has seen rapid progress in the field of education is the digitization of reading materials, such as e-books, digital books, and multimedia-

based learning resources. Digital technology has opened up great opportunities for the world of education to develop more engaging and efficient learning methods. With the availability of various digital devices such as computers, smartphones, and tablets, students can more easily access reading materials in a convenient and practical manner.

. Based on initial observations conducted by researchers, it was found that students' interest in reading is still relatively low. This can be seen from the low level of student involvement in independent reading activities and the low number of visits to the library. In addition, many students are more interested in using gadgets for entertainment than reading. This indicates a need for more innovative and engaging strategies to increase reading interest among students.

Digital literacy is an important part of the advancement of educational technology today. Digital literacy is not just the ability to use digital tools, but also includes the skills to understand, filter, and utilize information available on the internet wisely. Initial observations show that students' reactions to the use of digital storybooks vary. Some students are interested in reading digital storybooks because they consider them easier to access and offer a variety of interesting stories. However, there are also some students who dislike digital storybooks because they prefer printed books. Another challenge faced is the large collection of books in the library, which makes it difficult for students to find reading materials that align with their interests. Nevertheless, the majority of students recognize that digital storybooks are more appealing than printed books because they offer convenience, practicality, especially through interactive features that enhance story comprehension. With these advantages, digital storybooks have the potential to become one of the solutions to increase reading interest at SMP Negeri 1 Tongauna

This phenomenon also occurs at Tongauna 1 Public Junior High School. Based on initial observations conducted by researchers, it was found that students' interest in reading is still relatively low. This can be seen from the low level of student involvement in independent reading activities and the low number of visits to the library

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Experience of Digital Learning

Students' experiences in learning through digital media show how they adapt to technology during the learning process, in terms of efficiency, engagement, and obstacles

encountered. In the case of digital storybooks, students' experiences are a significant benchmark for assessing the effectiveness of digital learning media, especially in efforts to increase students' interest in reading.

Enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences can increase student participation while strengthening their literacy skills. Digital-based learning that prioritizes personalization, collaboration, and authenticity can substantially increase student contribution to the learning process, making them feel more motivated to actively engage when the digital content presented is relevant and engaging to them (Harahap et al., 2022). Engaging visuals and narratives in digital storybooks also help students become more interested and actively participate in lessons (Abdulatif & Arifin, 2023). In today's digital education era, students' learning experiences are greatly influenced by how technology is applied in the educational process. Therefore, from these two arguments, it can be concluded that students' learning experiences in the digital age are significantly influenced by how technology is used in innovative and student-centered ways. When digital learning is designed with visually appealing elements, clear illustrations, and engaging narratives tailored to students' interests, they become more interested in participating and motivated in learning activities. This not only makes them more active but also contributes to strengthening their overall literacy skills.

On the other hand, Sulianta (2020) argues that digital literacy is not only related to the technical aspects of using technology, but also includes attitudes, understanding, and the ability to manage and convey information effectively on various digital platforms. This means that digital literacy requires students to not only be able to operate tools, but also to have critical thinking, ethical, and responsible skills in online activities. With good digital literacy skills, students can make the most of various technologies and learning resources. This is an important foundation for the implementation of digital-based learning media, including the use of digital storybooks, which are now increasingly popular for increasing students' interest in reading.

According to Maulana & Prasetya (2015) explain that digital storybooks are a form of multimedia produced through the adaptation of storybooks via digitization using computers, complete with illustrations, audiovisual elements, and animations. According to Maynard et al. (2010), digital storybooks provide readers with the opportunity to

experience stories in a deeper and more engaging way, thanks to the integration of various forms of media that support understanding and emotional engagement.

According to Jayanti and Wibawa (2024: 15), interest is a driving force that originates from within an individual, creating emotional attention that guides a person to choose activities that are considered enjoyable, beneficial, and provide personal satisfaction. Qory'Aina and Rozy (2024: 2) add that interest is an emotion that motivates individuals to engage in an activity and serves as the reason behind the actions taken. In line with this, Nurtika (2021: 56-57) explains that interest arises when someone shows attention to something, accompanied by a desire to understand, learn, and even explore further what they have discovered. Bangsawan (2023: 4) also states that interest is everyone's desire to engage in certain activities, including reading. Someone with a very high interest in reading will generally be more consistent in making reading a part of their routine.

Relevant Research

Research studies that are considered relevant by researchers are described as follows:

Research conducted by Intan Maharani and Dendi Wijaya Saputra (2024) with the title "Increasing Students' Reading Interest through E-Bookstory Based Learning Media at SDN Pondok Cabe Ilir 01". The results of research by Intan Maharani and Dendi Wijaya Saputra (2024) with the title "Increasing Students' Reading Interest through E-Bookstory-Based Learning Media at SDN Pondok Cabe Ilir 01". The results showed that there was an increase in student interest in reading through E-bookstory-based learning media. The final results showed that all students' average scores and the percentage of student completeness had increased in each cycle, in cycle 1 with a frequency of 12 students who could not read using Ebookstory and in cycle 2 with a frequency of 7 students who could not read using E-bookstory. From these average results it can be concluded that through reading media using E-bookstory there is an increase in students. This study highlights the factors that influence students' reading interest, including the role of the school environment, teacher support, and the availability of interesting reading materials. It was found that students who were previously less interested in reading began to show interest after being given access to E-Bookstory. This is due to the visual display that is more attractive than conventional printed books. However, the challenge in

utilizing E-Bookstory is the lack of access to digital devices as well as potential distractions from the use of gadgets that are not related to learning.

1. Research by Nur Kalima, Maharani Oktavia, Puji Ayurachmawati (2023) with the title "the effect of digital books of bangka belitung racial tales on student reading interest class IV sd n 4 simpang katis". The results showed that in the experimental class using digital storybooks, there was a significant increase in students' interest in reading. The average score of students' reading interest in the pretest was 55.4, which was in the moderate category. After being given treatment in the form of digital books, the posttest score increased to 84.7, falling into the high category. In contrast, in the control class that used printed books, there was no significant increase in students' reading interest, with an average difference of only 0.1. This data shows that the use of digital storybooks is more effective in increasing students' reading interest than printed books.

Research conducted by Desy Getri Sari Gogahu and Tego Prasety (2020) with the title "Development of E-Bookstory Based Learning Media to Improve Reading Literacy of Elementary School Students". The results showed that based on the results of the development carried out E-Bookstory-based learning media can be said to be very effective to use to improve students' reading literacy. Evidenced by the results of validation by three expert lecturers, 1 material expert lecturer and 2 media expert lecturers. The material validation results get a score of 49 with a percentage of 82%, so it is categorized as very high and suitable for use. This can also be seen in the results of media validation 1 obtaining a score of 47 with a percentage of 67%, and the results of media validation 2 obtaining a score of 43 with a percentage of 61%, so it is categorized as high and feasible to use. teachers can use E-Bookstory learning media in reading literacy learning, so that students get used to and like reading books because they are equipped with interesting reading texts and pictures.

This study shares many similarities with previous studies, particularly in terms of its focus on how digital media can stimulate students' interest in reading. All of the studies reviewed indicate that digital storybooks or e-books can serve as effective learning tools for improving literacy and motivation to read. Additionally, elements that influence the effectiveness of digital books, such as attractive visuals, device availability, and support from the learning environment, are also important

factors in this study. However, there are several differences that set this study apart from previous ones. One of the main differences is the level of education being highlighted. While previous studies have generally focused on elementary school students, this study is directed at middle school students. Middle school students have different characteristics, including how they interact with technology and their interest in reading in digital formats. Additionally, the approach in this study is also different. Many previous studies have used quantitative methods, whereas this study adopts a more in-depth qualitative approach to understand students' experiences from a more subjective perspective. Instead of simply quantifying increases in reading interest, this study investigates how students experience the process of digital reading, the challenges they face, and the factors that can support or hinder their participation in reading. The uniqueness of this study lies in its in-depth exploration of students' experiences. This study not only examines whether digital storybooks can increase reading interest but also seeks to understand how students interact with digital features, whether they feel comfortable reading online, and the impact of this on their reading habits

RESEARCH METHODS

According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative approach is chosen when researchers want to explore the meaning that individuals assign to social phenomena or specific issues. In this study, a qualitative approach was applied to give researchers the opportunity to deeply understand students' experiences when using digital storybooks in their reading activities. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Tongauna with a focus on gaining a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences, including their perceptions, emotions, and involvement when reading digital storybooks. In addition, the researcher also sought to identify various elements that support the effective use of digital storybooks, as well as factors that may hinder their use.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted on eighth-grade students in class VIII A at SMP Negeri 1 Tongauna. There were 25 students who participated in this study. This study used a qualitative approach to collect information about students' experiences when using digital storybooks, factors that increase interest in reading through digital storybooks, and

challenges faced during the use of digital storybooks. The researcher obtained information through a questionnaire distributed to the research subjects. In other words, the results of this study are based on the questionnaire responses provided by the research subjects

CONCLUSION

Based on research conducted on eighth-grade A students at SMP Negeri 1 Tongauna, using digital storybooks provides a more engaging, comfortable, and motivating reading experience than printed books. Digital media is considered more flexible and suited to today's students' learning styles, supported by engaging visuals, interactive features, and easy access through personal devices. This positive experience directly contributes to increased student interest in reading.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Use of Digital Storybooks

Supporting factors include flexible access, adequate internet connections, user-friendly applications, and support from teachers and schools. Barriers identified include technical glitches, unstable internet connections, distractions from social media, and physical discomfort such as eye strain. The successful use of digital textbooks will be more optimal if supported by good infrastructure and appropriate guidance from schools.

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