



Optimizing the Hub of Knowledge: Library Management Strategies and Their Role in Enhancing Students' Reading Interest

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ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to examine efforts to optimize library management in fostering students' reading interest. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed. Data were collected through direct observation, interviews with key informants, and document analysis. The informants consisted of the head of the library, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, and eleventh-grade students. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that library management optimization was implemented through four main aspects: collection quantity, collection management, library spatial arrangement, and literacy programs. The library collection was considered adequate, although students' independent visitation rates remained relatively low. Collection management was conducted systematically and supported by digital library services; however, the availability of general reading materials still requires improvement. The library environment was found to be comfortable, clean, and well-organized, despite the need for maintenance of several facilities. Furthermore, structured literacy programs were effective in developing reading habits and enhancing students' reading interest. The study implies that effective library management, supported by adequate resources and sustainable literacy programs, can contribute significantly to strengthening students' reading culture and interest.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in developing high-quality human resources capable of responding to social, technological, and economic changes. Through educational processes, learners acquire knowledge, skills, values, and competencies that enable them to participate effectively in society and contribute to national development. The importance of education is explicitly emphasized

in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which defines education as a conscious and planned effort to create learning environments that facilitate the optimal development of students' potential (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, 2003). Among the competencies expected from educational processes, literacy occupies a strategic position because it enables individuals to access, understand, evaluate, and utilize information effectively. In contemporary society, literacy is increasingly recognized as a fundamental requirement for lifelong learning, informed decision-making, and active citizenship. Consequently, strengthening literacy skills among students is not only an educational priority but also a societal necessity that supports sustainable human development and prepares future generations to face increasingly complex global challenges (Faratunnisa & Afifah, 2024; Triyuwono et al., 2025).

Despite its importance, literacy development continues to face substantial challenges in many educational contexts. One of the most pressing concerns is the declining interest in reading among students, particularly in the era of rapid digitalization. The widespread use of smartphones, social media platforms, and digital entertainment has transformed students' learning habits and significantly reduced the time devoted to reading academic materials. While digital technology offers broader access to information, it simultaneously encourages instant information consumption that often limits deep reading practices and critical engagement with texts. As a result, many students demonstrate lower motivation to visit libraries, read books voluntarily, or participate in literacy-related activities. This condition has become a concern for educators and policymakers because reading interest is closely associated with academic achievement, critical thinking ability, and knowledge acquisition. Therefore, educational institutions are challenged to develop effective strategies that can cultivate sustainable reading habits and strengthen literacy culture among students in the midst of increasingly dominant digital influences (Dewi, 2024; Ramadhani et al., 2025).

The phenomenon of declining reading interest is also evident in school environments where libraries are expected to function as centers of learning and literacy development. School libraries serve not only as repositories of books and information resources but also as educational facilities that support students' intellectual growth and independent learning. However, the effectiveness of libraries in promoting reading culture is highly dependent on how they are managed and utilized. Preliminary observations conducted prior to this study revealed that although the school library provided various information services and learning resources, several challenges remained evident. Limitations in the quantity and diversity of reading materials reduced students' enthusiasm to

utilize library services. Furthermore, some students perceived the available collections as insufficiently attractive and unable to accommodate their reading preferences. These conditions were reflected in relatively low library visitation rates and limited participation in reading activities. Observational findings indicated that only approximately 30–40% of students actively used the library as a learning resource, suggesting that existing library management practices had not fully optimized the library's role in fostering reading interest.

Previous studies have highlighted the significant contribution of library management to literacy development and reading interest among students. Research conducted by Nurhayati et al. (2023) demonstrated that effective management of library facilities could enhance students' reading interest through the promotion of reading habits and the consistent utilization of library resources. Similarly, Sulfemi (2023) found that literacy programs managed through systematic processes involving planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation contributed positively to students' engagement in reading activities. These findings indicate that library management extends beyond administrative functions and directly influences students' literacy behavior. Effective management practices create supportive environments where students are encouraged to interact with reading materials and develop long-term reading habits. Consequently, educational institutions increasingly recognize the need to integrate library management strategies with literacy programs to maximize educational outcomes and support students' academic development.

Other scholars have further emphasized specific dimensions of library management that influence reading interest. Al Farizi et al. (2023) argued that strategic planning, resource organization, leadership effectiveness, and continuous evaluation are essential components of successful library management capable of strengthening reading culture within schools. Likewise, Dewi et al. (2024) identified collection diversity, facility quality, and attractive literacy programs as key determinants of students' willingness to visit libraries and engage in reading activities. Zalukhu et al. (2025) also reported a positive relationship between library management quality and students' reading interest, highlighting the importance of service quality, collection development, and librarian competence. Although these studies provide valuable insights, most examine library management from a broad perspective and tend to focus on its general effectiveness. Limited attention has been devoted to understanding how specific management components—including collection availability, collection management, spatial arrangement, and literacy program implementation—interact to influence students' reading interest, particularly within vocational secondary education settings. This gap necessitates further investigation to generate more context-specific evidence.

This study offers a more focused perspective by examining library management through four interconnected dimensions: collection availability, collection management practices, library spatial arrangement, and literacy program implementation. Rather than assessing library effectiveness in general terms, the study seeks to understand how these specific components collectively contribute to the development of students' reading interest. Such an approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of practical management strategies that can be implemented to strengthen literacy culture. The study also addresses the need for empirical evidence regarding the operational aspects of library management that directly influence student engagement with reading activities. By concentrating on these dimensions simultaneously, the research generates a more detailed framework for evaluating library optimization efforts and identifying areas that require improvement to support literacy development among students.

Based on the identified issues, this study investigates how library management can be optimized to foster students' reading interest. The underlying argument is that effective library management does not depend solely on the availability of learning resources but also on the integration of well-managed collections, supportive physical environments, accessible services, and sustainable literacy initiatives. When these elements function cohesively, libraries are more likely to become active learning centers that encourage reading habits and strengthen literacy culture. Therefore, this research contributes to educational practice by providing evidence-based insights into strategic library management and its role in promoting reading interest. The findings are expected to assist educational institutions in designing more effective library development policies and literacy programs, ultimately supporting the broader objective of improving students' literacy competencies and educational outcomes.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to obtain an in-depth understanding of library management strategies in fostering students' reading interest (Stanley, 2023; Villamin et al., 2025). A qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to explore social phenomena within their natural settings and to capture participants' perspectives based on real-life experiences. This approach is particularly suitable for examining library management practices, literacy activities, and students' responses without manipulating the research environment. The descriptive design was adopted to provide a comprehensive portrayal of the existing conditions and management processes implemented within the school library context (Annasthasya et al., 2025).

The research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. The school was selected because its library serves as an important learning resource and literacy support facility, while preliminary observations indicated several challenges related to library utilization and students' reading interest. The study involved key informants consisting of the head librarian, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, and selected eleventh-grade students who were considered capable of providing relevant information regarding library use and reading habits. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations of library activities and facilities, and document analysis of library management records, literacy program reports, and other supporting documents related to library governance and literacy development.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consisted of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, and organizing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents. Subsequently, the data were systematically displayed to facilitate interpretation and identify emerging patterns. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and continuously verifying findings throughout the research process to ensure consistency and accuracy. To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, source triangulation and technique triangulation were employed by comparing information obtained from different informants and data collection methods. The investigation focused on four dimensions of library management based on Sulistyono Basuki's framework: collection quantity, collection management, library spatial arrangement, and literacy programs aimed at improving students' reading interest (Sulistyono, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Optimizing Library Management in Quantity Aspects to Increase Student Reading Interest

Based on the data obtained, the library at SMK Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung has a relatively adequate collection and has been utilized quite well by the school community. However, development efforts are still needed to optimize the quality of service and utilization. Administratively, the library has a sufficient collection to support students' learning needs. However, the rate of independent student visits remains relatively low, averaging only two to three students per day. Conversely, the number of visits increases when there are literacy activities or field trips scheduled by the school.

Based on research findings, the implementation of literacy activities carried out in an organized and sustainable manner plays a role in encouraging students to more actively utilize library facilities. Findings (Sulfemi, 2023) confirm that increasing students' interest in reading can be encouraged through

structured literacy activity management, starting from program development, organizing implementation, and implementing activities, to a continuous evaluation process. Based on research findings, the implementation of literacy activities carried out in a sustainable and organized manner can be a strategic step in fostering students' habits of utilizing the library as a learning resource center.

While the number of visits is an important indicator, library development efforts also need to be directed at fostering a culture and willingness among students to access the library independently without any encouragement from others. Voluntary visits reflect a stronger interest in reading than mandatory or programmed visits. Research (Madiah & Rahmi, 2025) reveals that libraries' success in encouraging students' interest in reading is not limited to implementing various programs alone. Another equally important factor is the library's ability to provide a comfortable, engaging, and conducive environment that encourages students to come and read voluntarily.

In addition to program factors, the condition of library facilities also influences students' comfort levels and interest in visiting. The study found that several facilities, such as air conditioners (AC) and televisions, were damaged, reducing user comfort. This condition can impact the library's attractiveness as a place for learning and reading. These findings align with research (Dewi et al., 2024), which emphasized that efforts to increase student interest in reading activities and library visits are inseparable from the availability of adequate facilities, a comfortable environment, and library conditions that support literacy activities. Based on these conditions, the development and maintenance of library facilities are important aspects for schools to consider so that the library can provide optimal services as a learning center and information provider.

Observations revealed that students still utilize the library as a place to study and read, particularly during breaks or when there are no classroom activities. The library is used as a place to read, find study references, and complete school assignments. This situation reflects the library's continued function as a learning resource, utilized by students to support their various academic needs.

In terms of collection, the library has a relatively adequate selection of textbooks and supplementary books to meet students' information needs. One factor contributing to the improved quality of library services is the availability of an adequate collection of library materials tailored to user needs. Furthermore, supporting facilities such as tables, chairs, and a reading area are available to facilitate students' reading and learning activities more comfortably.

The documentation data obtained indicates that students regularly visit the library. The documentation also shows the number of books available as learning resources for students. Furthermore, book loan data indicates that the library collection is still utilized by students as reading material and learning reference sources. Based on the research results, the library has been able to fulfill its role in supporting student learning activities. However, optimization of library utilization still needs to be improved through various strategies, such as enriching the library collection, improving the quality of facilities, and developing a more varied literacy activities to attract student interest.

Optimizing Library Collection Management to Increase Student Reading Interest

Based on the data obtained, the library collection at SMK Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung is managed through an organized and well-designed mechanism, so that its management can run effectively in supporting user needs. Efforts to develop library materials are carried out continuously every semester through a planning process that refers to learning needs, curriculum development, and suggestions submitted by the principal and teaching staff. This process demonstrates the implementation of the planning function in library management, so that the available collection can be tailored to student learning needs.

Library collection management has added value because the library materials provided have been tailored to the characteristics and needs of existing expertise programs, thereby supporting the learning process more effectively. This is evident in the high level of utilization of vocational books by students, especially in the Accounting and Animation expertise competencies. The level of library utilization as a learning tool is greatly influenced by the availability of library materials capable of meeting users' information and learning needs. Research conducted by (Rosiana et al., 2024) confirms that the quality of library services and increasing student reading interest can be supported by collection management designed according to the learning needs and characteristics of users.

However, this study found that the collection of non-academic reading materials, such as novels, motivational books, and self-development books, is still relatively limited. In fact, the more diverse the library materials available, the greater the opportunity for the library to attract students' interest in accessing reading resources and developing independent reading habits. (Dewi et al., 2024) emphasized that one of the causes of low library utilization by students is the limited selection of reading collections that can meet their information needs and reading interests. Based on these conditions, efforts to increase the variety of

collections, especially popular books and self-development, are necessary so that the library can meet learning needs while also becoming an attractive place for students to obtain educational entertainment.

Observation findings show that library materials have been systematically grouped into specific categories, which helps students find reading resources that meet their needs. The classified and structured arrangement of library materials benefits library services and facilitates users in finding the information they need quickly and accurately. Furthermore, most of the book collection is in good condition and suitable for use due to maintenance efforts and repairs to damaged books. The well-maintained physical condition of the collection demonstrates the library's concern for the sustainability and quality of the available learning resources.

Libraries have also implemented technology-based services through the use of digital library applications. This use of technology is a positive step in increasing collection accessibility and the efficiency of library services. Research conducted by (Azzahro & Reni, 2025) confirms that digital-based library transformation provides various benefits, such as more efficient collection management, ease of access to information, and increased student reading interest through more innovative and accessible services. Furthermore, (Hasanah, 2025) emphasizes that digital library management supported by good technological infrastructure and services can strengthen literacy culture and increase student engagement in reading activities.

The documentation results show a collection inventory list containing various types of library materials available in the library. Furthermore, collection procurement data demonstrates the library's efforts to regularly update and add reading materials. Documentation of the collection's condition also shows that the majority of books are in good condition and ready for students to use as learning resources or supplementary reading materials.

Based on research findings, the library of SMK Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung has been able to manage its collection adequately through various activities, such as adding to the collection, organizing and categorizing library materials, maintaining the collection, and utilizing digital technology in library services. However, increasing the number and variety of non-academic reading collections is still necessary so that the library can reach a wider range of students' reading interests. With a more diverse collection and technology-supported services, the library can play a more effective role in increasing students' reading interest and literacy culture.

Optimizing Library Spatial Layout to Increase Student Comfort and Reading Interest

Based on the research results, the library layout at SMK Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung showed a fairly good condition and received positive responses from informants. The library space was assessed as clean, neat, and systematically arranged, thus supporting student comfort in reading and studying activities. The arrangement of bookshelves arranged according to certain classifications makes it easier for visitors to find the collections they need. In addition, the cleanliness of the library space is maintained through routine cleaning activities by staff and student support through the on-duty schedule reflects the well-running library environment management.

One factor that supports increased student interest in reading activities and visits to the library is the availability of a comfortable, well-organized, and conducive library environment. A well-organized and comfortable library environment can encourage students to stay longer in the library and engage in more intensive reading activities. Research conducted by (Rahayu, 2024) , confirms that the creation of a comfortable library environment, supported by optimal lighting, good ventilation, and adequate reading facilities, can increase the library's attractiveness as a learning resource for students. Therefore, the spatial aspect is not only related to the aesthetics of the room, but also influences the effectiveness of library services.

Observations revealed that the library is equipped with a reading area, tables, chairs, and neatly arranged bookshelves. The room appears clean, bright, and adequately supports students' literacy activities. Natural lighting from the windows also helps create a comfortable reading environment during the day. This demonstrates the library's commitment to providing a learning environment that supports the needs of its users.

Despite its numerous advantages, the library still faces several challenges that require attention, particularly in optimizing air circulation and providing climate control. Interviews revealed that some students felt the room temperature was not cool enough due to a faulty air conditioner (AC). This situation has the potential to reduce student comfort, especially during hot weather. These findings align with research. (Loh & Binny, 2025) explained that the comfort of the library environment, including room temperature, quietness, and a pleasant atmosphere, are factors that influence student engagement in reading activities. The more comfortable the library environment, the more likely students are to use the library voluntarily.

Furthermore, (Merga, 2021) explains that school libraries designed as safe, comfortable, and welcoming spaces for students not only serve as information resources but also as spaces that support student well-being,

improve learning concentration, and encourage the development of sustainable reading habits. Based on this description, creating a learning environment supported by comfortable facilities needs to be a primary concern, as it can contribute to increasing student interest in reading activities and strengthening the school's literacy culture.

According to theory (Sulistyo, 2018) , libraries, as centers of learning resources, must be able to provide a physical environment that optimally supports user needs. A comfortable, organized, and easily accessible layout is a crucial element for libraries to effectively function as centers for information and literacy development. Therefore, improvements to air conditioning systems and ventilation quality need to be part of library development programs to continuously improve user comfort.

The documentation results show that the library space has a fairly good layout and supports student reading activities. Documentation of facilities and infrastructure shows the availability of bookshelves, reading tables, chairs, and other supporting facilities that can be utilized by users. In addition, there is a library regulations document that serves as a guideline for students in utilizing library facilities in an orderly and responsible manner. The research findings show that the physical environment of the SMK Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung library has supported learning activities quite well. However, optimization of several facilities still needs to be done so that the library can provide a more comfortable, pleasant atmosphere and encourage students to be more active in using it.

Optimizing Library Literacy Programs to Increase Students' Interest in Reading

Based on the data obtained, literacy activities implemented at SMK Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung have produced quite good results, as indicated by an increase in student interest in reading activities. The program is implemented through various activities, such as reading before the start of classes, regular book loans, and a book donation program from alumni to add to the library collection. These programs support each other in building a reading culture within the school environment. The head of the library explained that literacy activities are carried out in rotation between classes so that every day there are students participating in literacy activities in the library during the first hour of classes.

The success of a literacy program is inseparable from the active involvement of teachers and the support of the entire school community. Collaboration between librarians, teachers, principals, and students is a crucial factor in creating a sustainable literacy culture. Research conducted by (Hamzah et al., 2023) confirms that the success of literacy development in schools is

determined not only by the program design but also by the support and collaboration of various school components, including teachers, the library, the literacy team, and the creation of a supportive reading environment. This support is evident in the enthusiasm of teachers who actively assist students in literacy activities and propose additional reading schedules to increase student engagement.

The regular implementation of literacy programs has proven effective in developing students' reading habits. Developing a reading habit through structured and scheduled activities encourages students to utilize various reading resources more frequently, thus creating continuous interaction with literacy materials. This condition aligns with research (Siregar, 2025) which found that reading activities before learning, utilizing the school library, and providing various literacy facilities can increase student participation in reading activities and build a culture of literacy in the school environment. Consistently developing a reading habit allows students to integrate reading activities into their daily lives, thus forming a sustainable reading culture.

Interviews revealed that the literacy activities conducted by the school have positively impacted students' reading behavior, leading them to become more active readers than before. Interviews indicated that students have become accustomed to reading more regularly, both in the library and during classroom learning activities. The research findings suggest that the literacy program implemented not only encourages students to read more frequently but also contributes to building awareness, interest, and a positive outlook on the importance of reading.

Based on observations, the library plays an active role in supporting the implementation of the school's literacy program. Various literacy activities are held regularly to foster a reading culture among students. The school provides a reading corner as an alternative literacy resource, allowing students to access a variety of reading materials without having to constantly visit the library. The existence of this reading corner is an effective strategy for bringing reading resources closer to students, thereby increasing their interest in reading.

Despite the successful implementation of the literacy program, several aspects still require improvement, particularly regarding the management of activity time and strengthening communication and coordination between school departments. Aligning the literacy activity schedule with the learning schedule requires more intensive communication between the library, curriculum department, and subject teachers to ensure optimal program implementation. Research conducted by (Endiyani, 2024) confirms that

successful literacy program development requires thorough preparation, adequate support facilities, and ongoing synergy and communication between the various parties involved in its implementation.

Based on the documentation, a schedule for the literacy program is available, demonstrating that the activities have been designed and implemented in a structured manner. The documentation also demonstrates students' active participation in various literacy activities, such as group reading, library visits, and other literacy development activities. A review of the library's work program documents indicates that the library has systematically designed various literacy activities as an effort to foster and enhance students' long-term interest in reading.

Based on research findings, the literacy program implemented in schools has played a role in fostering and strengthening students' reading habits, thus increasing their interest in reading. Routine reading activities, support from teachers and school administrators, and the use of libraries as literacy centers are key factors contributing to the program's success. Therefore, the sustainability and development of the literacy program is necessary to strengthen the reading culture in schools and continuously improve students' literacy.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the optimization of library management plays a crucial role in fostering students' reading interest through the integration of adequate collections, systematic collection management, supportive library facilities, and sustainable literacy programs. The most important finding is that students' reading interest is not influenced by a single factor but by the synergy among various library management components that collectively create a conducive literacy environment. The study contributes to the field of educational management and library science by providing a comprehensive understanding of how collection availability, collection organization, spatial arrangement, and literacy initiatives interact to strengthen reading culture among vocational school students. These findings enrich the existing literature by offering a more focused analysis of specific library management dimensions that support literacy development. However, this research is limited to a single school context and relies primarily on qualitative data, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are recommended to involve multiple schools, employ mixed-methods approaches, and examine the long-term impact of technology-based library services and literacy programs on students' reading behavior and academic outcomes.

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