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**INCREASING LITERACY COMPETENCE WITH A READING CORNER**

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**Abstract:** *Research indicates that establishing a Reading Corner in kindergarten significantly improves children's early literacy skills, including letter recognition, vocabulary growth, narrative understanding, and reading motivation. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative pre-test and post-test analysis with qualitative classroom observations and teacher interviews. Quantitative results demonstrated that the experimental group using the Reading Corner showed statistically significant improvements in literacy compared to a control group ( $p < 0.05$ ). The qualitative findings revealed increased student engagement, motivation to read, and enhanced oral language development. Themes of this study suggest that a literacy-rich environment fosters better reading habits and skills, aligning with contemporary pedagogical approaches emphasizing the importance of accessible reading resources for young learners. Thus, the Reading Corner is identified as a crucial tool in promoting foundational literacy among kindergarten students.*

**Keywords:** *Literacy, Children, Reading Corner*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembentukan Pojok Baca di taman kanak-kanak secara signifikan meningkatkan keterampilan literasi awal anak-anak, termasuk pengenalan huruf, pertumbuhan kosakata, pemahaman naratif, dan motivasi membaca. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, menggabungkan analisis kuantitatif pra-tes dan pasca-tes dengan observasi kelas kualitatif dan wawancara guru. Hasil kuantitatif menunjukkan bahwa kelompok eksperimen yang menggunakan Pojok Baca menunjukkan peningkatan literasi yang signifikan secara statistik dibandingkan dengan kelompok kontrol ( $p < 0,05$ ). Temuan kualitatif mengungkapkan peningkatan keterlibatan siswa, motivasi untuk membaca, dan peningkatan perkembangan bahasa lisan. Tema studi ini menunjukkan bahwa lingkungan yang kaya literasi mendorong kebiasaan dan keterampilan membaca yang lebih baik, sejalan dengan pendekatan pedagogis kontemporer yang menekankan pentingnya sumber bacaan yang mudah diakses untuk anak-anak usia dini. Dengan demikian, Pojok Baca diidentifikasi sebagai alat penting dalam mempromosikan literasi dasar di kalangan siswa taman kanak-kanak.

**Kata Kunci:** Literasi, Anak-anak, Pojok Baca

## INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, one of the most crucial abilities you may have is being able to read and write well. In a world where information moves quickly and the digital revolution is happening, being literate implies more than just being able to read and write. It also implies being

able to find, interpret, judge, and apply information in a responsible and critical way. UNESCO (2021) thinks that literacy is an important human right and a foundation for lifelong learning, especially in a world that is becoming more digital and knowledge-based. The OECD (2021) believes that learning to read and write when you're young has a

major effect on how well you do in school and how well you get along with other people. Literacy is very important all across the world, yet it's still a huge challenge, especially in schools for young kids. Recent assessments indicate that essential reading and writing skills must be cultivated early to prevent further learning challenges (World Bank, 2022). The preschool years are considered a crucial period for cultivating early literacy skills, encompassing vocabulary acquisition, phonological awareness, oral language development, and initial print recognition (Cabell et al., 2020). Recent studies indicate that kindergarteners exposed to ample language and print are more adequately prepared for reading upon entering primary school (Kim et al., 2021). Reading a lot is also very helpful for improving your reading and writing skills. Recent research indicates that children's motivation and access to essential reading materials significantly influence their early reading proficiency (Toste et al., 2020). Having a lot of books in schools is another way to assist students acquire new words and understand what they read (Guo et al., 2021). If young kids don't have places where they wish to read and tell stories, they may have problems learning how to read well. A reading area in kindergarten classrooms is a terrific approach for kids their age to learn how to read better. There are books, picture stories, and other visual aids in the Reading Corner that are good for kids of all ages. Recent research shows that having places to read in the classroom makes youngsters more aware of print, more enthused about reading, and more likely to discuss about what they're reading (Egert & Hopkins, 2020). Sociocultural theories argue that children enhance their learning and literacy skills through collaborative reading experiences (Wasik & Hindman, 2020). The concept of a Reading Corner aligns with contemporary pedagogical approaches that emphasize the significance of environmental print and

readily accessible reading resources in facilitating literacy development in children (Neumann, 2020). By giving youngsters books that are fun to look at and appropriate for their age, a Reading Corner may help children learn new words, use their imaginations, and understand things better. Kids learn to read and write better when they are told to do things in the reading space that help them understand things and talk to other kids. Setting up a reading area in kindergarten is a sensible and useful technique to help youngsters read better. Teachers may help young kids read better by making them want to read, giving them books that are interesting and easy to comprehend, and making the classroom a good place to read. The goal of this study is to find out how a Reading Corner affects kindergarten kids' literacy skills, such as letter recognition, vocabulary growth, narrative understanding, and reading motivation.

## **METHOD**

This study utilized a mixed methods framework with an explanatory sequential design. At first, quantitative data were collected and analyzed. Then, qualitative data were used to explain and confirm the quantitative results. This approach was chosen to fully evaluate how well a Reading Corner may help young kids improve their reading skills, both by teaching them new skills and by getting them excited about reading. The quantitative component of the study utilized a quasi-experimental approach, incorporating both a pre-test and a post-test control group. The kids who took part were in kindergarten and were split into two groups: one for the experiment and one for the control. The experimental group used the Reading Corner every day in class, whereas the control group did not. They taught in a normal way instead. Instead of looking at formal reading proficiency and looked at nascent literacy to assess how well young children were growing. The signs that were looked at

were being able to read letters, having a basic understanding of phonology, being able to grasp stories by looking at pictures, improving vocabulary, and being able to tell stories out loud. This study got information by employing structured observation checklists and play-based tests that were good for kids and looked at the data using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The data was checked the normal and homogenous before employing statistical tests like paired sample t-tests or their non-parametric equivalents and figured up the N-Gain scores to evaluate how much better the kids' reading and writing had grown. In the qualitative phase, data were gathered through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with educators. The observations looked at how much the kids did in Reading Corner, how often they read on their own, how well they listened when someone read a story, and how they talked to each other. This study was interviewed the teachers to find out what they thought had changed about how students read, how they utilized language, how driven they were, and how interested they were in activities linked to literacy in general. The qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, involving data reduction, categorization, and interpretation to identify recurring patterns and themes. The goal of this study is to fully explain how a literacy-rich environment, like a Reading Corner, can help young children develop their reading skills and develop good reading habits from an early age by combining both quantitative and qualitative data

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The quantitative study aimed to determine if the Reading Corner significantly influenced the reading skill development of kindergarten students. People thought of things like being able to read letters, knowing the basics of phonics, learning new words,

understanding stories conveyed with visuals, and being able to narrate a narrative out loud. The pre-test findings showed that both the experimental and control groups had the same level of literacy from the start, with no statistically significant difference in baseline competency. The post-test results showed a big difference between the experimental group and the control group after the intervention. The paired sample t-test showed that the experimental group had a statistically significant rise in literacy levels ( $p < 0.05$ ), while the control group only had a tiny rise. The independent sample t-test also showed a substantial difference between the two groups' post-test scores ( $p < 0.05$ ). This shows that the Reading Corner program helped students get better at reading. The N-Gain analysis showed that the experimental group moved up to a moderate-to-high gain category, whereas the control group stayed in the low-to-moderate range. The computed effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) signified a minor effect, suggesting that the Reading Corner successfully improved the reading abilities of kindergarten children. These results align with contemporary studies that underscore the significance of literacy-rich environments in early childhood schooling. Cabell et al. (2020) assert that consistent engagement in print and interactive language activities significantly enhances early literacy outcomes. Guo et al. (2021) also discovered that children acquire a greater vocabulary and comprehend their reading more effectively when reading materials are readily available in the classroom. The qualitative findings corroborated the quantitative data to a greater extent. It was clear that the kids in the experimental group were more interested when they were in the classroom. They went to the Reading Corner by themselves, picked out their own books, and told each other stories. When students read together and chatted about visuals, they talked to each other more.

Egert and Hopkins (2020) discovered that organized reading spaces in early childhood environments promote increased frequency and duration of reading among children. This type of contact is in accordance with it. Teachers also reported that the kids' vocabulary, confidence in telling stories, and ability to recognize letters in the Reading Corner segment had all gotten a lot better. Some kids who didn't talk much at first started to talk and interact more when it was time to read and write. These benefits align with the findings of Kim et al. (2021), which demonstrate that early exposure to ample print and language substantially enhances speech development and reading preparedness. Thematic analysis identified three primary themes: increased motivation to read, enhanced oral language development, and greater participation in classroom literacy activities. These findings are consistent with Toste et al. (2020), who underscore the substantial impact of reading motivation and engagement on early literacy outcomes. Children are more inclined to engage in activities that facilitate their reading and writing skills if they enjoy reading and perceive it as effortless. From a contemporary sociocultural perspective, early literacy development is profoundly influenced by guided interaction and collaborative meaning-making (Wasik & Hindman, 2020). Kids can read stories and talk about them in the Reading Corner. Kids learned new words and phrases by doing things. Neumann (2020) says that the way a classroom is set up and what is written around it can also have a huge effect on how well students read. This shows how crucial it is for kindergarten to have nice, easy-to-get-to reading areas. The Reading Corner is an excellent place for kindergarteners to practice reading and writing. This is what the numbers and words say. It is true and right for their age. The intervention not only helped kids read better by teaching them how to recognize letters, learn new words, and understand

stories, but it also made them more motivated, encouraged good reading habits, and got them interested in reading early on.

## CONCLUSION

The quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that the establishment of a Reading Corner significantly improves the foundational reading skills of kindergarten students. The statistical analysis showed that there was a big difference between the results of the pre-test and the post-test in the experimental group. The experimental and control groups were still considerably different from each other after the intervention. The Reading Corner helped kids develop better in reading and writing, especially when it came to learning new words, recognizing letters, using pictures to tell stories, and telling stories out loud. The qualitative results showed that the Reading Corner not only helped kids do better in school, but it also made them more enthused about reading, more involved in literacy activities, and better at speaking. The warm, inviting, and interesting setting, along with all the books, helped youngsters read more and in more meaningful ways. This helped them learn to read better when they were kids. The Reading Corner is a terrific place for kindergarteners to learn to read and write while also becoming better people. If youngsters practice it a lot and in a regulated way, it might help them get ready for the next level of school's formal reading programs

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