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Exploring Reading Difficulties among Phase C Students in Islamic Primary Education: An Ecological Case Study

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Abstract: This study explores reading difficulties among Phase C students in Islamic primary education through an ecological perspective. A qualitative case study focused on two students, with supporting accounts from peers, a teacher, and the principal. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis, then examined through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Findings identified difficulties in word recognition, fluency, and comprehension alongside embarrassment, limited confidence, and reading avoidance. These experiences occurred within uneven patterns of teacher guidance, peer interaction, reported home assistance, and institutional resources. Limited digital access coexisted with reliance on printed materials, without establishing that technology caused reading difficulties or determined psychological readiness. The study's originality lies in distinguishing available support from students' experiences of that support within an Islamic educational context. Its contribution is a contextual ecological interpretation connecting reading skills, emotional engagement, and learning opportunities. The findings inform targeted reading assistance, respectful classroom interaction, and feasible coordination between teachers and families. However, the small, contextually bounded sample limits generalization, and the effectiveness of these recommendations requires further investigation across diverse Islamic primary education settings.

***Abstrak**: Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi kesulitan membaca siswa Fase C dalam pendidikan dasar Islam melalui perspektif ekologis. Studi kasus kualitatif ini berfokus pada dua siswa, dengan keterangan pendukung dari teman sebaya, guru, dan kepala madrasah. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan menunjukkan kesulitan dalam pengenalan kata, kelancaran, dan pemahaman bacaan yang disertai rasa malu, keterbatasan kepercayaan diri, serta penghindaran kegiatan membaca. Pengalaman tersebut berlangsung dalam kondisi bimbingan guru, interaksi sebaya, pendampingan keluarga yang dilaporkan, dan sumber daya kelembagaan yang beragam. Keterbatasan akses digital ditemukan bersamaan dengan ketergantungan pada bahan cetak, tanpa membuktikan bahwa teknologi menyebabkan kesulitan membaca atau menentukan kesiapan psikologis. Kebaruan penelitian terletak pada pembedaan antara ketersediaan dukungan dan pengalaman siswa terhadap dukungan tersebut dalam konteks pendidikan Islam. Kontribusinya berupa interpretasi ekologis kontekstual yang menghubungkan keterampilan membaca, keterlibatan emosional, dan kesempatan belajar. Temuan menjadi dasar pendampingan membaca yang terarah, interaksi kelas yang menghargai siswa, serta koordinasi yang memungkinkan antara guru dan keluarga. Namun, sampel kecil dan konteks terbatas membatasi generalisasi, sehingga efektivitas rekomendasi memerlukan penelitian lanjutan dalam beragam lingkungan pendidikan dasar Islam.*

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INTRODUCTION

Reading proficiency enables students to access subject knowledge, interpret written information, and participate meaningfully in classroom learning. Nevertheless, reading difficulties can persist beyond the initial stages of primary education. Indonesian studies have examined beginning reading difficulties, reading fluency, and persistent reading problems across different primary grade levels (Zakirun et al., 2024; Julianty et al., 2023; Nurlaili & Suriani, 2025; Tamala et al., 2025). These studies provide a rationale for investigating students' specific reading needs without assuming that difficulties are uniform across ages or educational settings. Reading itself involves interconnected processes, including word recognition, language comprehension, fluency, and active self-regulation; consequently, students who experience reading difficulties may require different forms of support (Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

This issue deserves particular attention in Islamic primary education. In madrasah ibtidaiyah, reading supports students' engagement with general curricular content and written materials used in religious education. The educational significance of reading therefore extends to students' opportunities to understand, discuss, and reflect on the knowledge presented in these settings. Sahin (2018) argues for an understanding of Islamic education that takes pedagogical processes, reflective engagement, and learners' development seriously. This perspective provides a rationale for examining how a madrasah responds to students who encounter difficulties in accessing written knowledge. It does not, however, establish that Islamic values automatically improve reading outcomes. The ways in which educational values inform teacher guidance, classroom relationships, and support for struggling readers require empirical investigation. Furthermore, reading comprehension in Bahasa Indonesia and proficiency in Qur'anic recitation should be distinguished rather than treated as interchangeable indicators of literacy.

Within Indonesia's curriculum framework, Phase C generally corresponds to Grades V and VI of primary education, including madrasah ibtidaiyah. At this stage, persistent difficulties with word recognition, fluent reading, or text comprehension warrant attention because students increasingly need to use written texts to participate in subject learning. Research on reading difficulties among upper-primary students is therefore particularly relevant to the present study (Julianty et al., 2023; Tamala et al., 2025). Studies involving younger learners also provide useful background on beginning reading and instructional support (Fawaz et al., 2025; Nasution et al., 2025; Sipayung et al., 2025; Sumantri et al., 2022), but their findings cannot be transferred directly to Phase C students. Similarly, research on school transition offers contextual insights into educational continuity rather than direct evidence about upper-primary reading competencies (Hanifah & Kurniati, 2024; Mardiah et al., 2024).

Understanding reading difficulties requires attention to both the learner and the conditions in which reading takes place. The Indonesian literature addresses several relevant areas, including classroom literacy environments, literacy culture, parental involvement, and teachers' responses to reading difficulties (Wahyuni, 2024; Risnawati, 2017; Asmawati et al., 2025; Sabilia et al., 2025; Sinaga et al., 2022). These areas suggest useful questions about access to suitable reading

materials, opportunities for guided practice, peer relationships, and communication between families and teachers. General discussions of educational psychology and student development provide additional background for considering differences in learners' experiences and support needs (Apriyanto et al., 2025; Haryono et al., 2025; Jannah et al., 2025). However, such contextual considerations should not be used to attribute reading difficulties to a lack of parental concern or to fixed deficiencies within children. Their relevance must be established through evidence concerning the particular students and settings under investigation.

An ecological perspective offers a framework for examining these relationships within Islamic primary education. It focuses on students' immediate interactions with teachers, peers, and family members, as well as the connections between home and school and the broader institutional conditions surrounding instruction. Tudge et al. (2009) emphasize aligning Bronfenbrenner's theory with a study's conceptual assumptions, methods, and analysis. Accordingly, the present study uses an ecological perspective to interpret reading experiences within interconnected contexts rather than claiming to test the full bioecological model of development. Classroom and family interactions constitute immediate contexts, while communication between parents and teachers provides a focus for examining connections across settings. Institutional resources and educational expectations are considered where the evidence demonstrates their relevance. Within this framework, the madrasah's Islamic educational character is a contextual dimension to be investigated through actual practices and relationships, rather than an assumed explanation for students' reading performance.

This use of an ecological perspective should also be distinguished from ecoliteracy and environment-based learning. Research on outdoor learning, environmental learning activities, and community reading initiatives addresses related educational concerns but does not necessarily examine the ecological organization of students' reading experiences (Amalia et al., 2025; Putri, 2025; Wijayanti, 2025). Likewise, research on problem-based learning concerns instructional approaches rather than providing, by itself, an ecological explanation of reading difficulties (Kusnandar et al., 2025). These distinctions help delimit the present inquiry: it focuses on the relationship between documented reading difficulties and the social and institutional contexts in which students encounter reading tasks and receive support.

Digital resources form another potentially relevant part of these contexts. Research on digital reading has examined how readers encounter, evaluate, and engage with texts, while also questioning simplified assumptions about the relationship between digital media and reading depth (Gordon, 2023; Turner et al., 2020). Because this literature includes populations and settings that differ from Islamic primary education, it provides conceptual background rather than direct evidence about the students in the present case. Access to devices, the purposes for which they are used, and the availability of instructional guidance must therefore be examined separately. Limited access to digital resources does not, in itself, demonstrate low motivation, anxiety, or inadequate psychological readiness. In this study, digital resources are considered insofar as they form part of students' reported or observed reading environments; psychological interpretations require direct evidence beyond the presence or absence of technology.

The literature reviewed here addresses reading difficulties across grade levels, family and classroom contexts, instructional approaches, and different forms of literacy. These contributions provide a basis for a more focused examination of how such dimensions intersect within a bounded case of Islamic primary education. The rationale for the present study is therefore contextual and analytical, not a claim that ecological research on reading is absent. In particular, examining Phase C students within a madrasah ibtidaiyah can clarify how individual reading experiences relate to teacher guidance, peer interactions, reported home support, and institutional resources. Such an inquiry can also help distinguish difficulties encountered during reading from the conditions that participants perceive as supporting or constraining their engagement.

Accordingly, this study explores reading difficulties among Phase C students in Islamic primary education through an ecological case study. It addresses two research questions: (1) What forms of reading difficulty are documented among the focal students? and (2) How do participants describe the relationships between these difficulties and the support or constraints within their family, peer, and madrasah contexts? By examining these questions, the study seeks to provide a contextual account of reading difficulties and literacy support within an Islamic primary educational setting. It aims to inform discussions of responsive reading support and home–school collaboration while remaining attentive to students' experiences and the educational purposes of the madrasah. The study does not seek to establish causal effects, evaluate an intervention's effectiveness, or generalize its findings to all Islamic primary schools.

METHOD

Research Design

This study used an exploratory qualitative case study design to examine reading difficulties among students identified as Phase C learners in Islamic primary education. The inquiry focused on the forms of reading difficulty experienced by the focal students and the support and constraints within their classroom, family, and madrasah contexts. A case study approach facilitated the examination of these experiences in relation to their educational setting through multiple sources of evidence (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The study sought contextual understanding rather than statistical generalization or an assessment of intervention effectiveness.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework informed the interpretation of relationships between students and their learning environments. The analysis considered immediate interactions with teachers, peers, and family members, connections between home and school, and relevant institutional arrangements. The study examined the Islamic educational setting through instructional practices, interpersonal relationships, and school provision. The madrasah's religious identity was not treated as an independent cause of reading performance.

Research Context and Participants

The research took place in a madrasah ibtidaiyah setting implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. The setting was selected purposively based on institutional willingness to accommodate the research, preliminary indications of students'

reading difficulties, and the relevance of its literacy resources and instructional practices to the research questions.

The analysis centered on two students experiencing reading difficulties. Four supporting informants explicitly represented in the findings were two classroom peers, a homeroom teacher, and the school principal. The focal students described their reading experiences, while the supporting informants offered perspectives on classroom participation, peer relationships, instructional support, and school resources. The researchers also considered information on family support in relation to the interview material and other evidence available to them.

Recurring difficulties guided student selection during classroom reading activities, including problems understanding assigned texts and teacher records on reading performance. These indicators identified educational support needs rather than diagnosing a clinical reading disorder. Participants were selected for their knowledge of the focal students' experiences, not to represent the wider population of Islamic primary school students.

Sample adequacy was considered in relation to the focused research questions and the relevance and depth of the available evidence. Qualitative sample sufficiency depends on the study aim, participant specificity, theoretical orientation, quality of dialogue, and analytic strategy rather than participant numbers alone (Malterud et al., 2016). The experiences therefore bounded the study's interpretations and contextual information represented in the case.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, moderate participant observation, and document analysis. These techniques provided complementary information about students' reading experiences and the conditions surrounding reading instruction.

Interviews explored difficulties encountered during reading, responses to classroom tasks, assistance from teachers and peers, opportunities for practice at home, and access to learning materials. Interviews with adult participants addressed instructional responses, family support, school literacy activities, and resource constraints. Bahasa Indonesia and local languages, including Javanese and Madurese, facilitated communication and supported participants' understanding. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

The researchers conducted moderate participant observation during classroom learning and school literacy activities. The researchers observed students' engagement with reading tasks, teacher support, peer interactions, and use of available learning materials. The study included reading corners, library activities, and interactions with digital resources where relevant to the observed activities. Field notes documented reading behavior and the surrounding instructional and social context.

Document analysis included teaching modules or lesson plans, teacher records of students' reading development, reading assessment materials, reading practice records, and school documents concerning literacy and technology use. These materials provided information about instructional expectations, recorded

performance, and institutional provision. The team interpreted documents describing intended activities alongside interviews and observations, rather than treating them as proof that activities had been implemented as planned.

Research Instruments

The instruments comprised semi-structured interview guides, observation sheets, and document extraction forms. The research questions, indicators of reading difficulty, and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework informed their development. Interview questions were open-ended, with follow-up prompts used to clarify participants' accounts and explore relevant experiences in greater detail.

The reading-related focus included word recognition, reading fluency, and text comprehension. Attention, motivation, and confidence were considered as aspects of students' reported or observed engagement with reading. They were not treated as standardized psychological measurements. Similarly, access to digital resources and their use in instruction were examined as contextual conditions rather than indicators of psychological readiness.

The ecological framework focused on interactions within immediate settings and relationships across settings. We considered teacher guidance, peer interactions, and family reading support within students' immediate environments. The study examined communication between families and teachers as a connection between home and school. Wider institutional arrangements and educational expectations were interpreted only when the data supported their relevance.

Specialists in Islamic primary education and educational psychology with relevant expertise in literacy and ecological studies conducted a content review of the instruments. This review concerned the relevance and coverage of the instruments and should be distinguished from psychometric validation.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed an iterative process of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The researchers examined interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary material in relation to the research questions. Relevant segments were coded and organized into categories concerning reading difficulties, instructional assistance, peer relationships, family support, and institutional resources.

The researchers discussed coding decisions and compared interpretations across the available sources. Ecological concepts informed the organization and interpretation of contextual relationships, while the content of participants' accounts and observations guided the identification of case-specific patterns. Categories were developed into thematic descriptions that connected students' reading experiences with relevant features of their learning environments.

Matrices, thematic narratives, and concept maps organized and displayed the analysis. These displays supported comparison across participants and sources but were not treated as independent evidence of causality. The report distinguished support activities from demonstrated improvements in reading performance.

Conclusions were developed by revisiting the source material and comparing the interpretations with the evidence on which they were based. This emphasis on

the relationship between data, coding, and interpretation is consistent with transparent qualitative analysis (Nowell et al., 2017). The resulting account concerned the focal students and their educational contexts rather than the prevalence or causes of reading difficulties across Islamic primary education.

Researcher Position and Trustworthiness

The researchers worked as external investigators with institutional permission to conduct the study. Their engagement involved interacting with participants and observing educational activities within the madrasah setting.

Credibility was supported by comparing participant accounts and by comparing interviews, observations, and documents. Source comparisons considered the perspectives of the focal students, their peers, the homeroom teacher, the principal, and family-related accounts represented in the interview material. Method comparisons examined how participants' descriptions related to observed activities and documentary records.

Selected transcript content and developing interpretations were discussed with teachers and madrasah representatives for clarification. This feedback provided an opportunity to identify misunderstandings concerning school activities and contextual information. It was not treated as a substitute for the students' perspectives or as confirmation that every interpretation was correct. Findings remained bounded by the sources represented in the study and the depth of evidence available for each theme.

Ethical Considerations

The madrasah administration granted permission to conduct the research. The researchers obtained informed consent from participating adults, including teachers and parents, and verbal assent from participating students. Permission was also obtained to audio-record. Institutional access permission differs from approval by an independent research ethics committee.

Participant confidentiality was addressed through anonymized reporting of children, adults, and the institution. Participant codes were used in the revised presentation of the findings and should be applied consistently to quotations, tables, and analytical figures. We excluded information that could identify individual children or the madrasah from the public presentation.

The researchers stored audio recordings, interview transcripts, observation records, and analytical files in a password-protected digital folder on their cloud storage. The reporting of students' reading difficulties focused on educational experiences and support needs rather than diagnostic labels or judgments about their personal or religious characteristics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Reading Difficulties and Classroom Support

The findings centered on two focal students, S1 and S2, whose reading difficulties included limited fluency, frequent pauses, and difficulty understanding texts. The classroom observations also noted discomfort during reading activities,

complaints when asked to read, and limited confidence when approaching longer texts. The homeroom teacher, T1, reported that these difficulties recurred during classroom learning. These accounts identified both difficulties in performing reading tasks and reluctance to participate, although they did not establish which preceded the other.

Peer relationships formed part of the students' immediate reading environment. P1 and P2, the focal students' respective deskmates, were identified as sources of assistance and companionship. However, the accounts also described dismissive peer behavior and insufficient support. Peer interaction therefore appeared in the findings as both a potential resource and a source of discomfort, rather than a uniformly supportive influence.

T1 provided instructional guidance, adapted learning activities, monitored reading progress, and communicated with parents. H1 addressed institutional provision through budget management, digital resources, and school initiatives, including alum involvement. These accounts distinguished support delivered through everyday classroom interaction from support dependent on institutional decisions. They documented available forms of assistance but did not show their effectiveness in improving reading performance.

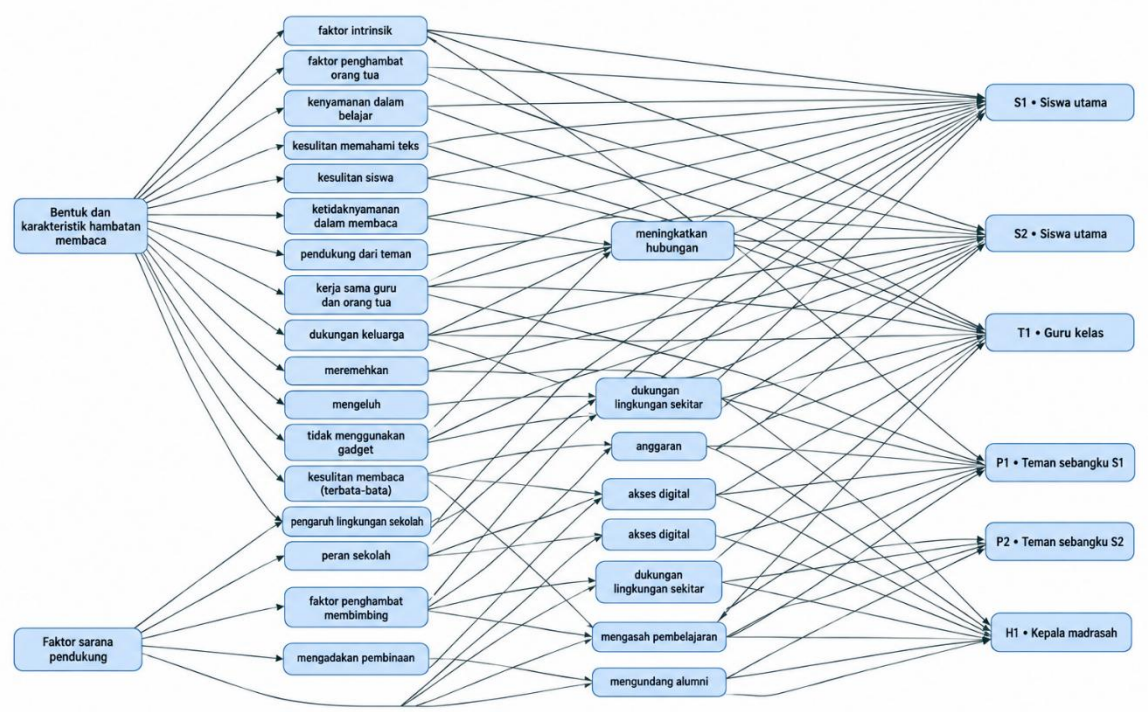


Figure 1. Project Map of the Forms and Characteristics of Reading Barriers among Phase C Students from an Ecological Perspective

Digital Access and Reported Learning Experiences

Accounts concerning S1 and S2 described limited active use of digital devices and a reliance on printed materials. Limited access to digital media and its restricted integration into instruction were also associated with their peers' experiences. The clearest finding concerned the conditions under which students encountered learning resources, rather than their psychological readiness to use technology.

The teacher's role involved supporting reading within these conditions, while the principal's role concerned resource allocation and efforts to expand digital provision. The presence of initiatives to improve access alongside reports of limited availability suggests a distinction between institutional efforts and students' everyday opportunities to use digital resources. The available accounts did not establish how consistently the resources were accessible or whether their provision changed students' reading experiences.

Although Figure 2 retains the term "psychological dynamics," limited device use alone does not demonstrate anxiety, low confidence, or inadequate readiness. The reported evidence primarily concerns access, instructional use, and support.

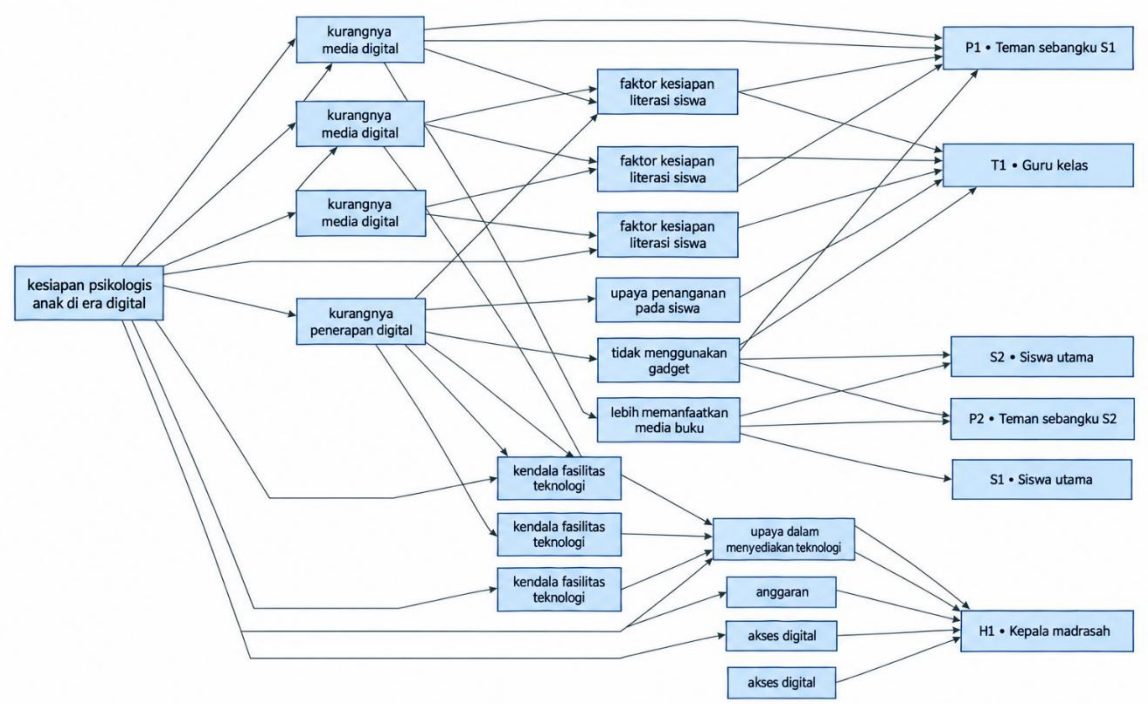


Figure 2. Project Map of Students' Psychological Dynamics in Responding to Digital Literacy Demands in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Reading Performance and Emotional Engagement

The thematic accounts distinguished difficulties with recognizing letters and words, reading fluently, and understanding texts. They also described difficulties retelling information, constructing sentences, and expressing ideas about readings. These related activities went beyond oral reading fluency and indicated that students struggled to respond to texts as well as read them aloud.

The accounts further described limited concentration, embarrassment, fear of making mistakes, and avoidance of reading activities. These experiences accompanied reading difficulties but were not sufficient to establish a psychological diagnosis or a causal sequence. Similarly, descriptions of low interest or limited initiative did not establish that students were unwilling to learn.

Family-related accounts concerned limited guidance and opportunities for supported reading practice at home, sometimes attributed to constraints on parents' time or resources. These descriptions identified possible limitations in available support rather than demonstrating a lack of parental concern. Teacher

guidance, emotional reassurance, suitable materials, and peer assistance were presented as resources within the school environment. Analytically, the findings therefore distinguished reading performance, emotional engagement, and opportunities for practice as related but separate dimensions.

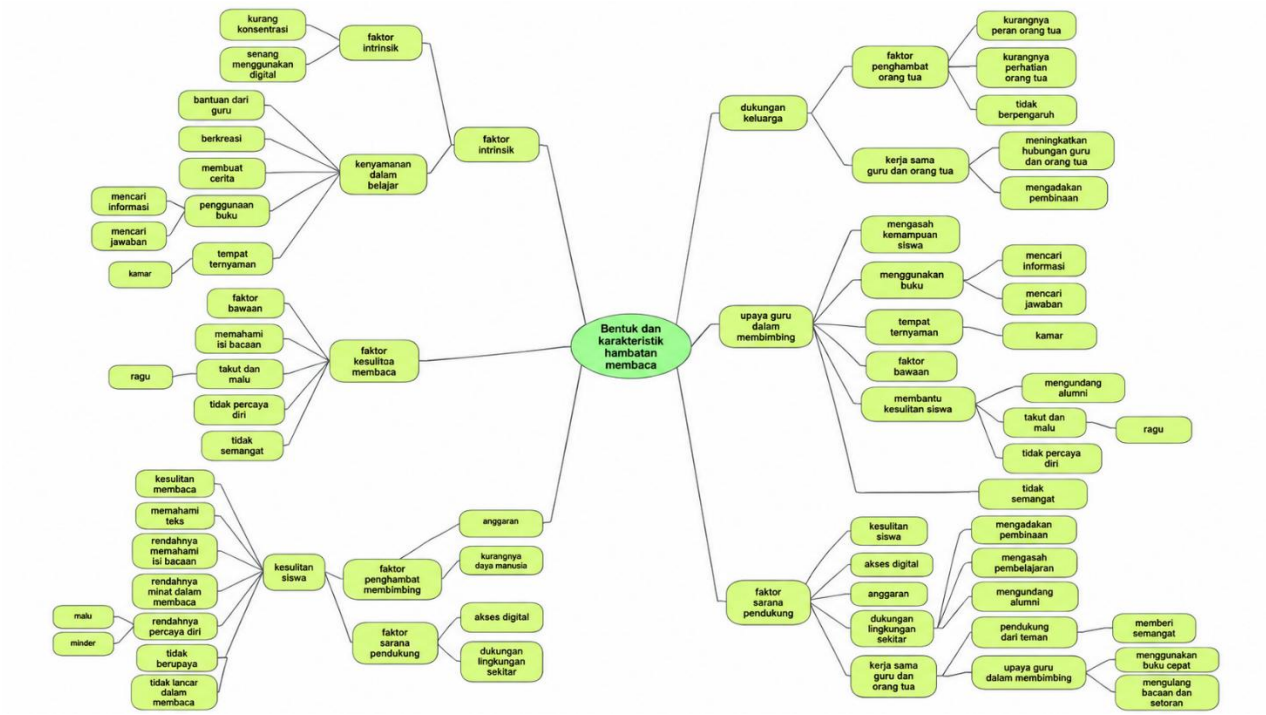


Figure 3. Mind Map of the Forms and Characteristics of Reading Barriers among Phase C Students from an Ecological Perspective

Instructional Responses and Resource Constraints

Reported instructional responses included guided reading, repeated reading, structured exercises, and periodic reading assessments. Printed books remained prominent in the described learning activities. The account also mentioned materials labeled "rapid reading books," but did not explain their specific content or instructional approach.

At the institutional level, academic guidance, instructional improvement, and alums involvement were described alongside limited budgets and staffing. The findings thus presented school support and resource constraints together. The existence of support initiatives did not establish that their coverage, frequency, or intensity met the needs of the focal students.

These activities were described as attempts to support learning. The available evidence did not show measurable improvements in reading, digital competence, or psychological readiness after implementation. Figure 4 therefore summarizes reported support and constraints rather than demonstrating the effectiveness of an intervention.

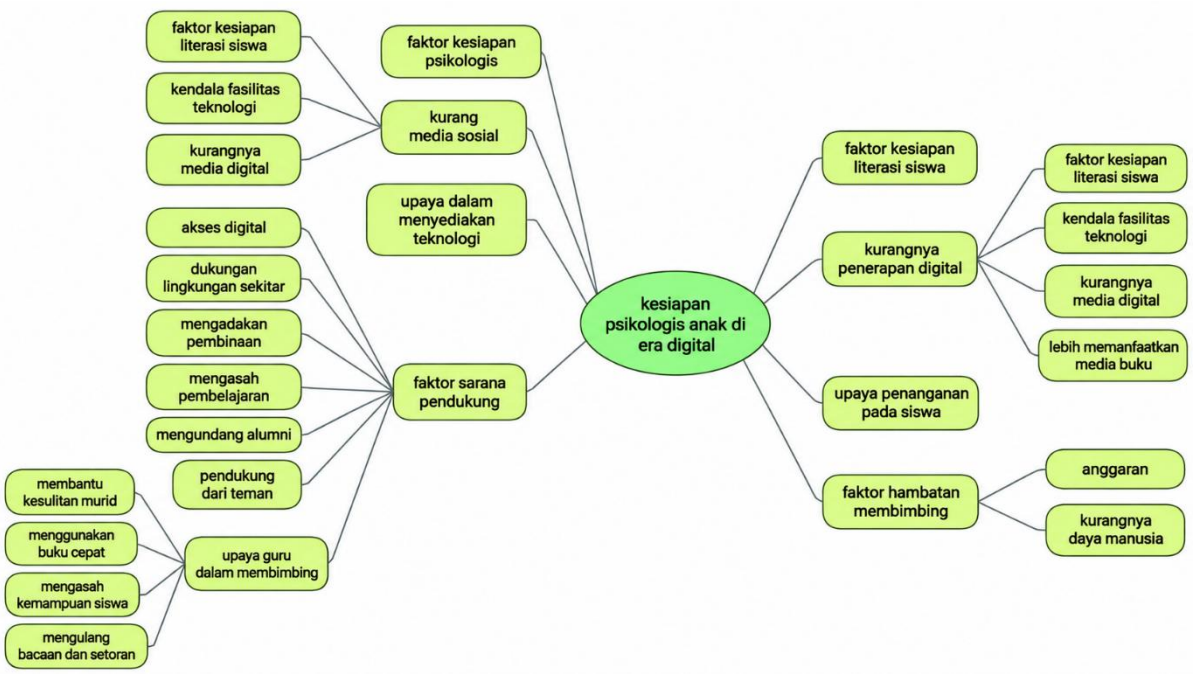


Figure 4. Mind Map of Students' Psychological Dynamics in Responding to Digital Literacy Demands in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Relationships across Reading and Learning Contexts

The concept map brought together reading difficulties, reported confidence and engagement, family support, classroom relationships, and school resources. Teacher assistance and peer interaction concerned students' immediate learning experiences, while communication between teachers and parents connected home and school. Budget and staffing constraints concerned the institutional conditions within which support was provided. This distinction gave the ecological interpretation greater specificity than treating all contextual factors as equivalent.

The accounts also contained an unresolved difference concerning digital engagement. Some descriptions indicated that students preferred digital media and sought immediate answers, whereas others emphasized limited device use and reliance on printed books. These accounts may reflect different activities or settings, but the available evidence did not identify those distinctions clearly enough. They therefore cannot support a single conclusion that excessive digital use caused the students' reading difficulties.

The map identifies relationships proposed through the analysis, not verified causal pathways. In particular, reported low confidence, reading avoidance, and difficulty understanding texts occurred within the same thematic account, but their direction of influence remained undetermined.

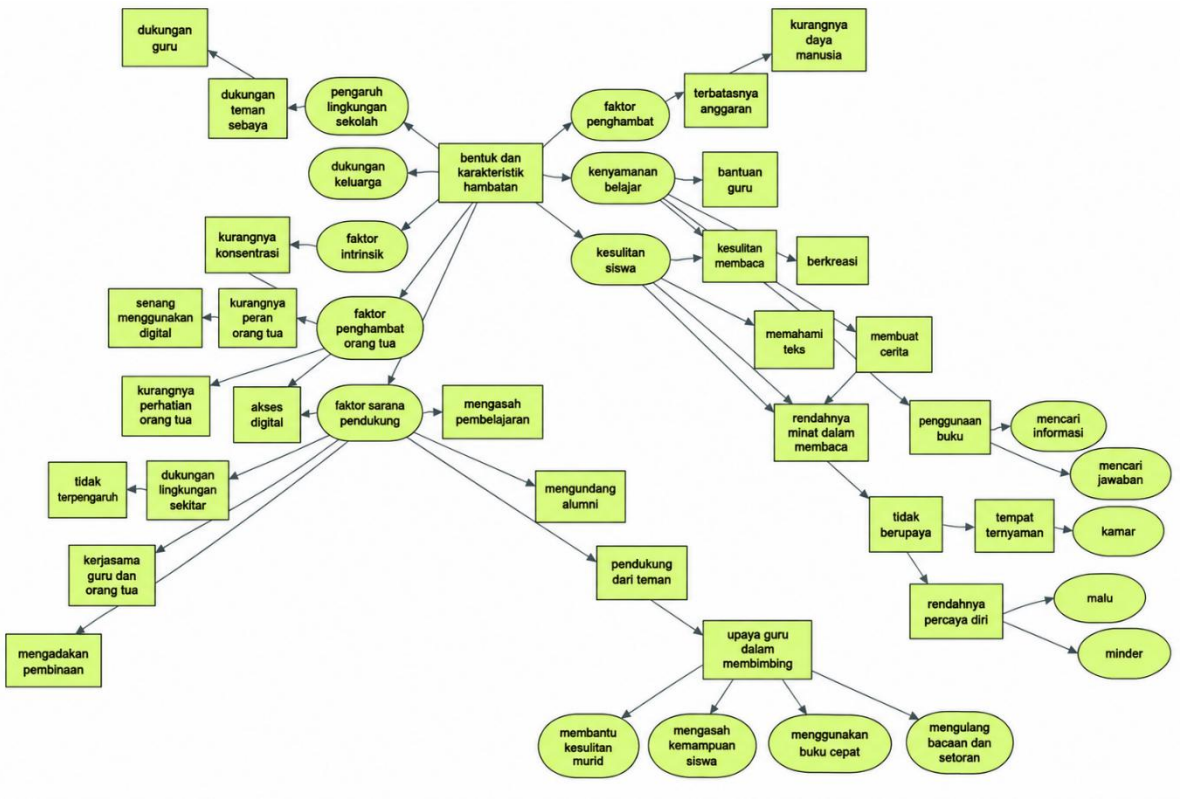


Figure 5. Concept Map of the Forms and Characteristics of Reading Barriers among Phase C Students from an Ecological Perspective

Synthesis of Digital Resources and Contextual Support

The final concept map consolidated accounts of digital access, instructional provision, teacher guidance, peer support, and resource limitations. Constraints included devices, connectivity, funding, and staffing, while reported support included reading practice, school guidance activities, and communication between teachers and families.

The evidence described the learning opportunities available to students more clearly than their psychological readiness for digital learning. The findings described emotional experiences associated with reading elsewhere, but did not show they were specifically attributable to digital tasks. Likewise, the reported use of printed materials represented an instructional practice rather than evidence of deficient readiness for technology.

Across the case, reading difficulties were described alongside variations in support within the madrasah and home contexts. The Islamic primary setting located these experiences institutionally, but the reported findings did not isolate the contribution of specifically Islamic pedagogical practices or values. The results therefore support a contextual account of reading difficulties in Islamic primary education, without establishing the effects of religious instruction, digital provision, or particular support strategies.

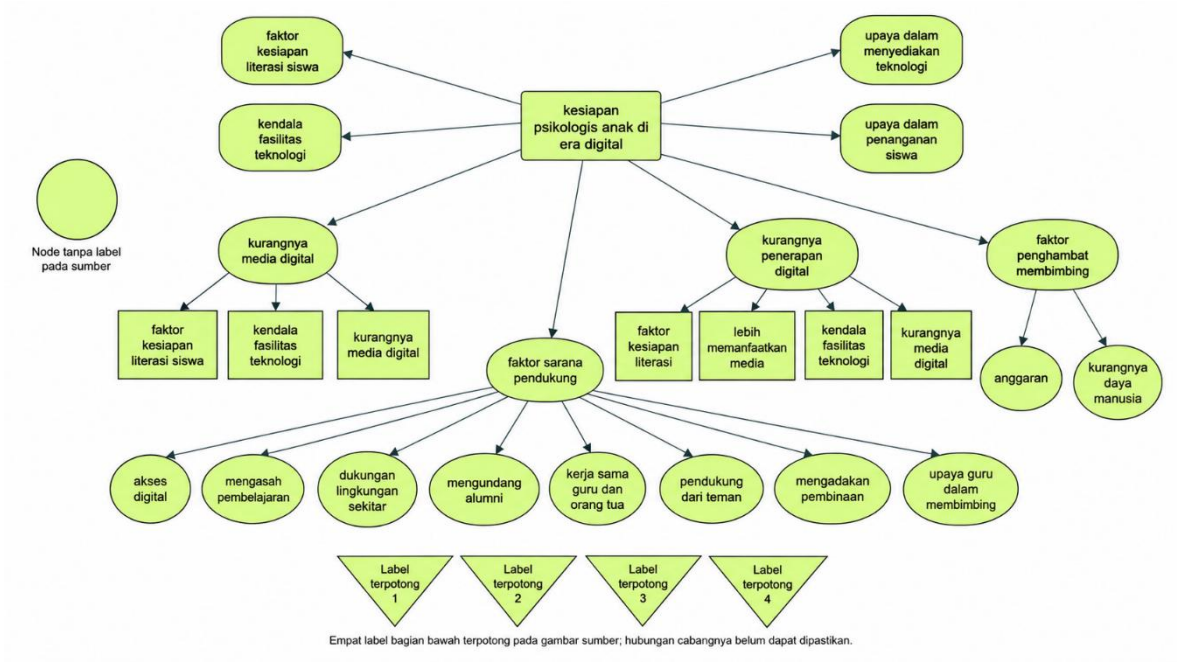


Figure 6. Concept Map of Students' Psychological Dynamics in Responding to Digital Literacy Demands in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Discussion

The findings suggest that reading difficulties in this Islamic primary education setting involve interconnected challenges in reading skills, emotional engagement, and access to support. Difficulties with fluency and comprehension occurred alongside hesitation, embarrassment, and avoidance. This pattern is consistent with Duke and Cartwright's (2021) account of reading as involving multiple interacting processes. Furthermore, Toste et al. (2020) demonstrate a reciprocal relationship between reading achievement and motivation. Accordingly, students' reluctance should not be interpreted simply as a lack of effort. Repeated difficulty may discourage participation, while reduced engagement may restrict opportunities for practice. The present evidence identifies this co-occurrence but cannot establish its direction.

An ecological interpretation helps explain how these difficulties are situated within everyday relationships and institutional conditions. Teacher guidance and peer interactions represent immediate learning experiences, while communication between teachers and families connects learning across settings. Staffing and budget constraints shape the support that the madrasah can provide. However, these relationships should be interpreted as contextual associations rather than causal pathways. Following Tudge et al. (2009), the study applies an ecological lens without claiming to test the complete bioecological model. Its contribution lies in showing that the availability of support and students' actual experiences of that support may differ. Peer relationships, for example, provided assistance in some accounts but involved dismissive responses in others.

The findings also highlight the importance of feasible coordination between the madrasah and families. Reports of limited home assistance do not establish

parental indifference, because caregivers' time, resources, and confidence were not sufficiently documented. Sénéchal and Young (2008) found that family literacy interventions can support reading acquisition, although their review concerned kindergarten to Grade 3 and cannot establish equivalent effects for Phase C students. For this setting, brief guided reading routines and clear communication about specific learning needs are reasonable practices to investigate, rather than interventions whose effectiveness has already been demonstrated.

Digital resources require similarly careful interpretation. Reported preferences for digital content coexisted with limited device use and reliance on printed materials. These accounts may reflect different situations, but the available evidence does not resolve that distinction. Neither restricted access nor a preference for digital content demonstrates psychological readiness or explains the students' reading difficulties. Delgado et al. (2018) found a paper-based comprehension advantage that varied with reading conditions and text types. The implication is therefore to select media according to instructional purpose, accessibility, and teacher guidance, rather than assuming that additional technology will necessarily improve reading.

Within Islamic primary education, these findings support a pedagogical emphasis on patient guidance, respectful interaction, and meaningful participation. Sahin's (2018) discussion of reflective Islamic education provides a basis for developing literacy activities that encourage understanding and dialogue. Appropriately selected Islamic narratives could provide opportunities for vocabulary learning, retelling, and comprehension while connecting instruction with the madrasah context. These are proposed educational applications, not observed effects of Islamic pedagogy. Likewise, competence in Qur'anic recitation should not be treated as evidence of Indonesian-language reading comprehension, because the present study did not establish a relationship between these abilities.

Practically, support should begin with identifying each student's specific difficulties and monitoring responses to guided practice. Teacher assistance, peer support, and home activities should address these needs consistently. However, this case study concerns two focal students, and the reported support activities were not evaluated through an intervention or longitudinal assessment. The findings therefore offer context-sensitive insights rather than population-level conclusions. Future research should combine detailed classroom evidence, caregiver perspectives, and repeated reading assessments to examine how coordinated support operates over time in Islamic primary education.

CONCLUSION

This study identified interconnected difficulties in word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension among two focal students in Islamic primary education. These difficulties coexisted with embarrassment, limited confidence, and avoidance of reading activities, alongside uneven support across classroom, peer, and home settings. The findings draw attention to the importance of students' everyday learning experiences and challenge an interpretation of reading difficulties based solely on individual ability or effort. However, the evidence does not establish the

relative impact of these factors or demonstrate that limited digital access causes reading difficulties or psychological unreadiness.

The study contributes a context-specific ecological interpretation that is consistent with previous research connecting reading development with cognitive, motivational, and environmental processes. It questions the adequacy of explanations that attribute reading difficulties primarily to low motivation or insufficient technology. Its analytical contribution lies in distinguishing the availability of support from how students experience and engage with that support. Within Islamic primary education, this distinction provides a basis for considering literacy instruction that combines targeted reading assistance with patient guidance, respectful relationships, and meaningful participation. These implications extend the discussion of literacy support in madrasahs without claiming to establish a new theory or demonstrate the effectiveness of particular Islamic pedagogical practices.

The study is limited by its small sample, specific institutional context, and absence of longitudinal or intervention evidence, which restrict generalizability and causal interpretation. Teachers are therefore encouraged to assess individual reading needs, provide guided practice, monitor progress, and coordinate feasible support with families and peers. Digital resources should be selected according to accessibility and instructional purpose, while maintaining appropriate printed materials. Future research involving larger and more diverse samples across madrasahs, repeated reading assessments, and fuller caregiver perspectives is needed to examine how these forms of support operate over time and whether culturally relevant literacy interventions improve reading outcomes and participation.

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