

## THE ELEMENTS OF CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND TEACHER'S STRATEGIES IN FOSTERING STUDENTS' READING INTEREST AND READING ACHIEVEMENT

**Dino Bagyo Khalid**

Department of English Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati  
Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia  
*dinobagyokhalid72@gmail.com*

**Nia Kurniawati**

Department of English Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati  
Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia  
*niakurniawati29\_ftk@uinsgd.ac.id*

**Dini Utami Mulyaningsih**

Department of English Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati  
Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia  
*diniutami@uinsgd.ac.id*

### Abstract

This study aimed to reveal the elements of the classroom environment and teacher's strategies to foster students' reading interest and reading achievement. A qualitative method was used to conduct this research with case study design. This study observed classrooms, spread questionnaires to 15 students, and interviewed an English teacher in one particular school in Bandung. The study found that students prefer physical books and comfortable temperatures but have mixed opinions about using technology for reading. A quiet space with a variety of reading materials is important. The teacher's strategy of creating a "literacy tree" with planned reading activities, encouragement, and a supportive school library helped students enjoy reading more and improve their reading abilities. Therefore, the research shows the elements of the classroom environment and teacher strategies are key factors in developing reading interest and better reading achievement.

Keywords: Classroom environment, Students' reading interest, Reading achievement

## INTRODUCTION

A classroom is more than just a physical space; it is a dynamic environment that significantly influences how students learn and feel. The way a classroom is arranged, equipped, and managed can impact students' behavior, performance, and ultimately, their reading achievement. Ozyildirim (2021) explains that the ability to provide a safe and comfortable learning environment, both physically and psychologically, to students can be defined as the classroom environment.

Creating a comfortable setting for students to read is critical because it impacts students' reading habits in the future. Manurung and Izar (2019) conveyed that reading is a vital skill that students must master since it is inextricably linked to the teaching and learning processes. Still, the teaching and learning process is influenced by a comfortable setting that triggers

students' reading interest. Also, the lack of interest in reading is affected by an unsupportive environment for students who intend to read. Physical elements like adequate space, lighting, and ventilation, as well as psychological factors such as safety and comfort, contribute to creating an optimal learning space. Teachers play a vital role in shaping this environment and implementing strategies to encourage reading.

There are several studies related to this research. The first is a study conducted by Dogan and Dogan (2018) that uncovers the opinions of students in fourth grade at a primary school about the classroom environment in their dreams. The findings indicate that a single study table, a private locker, an interactive smartboard, colorful furniture and design, fancy bulletin boards, a tidy environment, and a clean environment were the general physical expectations of the students from the classroom environment. The second study conducted by Batubara, Derin, and Yudar (2020) identified five elements affecting students' motivating conditions.. For instance, the teacher's presence, personal attitude, Montessori materials, classroom conditions, and friends' influence. Third, Quirino (2020) reveals the significance of environmental quality and how it relates to user preferences and productivity. The result showed that the schoolchildren affirmed that they would prefer the temperature in the room to be lower. Then, Sulistiyarini, Sukarno, and Triyanto (2021) elaborated on the School Literacy Movement (SLM) as a strategy for increasing reading interest. The effective reading activity was silent reading. Lastly, Nurdianingsih (2021) portrays teachers' strategies for teaching reading comprehension to students by involving an English teacher.

This research fills the gap left by the previous research. The differences between this current research and previous studies are the explanation of the kind of classroom environment that can foster students' reading interest and reading achievement in their dreams. Also, this examines the factors not only from the classroom environment but also from all facility factors of the classroom as well. Moreover, it tends to explore a safe reading environment where students feel comfortable getting the best reading achievement. In addition, this study presents strategies that teachers can apply to create a proper classroom environment for their students, enhancing their reading achievement.

However, many classrooms, especially those with limited resources, may not provide ideal conditions for reading. This study aims to identify specific physical and psychological elements that promote reading interest, as well as effective teacher strategies to create such an environment in fostering students' reading achievement. By understanding these factors, teachers can work towards improving reading outcomes for students.

## **METHOD**

The current study used a qualitative method. Creswell (2012) explains qualitative research as an inquiry approach to understanding a social or human problem centered on constructing a comprehensive, holistic picture with words, reporting specific viewpoints of informants, and taking place in a natural setting. The research is designed to be a case study. Combs (2022) affirms that case study research needs an in-depth evaluation of an individual, institution, or event to understand a real-life occurrence. Then, this study focused on comprehensively understanding individual experiences and the importance of the classroom environment.

The research participants are teachers and students at Ar-Rosyidiyah Junior High School. This first participant is a teacher who taught English to grade 8 at Mts Ar-Rosyidiyah. The second research participants are 15 students in eighth grade at Ar-Rosyidiyah Junior High School. The researchers chose eighth-grade students because they had more free time compared to ninth-graders who were busy taking exams. Purposive sampling is used in the selection of participants. Campbell et al. (2020) purposive sampling aligns the sample with the research's aims and objectives, boosting the study's rigor and the dependability of the data and findings.

The data were collected using observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Furthermore, data were gathered by conducting observations during English class. The interview was conducted by asking open-ended questions to discuss with the teacher and collect data about the strategies for creating a safe and comfortable classroom environment. The students of class eight distributed and answered the questionnaires. In the process of analyzing and interpreting this qualitative data, the researcher follows six steps, such as preparing and organizing the data for analysis, exploring and coding the data, coding to build a description and theme, representing and reporting qualitative findings, interpreting the findings, and validating the accuracy of the findings.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

This section elaborates on the findings that represent the role of the classroom environment in fostering students' reading interest and reading achievement. This study has two research objectives related to the classroom environment. The first was the physical and psychological elements within the classroom in fostering students' reading interest. The second was the teacher's strategy to create a safe and comfortable classroom environment to enhance students' reading achievement. This study was conducted at a junior high school in Bandung. Therefore, the following sections address the two research purposes.

### The physical and psychological elements within classroom environments to foster students' reading interest

This section discusses the result of observing the physical and psychological elements within the classroom environment and students' answers to the questionnaires that foster their reading interest. In the first phase, the researcher observed the English teaching activity in a class of grade eight and filled out the observation checklist.

**Table 1.** Observation Result

Observation Items	Implementation	
	Yes	No
<b>The Physical Elements</b>		
The classroom size is very wide so that students do not feel cramped and tight.	✓	

The equipment in the class such as tables and chairs are very worthy making students very comfortable to foster their reading interest. ✓

The lighting in the classroom is bright to support students' reading interests. ✓

---

**The Psychological Elements**

The clean and comfortable classroom makes students eager to read and enhances their reading interests. ✓

There is noise that distracts the students' attention, so they look uncomfortable. ✓

The school hour makes students so sleepy while reading. ✓

---

**The Psychological Elements Influenced by the Teacher**

The English teacher gives any tips for students to become good readers. ✓

The English teacher creates a very pleasant atmosphere in the classroom for reading. ✓

The English teacher is very patient in explaining the material and reading instructions. ✓

The English teacher uses various learning media and reading sources. ✓

---

**Classmates' Effects on the Classroom Environment**

Students pay good attention in class during study hours, especially in reading activities. ✓

High enthusiasm students trigger other friends to be more eager to read. ✓

Class friends are concerned about a friend who is less interested in reading. ✓

The table above shows the elements of the classroom environment that the researcher observed. Marzano (2021) discusses how the physical arrangement of the classroom can impact student reading interest. Appropriate furniture dimensions and arrangement, comfortable seating options, strategically placed vocabulary posters, and bright lighting all contribute to a positive reading environment. Next, we examine the psychological aspects of the classroom

environment. Rentzou (2014) believes that the classroom environment should pique students' interest and provide them a comfortable environment in which to study and progress. This study found that clean and comfortable classrooms, noise levels from both internal and external classrooms, and daylight hours all play a role in shaping student enthusiasm and reading enjoyment. However, Miller and Cunningham (2011) assert that the interaction between students and teachers creates a psychological environment. This study shows that teachers can still achieve great results by creating a positive reading environment, even if they rely on more traditional methods. To truly ignite students' reading interests, though, adding technology and a broader range of materials to the mix is recommended. Additionally, the classroom environment is driven by classmates' focus and participation. When the students see their peers actively reading and answering questions, it creates social support and encourages them to do the same. Furthermore, classmates with a positive attitude towards reading can create a welcoming environment that motivates even those less interested. A positive and supportive reading environment significantly influences students' reading interests (Merga, 2018).

In addition, the students' answers to the open-ended questionnaires reveal that the physical and psychological elements of the classroom environment influence students' reading interests. While there is a general preference for physical books and a comfortable temperature, student opinions vary on other factors. Noise from classmates is a major distraction, hindering focus and concentration. As stated by Shield and Dockrell (2008), high levels of classroom noise can lead to deficits in focus. The current lighting system with ample natural light seems adequate for most students. Barrett et al. (2015) supports the importance of natural light, finding that students in classrooms with higher levels performed up to 26% better in reading compared to those in poorly lit environments. The classroom temperature with proper ventilation creates a comfortable space for reading. Opinions are divided between adding more physical books or incorporating digital media like projectors and the internet. A majority of students prefer reading physical books, although some locate digital media more engaging. Hutchison and Reinking (2011). Digital tools and resources can expand the range of reading materials available to students, promoting greater interest and engagement in reading. The current arrangement of tables and chairs seems to be comfortable for most students. These findings suggest that creating a positive reading environment requires considering various factors beyond just physical space. A balance between traditional and digital resources, along with managing noise levels, can significantly enhance students' reading experiences.

### **Teacher's strategies to create a safe and comfortable classroom environment in fostering students' reading achievement**

An interview was used to accomplish the second research objective. This section is intended to reveal the teacher's strategy to create a safe and comfortable classroom environment to foster students' reading achievement. The teacher has a powerful strategy to create a safe and comfortable classroom environment to foster students' reading achievement. Guthrie and Humenick (2004) emphasize the importance of allowing students choices in their reading materials. This goal is realized by using a literacy tree. The teacher always plans and prepares every detail before teaching the class. The activities are planned with limited time constraints in mind. The challenge in implementing the literacy tree is limited time and various school activities. Fortunately, the teacher can solve the problem by scheduling time for a special

reading activity. Although it is not a routine activity, this special reading time can provide a safe and comfortable environment for students to read books. As a feeling of concern, the teacher also consistently reminds the students to read. The teacher encourages and reminds the students to maintain their reading progress. This process is the key predictor of future reading achievement (Kim and Quinn, 2020). The school facilitates students by providing a library and posters as media for their reading. The students are free to choose books that are intriguing from the library. As stated by Gambrell (2018), students' choice of reading material can foster students' comfort and interest. Storybooks are the most popular media for enhancing students' reading achievement. Besides, the arrangement of tables and chairs, as well as the seatmates, can influence a safe and comfortable classroom environment for reading. Then, it automatically affects students' reading achievement. Therefore, the teacher has sufficient strategy and effort to create a safe and comfortable classroom environment to foster students' reading achievement.

Overall, this research demonstrates the importance of well-planned lessons, a supportive classroom environment, and engaging strategies like the "Literacy Tree" in improving student reading achievement. By addressing challenges and utilizing various resources, teachers can create an environment where all students can develop their reading interests and reading achievement.

## CONCLUSION

The current research aimed to uncover physical elements, which include physical books, lighting, tables, and chairs, as well as psychological elements in the classroom environment, such as comfortable temperature and noise from classmates, that contribute to fostering students' reading interest. Then, this research also revealed the teacher's strategies, such as a literacy tree, allowing students to choose books, reminding students to read, and colorful posters to create a safe and comfortable classroom environment for fostering students' reading achievement.

The study found that how a classroom is set up can affect how much students enjoy reading. In general, students liked having real books and feeling comfortable temperature-wise. Noise from classmates bothered most students, making it difficult to focus. The current lighting with lots of natural light seemed to work well for most. The temperature and adequate ventilation created a nice space for reading. The way the tables and chairs were arranged seemed acceptable for most students.

The teacher uses a clever strategy called the literacy tree to make her classroom a safe and comfortable place where students can select books and learn to read well. This involves careful planning and activities that fit neatly into the school day. While limited time and other school events can be a challenge, the teacher sets aside special reading periods to create that safe and comfortable space. She also gently reminds students to read, and the school helps by providing a library and colorful posters to make reading more inviting. All these efforts add up to a strong strategy for helping students succeed in reading.

To sum up, this research showed that a favorable reading environment involves more than just having a room. The elements of the classroom environment, both physical and psychological, influence students' reading interest. In addition, the teacher's strategies also enhance students' reading interest, which can result in excellent reading achievement.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barrett, P., Zhang, Y., Moffat, J., & Kobbacy, K. (2015). The impact of classroom design on pupils' learning: Final results of a holistic, multi-level analysis. *Building and Environment*, 89, 118-133
- Batubara, M, F., Derin, T., Putri, N, S., & Yudar, R, S. (2020). Five Factors Influencing the Students' Motivation to Learn English as a Foreign Language: A Closer Look into Montessori Classroom Environment. *Journal of Research and Innovation in Language*
- Campbell, et al. (2020). Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of research in nursing*. DOI:10.1177/1744987120927206
- Combs, H. (2022). Case study research: single or multiple (White paper). *Southern Utah University*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7604301>
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational research. Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research
- Dogan, M, F, & Dogan, Z. (2018). A Study of the 4th Grade Students in Primary School through the Compositions of Their Opinions about the Classroom Environment They Want to be In. *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 6(11): 2509-2514, 2018. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2018.061115
- Gambrell, L. B. (2018). Creating classrooms of readers. *Routledge*.
- Guthrie, J. T., & Humenick, N. M. (2004). Motivating Students to Read: Evidence for Classroom Practices that Increase Motivation and Achievement. In P. McCardle & V. Chhabra (Eds.), *The Voice of Evidence in Reading Research* (pp. 329-354). *Brookes Publishing*.
- Hutchison, A., & Reinking, D. (2011). Teachers' perceptions of integrating information and communication technologies into literacy instruction: A national survey in the United States. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 46(4), 312-333.
- Kim, J. S., & Quinn, D. M. (2020). The effects of reading intervention programs on reading skills of elementary school students: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, 30, 100338.
- Manurung, Y, H & Izar, S, L. (2019). Developing speed reading skills in students. *Proceeding International Seminar on Islamic Studies Volume 1 Nomor 1 Tahun 2019 Medan, December 10-11, 2019*
- Marzano, R. J. (2021). The New Art and Science of Teaching: More Than Fifty New Instructional Strategies for Academic Success. *Solution Tree*.
- Merga, M. K. (2018). The importance of recreational reading, and how schools can best support it. *Australian Journal of Education*, 62(3), 304-317.
- Miller, A., & Cunningham, K. 2011. Classroom environment. *Retrieved on, 30(07), 2015*

- Nurdianingsih, F. (2021). Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension. *Professional Journal of English Education*, 4(2), 285-289.
- Ozyildirim, G. (2021). How teachers in elementary schools evaluate their classroom environments: An evaluation of functions of the classroom through an environmental approach. *Journal on Efficiency and Responsibility in Education and Science*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 180-194. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7160/eriesj.2021.140305>
- Quirino, L, M. (2020). Thermal and visual comfort of schoolchildren in air-conditioned classrooms in hot and humid climates. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2020.107156>
- Rentzou, K. (2014). The quality of the physical environment in private and public infant/toddler and preschool Greek day-care programmes. *Early Child Development and Care*. 184 (12), 1861-1883. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2014.891991>
- Shield & Dockrell, J. (2008). Effects of noise in high schools on pupils' perceptions and performance. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 132(3):2045. <https://doi.org/10.1121/1.4755520>
- Sulistiyarini, A., Sukarno., & Triyanto. (2021). School Literacy Movement (SLM) as a Solution to Increase Reading Interest of Indonesian Students. *Ilkogretim Online Elementary Education Online*, 2021; 20 (1): pp. 1324-1334. <https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2021.01.12>