

Children's Experiences, Story Comprehension and Appreciation of Moral Values through Read Aloud Activities at Kota Baca

Mohd Fauzi Md Yunus & Mohd Syazwan Zainal

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Corresponding Author Email: syazwanzainal@ukm.edu.my

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Abstract

This study explores children's experiences, story comprehension, and appreciation of moral values through a Read Aloud activity conducted as part of the Read Aloud Programme at Kota Baca. The study addresses the relatively limited attention given to older children aged 9–14 years in community-based Read Aloud research, particularly in relation to story comprehension and appreciation of moral values. A descriptive qualitative research design was employed involving 10 children aged 9 to 14 years who participated in the programme at Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur. Data were collected through participants' open-ended written responses, facilitator observations, and researcher reflective notes. The Read Aloud session incorporated pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities involving book introduction, expressive reading, questioning, prediction, vocabulary explanation, discussion, and reflection. Data were analysed thematically based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. Five themes emerged: interest and engagement in Read Aloud activities, literal story comprehension, inferential story comprehension, appreciation of moral values, and reflection on the reading experience. The findings indicate that participants responded positively to the reading activity and demonstrated engagement through attention, responses to questions, and participation in discussion. Participants also demonstrated literal and inferential understanding of the story, including the ability to identify characters, recall storyline elements, and interpret broader messages concerning helping others, friendship, and positive behaviour. Helping others emerged as the most prominent moral value, followed by friendship, affection, and caring. The findings can be interpreted through Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory, particularly the role of social interaction and scaffolding in supporting meaning-making during interactive reading. Overall, the study provides context-specific qualitative insight into how children aged 9–14 years engage with stories, construct meaning, and appreciate moral values through Read Aloud in a community literacy setting.

Keywords: Read Aloud, Story Comprehension, Moral Values, Children's Reading, Community Literacy, Social Constructivism

Introduction

Reading is a fundamental literacy activity that contributes to children's cognitive, language, and social development. Through meaningful reading experiences, children have opportunities to acquire knowledge, develop language abilities, understand information, and construct meaning from texts. Regular exposure to literacy activities can also contribute to the development of positive attitudes towards reading and provide a foundation for continued literacy development. Morrow (2020) emphasises the importance of meaningful literacy experiences in supporting children's literacy development, while Neuman and Dickinson (2011) highlight the role of early literacy experiences in establishing foundations for later reading and learning. Therefore, providing children with engaging and meaningful opportunities to interact with stories is important not only for literacy development but also for developing positive relationships with reading.

One approach that can provide children with meaningful and interactive literacy experiences is Read Aloud. Read Aloud refers to a reading practice in which a facilitator reads a story aloud to children while incorporating expressive delivery, questioning, discussion, and opportunities for children to respond to the text. In an interactive Read Aloud, children are not positioned solely as passive listeners; instead, they are encouraged to answer questions, make predictions, share their opinions, and relate story events to their own experiences. Wiseman (2011) describes Interactive Read Aloud as a process through which teachers and students construct knowledge and literacy through dialogue and interaction. Similarly, Axelsson and Lundqvist (2025) emphasise the importance of interaction during reading aloud in supporting children's language and engagement. Thus, Read Aloud can be understood not simply as oral delivery of a written text, but as a socially interactive literacy activity through which children listen, respond, discuss, and construct meaning from stories.

Beyond supporting literacy and story comprehension, Read Aloud may also provide opportunities for children to encounter and reflect on social and moral values presented through stories. Stories introduce children to characters, relationships, emotions, and situations in which different behaviours and choices are portrayed. Through discussion of these narrative experiences, children may recognise and reflect on values such as helping others, friendship, affection, empathy, cooperation, and caring behaviour. Ocampo (2025) reported that positive psychology-themed read-aloud activities were associated with socio-emotional outcomes, including empathy and social relationships. Although the context and design of that study differ from the present research, its findings support the relevance of examining story reading as a context for children's socio-emotional experiences. In the present study, the selected story, *Warna-Warni Dunia Iman* by Izzat Zaid, presents situations involving helping others, friendship, affection, and caring behaviour. These features provide an appropriate narrative context for examining how children interpret the story and articulate the moral values they appreciate following an interactive Read Aloud experience.

Although much of the Read Aloud literature has been conducted in formal educational settings, existing research has also demonstrated the use of reading-aloud activities in community-based literacy programmes. Law and Chia (2016), for example, examined the kidsREAD programme in Singapore, a community-based reading programme involving 186 children aged 4–8 years from 12 reading clubs. Trained volunteers conducted weekly reading sessions followed by reading-related activities, and the study reported improvements in

children's English language use, individual participation, peer interaction, and reading skills. Similarly, Mahasneh et al. (2021) investigated the We Love Reading programme in Jordan, a community-based intervention in which local community members organised read-aloud sessions in informal public spaces. Involving 1,718 children, the study examined children's reading attitudes and reading practices and found a small but significant positive effect associated with participation in the programme. More recently, Utari et al. (2025) examined a community-based literacy initiative in Indonesia involving 19 children aged 5–12 years through storytelling and read-aloud activities. The study focused on children's participation, confidence in expression, early literacy experiences, and understanding of moral values, including empathy, cooperation, and compassion. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that Read Aloud and related reading-aloud activities can be implemented beyond formal classroom environments and can support children's reading engagement, participation, literacy-related development, and reflection on positive values. However, the outcomes examined across these studies have varied, with particular attention given to reading attitudes, reading practices, participation, language development, and early literacy rather than the combined examination of story comprehension and appreciation of moral values among older children.

Within the community-based studies identified above, considerable attention has been given to younger children and early literacy or reading-related development. Law and Chia (2016) focused on children aged 4–8 years, while the We Love Reading programme examined by Mahasneh et al. (2021) primarily targeted children aged 4–10 years, with participants having a mean age of 7.52 years. Utari et al. (2025) included a somewhat wider age range of 5–12 years, but the programme was still framed around early literacy, participation, and character development. Although these studies provide valuable evidence concerning community-based reading activities, comparatively less attention has been given to children in the 9–14-year age range, particularly in relation to how they understand narrative content and interpret moral values through interactive Read Aloud activities. This age range is important because children beyond the early-literacy stage may engage with stories not only by recalling characters and events but also by making inferences, interpreting relationships, and reflecting on the behavioural and moral meanings embedded in narratives. The present study therefore extends the existing community-based literature by focusing specifically on children aged 9–14 years participating in a Read Aloud activity at Kota Baca.

In addition to the age-related gap, there is a need to further examine the outcomes associated with interactive Read Aloud in community literacy contexts. Existing community-based studies have examined outcomes such as reading attitudes, reading practices, language use, participation, peer interaction, and early literacy development (Law & Chia, 2016; Mahasneh et al., 2021). Utari et al. (2025) further highlighted children's understanding of moral values through community-based storytelling and read-aloud activities. However, comparatively less attention has been given to the relationship between children's story comprehension and their appreciation of moral values following an interactive reading experience. Examining both literal and inferential story comprehension alongside children's articulation of values such as helping others, friendship, affection, and caring may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how children construct meaning from stories in community literacy settings. The present study addresses these gaps by examining children aged 9–14 years who participated in a Read Aloud activity conducted through the Kota Baca Programme in Kuala

Lumpur. Unlike studies that have primarily examined reading attitudes, reading practices, language development, or early literacy outcomes, the present study considers children's experiences across three interconnected dimensions: their interest and engagement in Read Aloud, their literal and inferential understanding of the story, and their appreciation of moral values presented through the narrative. Guided by Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism Theory, the study further considers how questioning, discussion, explanation, and other forms of facilitator support may contribute to children's meaning-making during the reading process. In this way, the study extends existing research on community-based Read Aloud by providing context-specific qualitative insight into the reading experiences of children aged 9–14 years and their interpretation of story-based moral values.

Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do participants experience and express their interest and engagement in Read Aloud activities?
2. How do participants demonstrate literal and inferential understanding of the story being read?
3. What moral values do participants appreciate after participating in the Read Aloud session?

Literature Review

Read Aloud and Children's Literacy Development

Read Aloud is an interactive literacy practice in which stories or other reading materials are read aloud to children using appropriate intonation, expression, questioning, and discussion. Rather than functioning as a one-way transmission of written content, interactive Read Aloud provides opportunities for children to listen, respond, ask questions, and share their interpretations of the story. Wiseman (2011) describes Interactive Read Aloud as an approach through which teachers and students construct knowledge and literacy together through dialogue and interaction. This perspective suggests that the value of Read Aloud extends beyond exposure to printed text, as children are actively involved in constructing meaning during the reading process.

Read Aloud has also been associated with the development of children's early literacy and language skills. Morrow (2020) emphasises that children's literacy development is influenced by the language and literacy experiences available within their surrounding environments. Shared reading and exposure to storybooks provide children with opportunities to encounter vocabulary, sentence structures, and forms of language that may not occur frequently in everyday conversation. Similarly, Neuman and Dickinson (2011) highlight the importance of meaningful literacy experiences in establishing a foundation for subsequent reading and writing development. Within this context, Read Aloud provides a structured yet enjoyable opportunity for children to interact with language and literacy materials.

Recent literature further indicates that reading aloud can contribute to children's language development. Axelsson and Lundqvist (2025), through a scoping review and content analysis, highlight the importance of reading aloud in early language development. Story-reading activities expose children to language within meaningful contexts and provide opportunities for interaction surrounding the text. Isbell et al. (2004) similarly found that storytelling and

story reading were associated with greater oral language complexity and story comprehension among young children. These findings suggest that the interactive nature of story reading can support children's language development while simultaneously facilitating their understanding of narrative content.

Read Aloud, Reading Interest, and Engagement

In addition to literacy development, Read Aloud may contribute to children's interest and motivation towards reading. Children's attitudes towards reading can be influenced by the nature of their reading experiences and the extent to which they perceive reading as enjoyable and meaningful. Ledger and Merga (2018) reported positive attitudes among children towards being read to at home and at school, highlighting the importance of reading experiences in shaping children's relationships with reading. When reading is experienced through enjoyable interaction rather than as a purely individual or mechanical activity, children may be more willing to participate and engage with the reading material.

The interactive characteristics of Read Aloud are particularly relevant to children's engagement. Wiseman (2011) emphasises that interactive reading involves opportunities for students to respond to questions, exchange ideas, and construct knowledge during the reading process. Such interaction may help transform reading from a passive listening activity into a socially engaging learning experience. Axelsson and Lundqvist (2025) also emphasise the role of interaction during reading aloud in supporting children's engagement and language development. Thus, the use of expressive reading, questioning, discussion, and opportunities for children to express their views may contribute to positive experiences during Read Aloud sessions.

The potential relationship between Read Aloud and reading interest is particularly relevant in community literacy programmes, where participation may be voluntary and learning environments may be less formal than conventional classroom settings. In such contexts, creating an enjoyable and inclusive reading experience may be important for encouraging children to participate actively. However, the existing literature identified in this study has largely examined Read Aloud within school, preschool, or classroom settings. Consequently, there is a need to further examine children's responses to Read Aloud within community-based literacy activities.

Read Aloud and Story Comprehension

Story comprehension involves children's ability to understand information presented in a narrative, identify characters and events, and interpret relationships and messages within the story. Read Aloud can provide support for this process by allowing children to focus on listening to and interpreting the story while receiving guidance from the reader. Although Isbell et al. (2004) focused on younger children, their findings provide relevant evidence that story reading can support narrative comprehension and oral language development.

Interactive reading may further facilitate comprehension because children are encouraged to engage with the text through questions, predictions, explanations, and discussions. Mohd Asraf and Abd Halim (2024) reported that Read Aloud activities among preschool pupils supported story comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and engagement in learning activities. These findings suggest that comprehension may be strengthened when children

are provided with opportunities to discuss and respond to the story rather than simply listening to it.

From a pedagogical perspective, the Read Aloud process can therefore support both literal and inferential aspects of comprehension. At the literal level, children may identify characters, events, and information explicitly presented in the story. At the inferential level, interaction and discussion may enable children to interpret implicit messages and connect events in the story with their own experiences. Such meaning-making processes are particularly relevant to the present study because the reading session was designed to include questioning, prediction, discussion, and reflection rather than reading aloud alone.

Read Aloud and Socio-Emotional Development

The potential contribution of story reading extends beyond literacy and comprehension to children's social and emotional development. Stories provide children with opportunities to encounter characters experiencing different situations, emotions, relationships, and behavioural choices. Through these narrative experiences, children may be exposed to concepts such as empathy, friendship, affection, cooperation, caring, and responsibility.

Ocampo (2025) reported associations between positive psychology-themed read-aloud activities, reading accuracy, and socio-emotional outcomes across a diverse participant group. While the study differs substantially from the present study in age range and design, it provides contextual support for examining story reading in relation to socio-emotional experiences. The study highlighted outcomes related to empathy, self-confidence, and social relationships. These findings support the view that story-reading activities can provide a context in which children encounter and reflect upon positive behaviours and social values.

Moral values presented through stories may also provide children with examples of behaviour that can be recognised and discussed within their own social contexts. When children are encouraged to reflect on why characters behave in ways and what lessons can be derived from narrative events, reading can become an opportunity for moral and social meaning-making. In the context of the present study, the book *Warna-Warni Dunia Iman* was selected because it contains values related to helping others, friendship, affection, and caring attitudes. These characteristics make the reading material relevant to examining children's appreciation of moral values alongside their literacy experiences.

Social Interaction and Read Aloud: Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory

The relationship between interactive reading and children's meaning-making can be further understood through Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism Theory. The theory emphasises that learning and cognitive development occur through social interaction and communication with others. Children construct knowledge through experiences and interactions within their social and cultural environments, rather than developing understanding solely through independent activity.

A central concept within Vygotsky's theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the difference between what a child can accomplish independently and what the child can accomplish with assistance from a more knowledgeable individual. In educational settings, this assistance can take the form of scaffolding, whereby an adult or more capable

peer provides appropriate support to enable the learner to develop a greater level of understanding.

The Read Aloud approach is consistent with this theoretical perspective because the facilitator can provide scaffolding through questioning, explanation, prompting, prediction, and discussion. During a reading session, children may initially identify explicit information within the story, while facilitator guidance can encourage them to explain character behaviour, interpret messages, and connect the story with their own experiences. In this sense, meaning is constructed collaboratively through interaction between the facilitator, participants, and reading material.

For the present study, Vygotsky's theory provides a useful framework for understanding how participants may develop story comprehension and appreciation of moral values through an interactive reading process. The facilitator's role is not limited to reading the text but includes guiding participants towards deeper engagement with the story. The theory therefore provides a conceptual basis for examining the relationship between social interaction during Read Aloud and participants' literacy and socio-emotional experiences.

Read Aloud in Community Literacy Contexts

Although Read Aloud has traditionally been examined in formal educational settings, existing research has also demonstrated its use in community-based literacy programmes. Community-based reading initiatives provide children with opportunities to engage with stories in settings that may differ from conventional classrooms in terms of participation, social interaction, and programme structure. Law and Chia (2016), for example, examined the kidsREAD programme in Singapore, in which trained volunteers conducted reading sessions with children in community reading clubs. Their findings highlighted outcomes related to English language use, participation, peer interaction, and reading skills. Similarly, Mahasneh et al. (2021) examined the We Love Reading programme in Jordan, in which community members conducted reading sessions in informal settings. Their study focused primarily on children's reading attitudes and reading practices. More recently, Utari et al. (2025) examined a community-based storytelling and read-aloud initiative involving children in Indonesia and reported outcomes related to participation, early literacy experiences, and understanding of positive values.

These studies demonstrate that reading-aloud activities can be implemented beyond formal classroom environments and can provide opportunities for children to engage with stories, interact with others, and develop positive reading-related experiences. However, the findings also indicate variation in the populations and outcomes examined across community-based programmes. Existing studies have given considerable attention to younger children, early literacy, reading attitudes, reading practices, participation, language development, and other literacy-related outcomes. While these findings establish the relevance of community-based reading activities, they provide comparatively less insight into how older children interpret narrative content and moral meanings during an interactive Read Aloud session.

The present study therefore considers the community literacy context as an important setting for examining children's reading experiences beyond formal classroom instruction. In particular, the study focuses on children aged 9–14 years, an age range that extends beyond

the predominant emphasis on preschool and early-literacy populations identified in the literature reviewed. The study also considers several interconnected dimensions of the reading experience, namely interest and engagement, literal story comprehension, inferential story comprehension, and appreciation of moral values. By examining these dimensions together, the study seeks to provide context-specific qualitative insight into how older children engage with and construct meaning from stories within a community-based Read Aloud programme.

Research Gap and Conceptual Positioning

The literature reviewed indicates that Read Aloud can support children's engagement with reading, language development, story comprehension, and socio-emotional experiences. Research conducted in community-based settings further demonstrates that reading-aloud programmes can provide opportunities for children to participate in reading activities and develop positive reading-related experiences (Law & Chia, 2016; Mahasneh et al., 2021; Utari et al., 2025). Therefore, the research gap should not be understood as an absence of community based Read Aloud research. Rather, the gap concerns the specific populations, outcomes, and meaning-making processes examined within these settings.

First, the community-based studies reviewed have given considerable attention to younger children and early literacy or reading-related development. While some programmes have included children beyond the early-literacy stage, comparatively less attention has been given to children aged 9–14 years as a distinct group in community-based Read Aloud research. This age range is relevant because children may engage with narratives through both literal comprehension and more inferential forms of meaning-making, including interpretation of character behaviour, relationships, and messages conveyed through stories.

Second, existing community-based studies have examined outcomes such as reading attitudes, reading practices, language use, participation, peer interaction, and early literacy development. Although these outcomes provide important evidence concerning the value of community reading programmes, comparatively less attention has been given to examining children's interest and engagement together with both literal and inferential story comprehension and appreciation of moral values. In particular, the relationship between understanding narrative content and identifying values embedded within the story remains relevant for further investigation.

Third, the interactive processes through which children construct meaning during community based Read Aloud activities warrant further attention. Read Aloud involves more than exposure to oral reading because questioning, explanation, prediction, discussion, and reflection can provide opportunities for children to develop and express their interpretations. Examining these processes is particularly relevant in a community literacy context, where interaction between the facilitator, children, peers, and reading material forms an important part of the reading experience.

Accordingly, the present study positions Read Aloud as both a literacy and meaning-making activity within a community context. The study focuses on children aged 9–14 years participating in the Read Aloud Programme at Kota Baca and examines four interconnected dimensions: interest and engagement in Read Aloud activities, literal story comprehension,

inferential story comprehension, and appreciation of moral values. Guided by Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism Theory, the study conceptualises children's meaning-making as socially mediated through interaction, questioning, discussion, and facilitator support. This conceptual positioning enables the study to extend existing community-based Read Aloud literature by providing context-specific qualitative insight into how older children engage with stories, interpret narrative meanings, and articulate the moral values they appreciate following an interactive reading experience.

Summary

The literature reviewed demonstrates that Read Aloud can provide children with meaningful opportunities to engage with language, stories, social interaction, and literacy-related activities. Previous studies have associated Read Aloud with reading engagement, language development, story comprehension, reading attitudes, participation, and socio-emotional experiences. Research in community-based settings further indicates that reading-aloud activities can provide children with opportunities to participate in reading programmes and develop positive reading-related experiences. Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism Theory provides a relevant theoretical perspective for understanding how interaction, dialogue, and scaffolding may support children's meaning-making during interactive reading.

However, the literature reviewed indicates that community-based Read Aloud research has examined varied populations and outcomes, with considerable attention to younger children, early literacy, reading attitudes, reading practices, participation, and language-related outcomes. Comparatively less attention has been given to children aged 9–14 years and to the combined examination of children's engagement, literal and inferential story comprehension, and appreciation of moral values within an interactive community-based Read Aloud setting. The present study addresses this specific gap by exploring the experiences of children aged 9–14 years during a Read Aloud session conducted through the Kota Baca Programme.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore children's experiences, understanding, and appreciation of moral values following their participation in a Read Aloud activity at Kota Baca. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on participants' responses, interpretations, and experiences rather than on measuring outcomes through numerical data. The design enabled the researcher to examine how participants understood the story, interpreted its messages, and expressed the values they gained from the reading experience.

The study focused specifically on the experiences that emerged during and after the Read Aloud session. Data were obtained from participants' written responses, observations made during the programme, and the researcher's reflective notes. These sources were subsequently analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns and themes related to the research objectives.

Research Context and Location

The study was conducted as part of the Read Aloud Programme at Kota Baca, a community literacy initiative designed to provide children with enjoyable, interactive, and meaningful reading experiences. The programme was held at Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur, from 25 to 26 April 2026, between 9.00 a.m. and 12.00 noon.

Unlike conventional classroom-based reading activities, the programme was conducted within a community setting in which children participated voluntarily and were accompanied by their parents, guardians, or family members. The setting provided an opportunity to observe children's engagement with reading activities within a relatively informal and socially interactive environment.

Research Participants and Sampling

The study involved 10 children aged between 9 and 14 years who participated in the Read Aloud Programme at Kota Baca. The participants took part in the reading session, subsequent discussion, and reflection activities. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on characteristics considered relevant to the objectives of the study.

The selection focused on children who were directly involved in the Read Aloud programme and who were able to provide responses concerning their experiences, understanding of the story, and appreciation of the values presented. The use of purposive sampling was consistent with the qualitative nature of the study, as participants were selected because they had direct experience of the phenomenon being explored.

To protect participants' confidentiality, individual identities were not disclosed. Instead, participants were assigned codes ranging from P1 to P10 throughout the analysis and reporting of findings.

Table 1

Research Participant Profile

Participant	Age (years)
P1	9
P2	12
P3	14
P4	13
P5	13
P6	14
P7	10
P8	10
P9	12
P10	9

The participants represented an age range of 9 to 14 years, providing different perspectives on the reading experience within the community literacy programme.

Participant Selection Criteria

Participants were selected according to predetermined inclusion criteria to ensure that the data collected were relevant to the research objectives. Participants were required to be children aged between 9 and 14 years who voluntarily participated in the Kota Baca Read Aloud Programme, attended the reading session until completion, and were willing to

respond to the reflection activities and open-ended questions following the session. Parental or guardian permission was also required because the study involved children.

Children who did not fulfil these requirements were excluded from the analysis. The exclusion criteria included participants who did not complete the reading session, did not participate in the discussion or reflection activities, did not provide sufficient responses for analysis, or withdrew before completion of the programme. These criteria were established to ensure that participants had sufficient direct experience of the Read Aloud activity to provide information relevant to the research questions.

Reading Material

The primary reading material used in the Read Aloud session was *Warna-Warni Dunia Iman* by Izzat Zaid, with illustrations by Gracious Yoong. The book was selected because its language and content were considered appropriate for the participating children and because the story incorporates values relevant to the focus of the study.

The book uses relatively simple language, colourful illustrations, and characters and situations that are related to children's everyday experiences. The story centres on the character Iman and presents situations involving values such as helping others, friendship, affection, and caring behaviour. These characteristics made the book suitable for an interactive reading session involving questioning, discussion, reflection, and the sharing of participants' views. The selection of the reading material was therefore aligned with the three main areas examined in the study: participants' interest in Read Aloud activities, their understanding of the story, and their appreciation of moral values.

Data Collection Instruments and Sources

The primary instrument used to collect participants' responses was an open-ended response form administered following the Read Aloud session. The questions enabled participants to express their experiences of the activity, their understanding of the story, the character they preferred, and the values or lessons they gained from the reading.

In addition to the written responses, the study incorporated facilitator observations and researcher reflective notes as supplementary sources of qualitative data. Observations focused on participants' involvement, interactions, responses to questions, and engagement throughout the reading session. Reflective notes were prepared following the programme to document the researcher's observations and reflections regarding the implementation of the activity.

The use of these multiple sources provided different perspectives on the participants' experiences and formed the basis for data triangulation during the analysis process.

Read Aloud Implementation Procedure

The Read Aloud activity was implemented through three interconnected phases: pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading.

Pre-Reading Phase

Before reading began, the researcher introduced the book and its main character to the participants. Stimulus questions were posed to activate participants' prior knowledge and

encourage them to anticipate the content of the story. This stage was intended to prepare participants for active engagement with the reading material.

During-Reading Phase

During the reading session, the researcher used expressive reading techniques, including appropriate intonation and expression, to maintain participants' attention and engagement. Comprehension questions were incorporated throughout the reading process, and participants were encouraged to make predictions about the storyline.

The researcher also provided explanations of selected vocabulary where necessary. Opportunities were provided for participants to respond to questions, express their views, and interact with the content of the story.

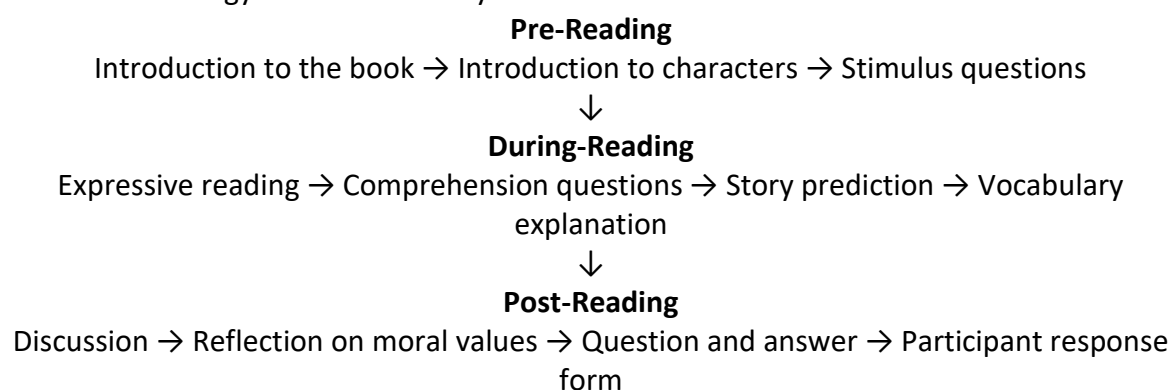
Post-Reading Phase

Following completion of the story, participants took part in question-and-answer activities and discussion concerning the storyline, messages, and lessons contained in the book. Participants were encouraged to relate the values presented in the story to their own experiences and everyday situations.

The session concluded with a reflection activity and completion of the open-ended response form. The responses obtained during this stage constituted the primary participant-generated data for the study.

Figure 2

Read Aloud Strategy Used in the Study



Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analysed using Thematic Analysis based on Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach was selected because it enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns of meaning within participants' responses and other qualitative data sources.

The analysis began with repeated reading of the collected data to develop familiarity with the participants' responses, observations, and reflective notes. The researcher then identified initial codes representing ideas or meanings relevant to the research objectives. Codes with similar meanings were subsequently grouped into broader categories.

The categories were examined to identify potential themes that represented recurring patterns within the dataset. The emerging themes were reviewed against the original responses to ensure that they remained grounded in the collected data. The final themes

were then defined, named, and interpreted in relation to the research objectives and Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory.

Through this process, the analysis focused on five main themes:

1. Interest in Read Aloud activities;
2. Literal story comprehension;
3. Inferential story comprehension;
4. Appreciation of moral values; and
5. Reflection on the reading experience.

The thematic analysis enabled the researcher to examine not only what participants understood from the story but also how they interpreted its messages and connected them with their everyday experiences.

Trustworthiness of the Data

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed data triangulation involving three qualitative data sources: participants' written responses, facilitator observations, and the researcher's reflective notes.

Participants' written responses provided direct accounts of their experiences, understanding, and appreciation of the Read Aloud activity. Facilitator observations provided additional information concerning participants' engagement, interactions, and responses during the session. The researcher's reflective notes provided a further perspective on the implementation of the programme and observations made during and after the activity.

The comparison of these sources enabled the researcher to identify similarities and recurring patterns across different forms of evidence. Where similar themes emerged across participant responses, observations, and reflections, these patterns provided additional support for the interpretation of the findings. This approach is consistent with the use of multiple data sources to strengthen the credibility of qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were considered throughout the research process, particularly because the study involved children. Participation was voluntary, and participants were provided with an explanation of the purpose and activities of the programme before participation.

Parental or guardian permission was obtained before children participated in the programme. Participants' identities were protected using participant codes, P1 to P10, rather than personal names. The data collected were used for academic purposes and were treated confidentially.

Participants were also informed that they could choose not to respond to questions they did not wish to answer and could withdraw from the study without implications. The researcher further ensured that the activities were conducted within a safe and child-friendly environment.

Methodological Summary

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to explore children's experiences, story comprehension, and appreciation of moral values following participation in a Read Aloud activity at Kota Baca. Ten children aged 9 to 14 years participated in the study through purposive sampling.

Data were generated from participants' open-ended written responses, facilitator observations, and researcher reflective notes. The Read Aloud session incorporated pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities involving introduction, expressive reading, questioning, prediction, discussion, and reflection. The collected data were analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach, while triangulation was used to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings. Ethical procedures, including parental or guardian permission and participant confidentiality, were observed throughout the study.

Findings

Overview of the Findings

The findings presented in this section were derived from the thematic analysis of participants' written responses, facilitator observations, and the researcher's reflective notes following the Read Aloud session at Kota Baca. The analysis focused on participants' interest in the reading activity, their understanding of the story, and the moral values they identified and appreciated.

Five interrelated themes emerged from the analysis: (1) interest in Read Aloud activities, (2) literal story comprehension, (3) inferential story comprehension, (4) appreciation of moral values, and (5) reflection on the reading experience. Together, these themes illustrate how participants responded to the reading activity, engaged with the story content, interpreted its messages, and reflected on the values presented in *Warna-Warni Dunia Iman*.

Theme 1: Interest and Engagement in Read Aloud Activities

The first theme concerned participants' interest and engagement in the Read Aloud activity. The participants generally expressed positive reactions towards the reading experience. Their responses included words and short statements such as "Enjoyable," "Great," "Happy," and "Relatable." These responses indicate that participants experienced the reading session positively and perceived the activity as enjoyable and relevant to their experience.

The participants also expressed an intention to participate in similar reading activities in the future. Responses such as "I want to come again" indicate a willingness to re-engage with the programme. This pattern suggests that the reading session generated positive affective responses towards the activity itself.

Facilitator observations provided additional evidence of participants' engagement. Participants were observed paying attention to the story, responding to questions, and participating in discussions during the session. The combination of positive verbal responses and observed participation suggests that the interactive nature of the Read Aloud session provided a context in which participants remained engaged with the reading activity.

Table 2

Theme 1: Interest and Engagement in Read Aloud Activities

Subtheme	Illustrative evidence	Interpretation
Enjoyment of reading	"Enjoyable." / "Great." / "Happy."	Participants expressed positive emotional responses towards the reading activity.
Perceived relevance	"Relatable."	Participants perceived some aspects of the reading experience as connected to their experiences.
Willingness to re-engage	"I want to come again."	Participants expressed an intention to participate in similar activities again.
Active engagement	Facilitator observations indicated attention, responses to questions, and participation in discussion.	Participants demonstrated behavioural engagement throughout the session.

Theme 2: Literal Story Comprehension

The second theme related to participants' ability to understand information explicitly presented in the story. The analysis indicated that participants were able to identify the main character and demonstrate an understanding of the basic storyline.

When participants were asked to identify their favourite character, most selected Iman. Responses included "Iman," "The character Iman," and "Iman because [he/she is] good." These responses demonstrate participants' ability to identify a central character and associate the character with a positive characteristic.

Participants also indicated that they understood the content of the story and were able to retell the storyline to their friends. Their responses therefore demonstrated understanding at the literal level, particularly in relation to characters, events, and basic story content.

Table 3

Theme 2: Literal Story Comprehension

Subtheme	Illustrative evidence	Interpretation
Identification of main character	"Iman."	Participants were able to identify the central character.
Character recognition	"The character Iman."	Participants demonstrated recall of information explicitly presented in the story.
Recognition of character traits	"Iman because [he/she is] good."	Participants associated the character with a positive characteristic.
Recall of storyline	Participants reported understanding and being able to retell the storyline to friends.	Participants demonstrated basic understanding of narrative content.

Theme 3: Inferential Story Comprehension

The third theme reflected participants' ability to move beyond the recall of explicit story information and interpret the messages conveyed through the narrative. The analysis identified several responses that represented participants' interpretations of the lessons embedded within the story.

Participants expressed statements such as “We must help others,” “Do not fight with friends,” “Be a good person,” and “Love our friends.” Rather than simply recalling characters or events, these responses demonstrate that participants were able to derive broader meanings from the story and express these meanings in relation to appropriate behaviour.

The responses also indicate a connection between the narrative and participants’ everyday experiences. The messages identified by participants were expressed as behavioural principles that could be applied beyond the immediate reading context. Thus, the findings suggest that participants engaged in meaning-making that extended from understanding the storyline to interpreting the underlying messages of the story.

Table 4

Theme 3: Inferential Story Comprehension

Subtheme	Illustrative evidence	Interpretation
Helping others	“We must help others.”	Participants inferred a behavioural lesson from the story.
Maintaining friendship	“Do not fight with friends.”	Participants interpreted the story in relation to interpersonal relationships.
Positive behaviour	“Be a good person.”	Participants derived a broader moral message from the narrative.
Affection towards friends	“Love our friends.”	Participants connected the story with positive social relationships.

Theme 4: Appreciation of Moral Values

The fourth theme concerned participants’ appreciation of the moral values presented in *Warna-Warni Dunia Iman*. Among the themes identified, helping others emerged most prominently from participants’ responses. Participants repeatedly referred to helping and doing good towards others.

Examples of responses included “Helping others,” “Help people more,” “Help people,” and “I like helping people.” The recurrence of these responses indicates that helping others was a particularly salient value that participants identified from the story.

The value of friendship also emerged consistently. Participants expressed responses such as “Be good friends,” “Do not fight with friends,” and “Love our friends.” These responses demonstrate that participants recognised the importance of maintaining positive relationships with others.

Taken together, the responses suggest that participants were able to articulate moral values using their own words and connect these values with interpersonal behaviour. The findings therefore indicate that the story provided participants with an opportunity to identify and express positive social values arising from the reading experience.

Table 5

Theme 4: Appreciation of Moral Values

Subtheme	Illustrative evidence	Interpretation
Helping others	"Helping others."	Helping others emerged as the most prominent moral value.
Prosocial behaviour	"Help people more." / "Help people."	Participants expressed the value of assisting others.
Personal inclination to help	"I like helping people."	Participants expressed a positive orientation towards helping others.
Friendship	"Be good friends."	Participants recognised the importance of positive friendship.
Avoiding conflict	"Do not fight with friends."	Participants associated friendship with peaceful interpersonal behaviour.
Affection	"Love our friends."	Participants identified affection as part of positive relationships.

Theme 5: Reflection on the Reading Experience

The fifth theme concerned participants' reflections on the overall reading experience. Participants provided positive reflections following the completion of the Read Aloud session. Among the responses were "I want to read another book," "I want to come again," "It was enjoyable listening to the story," and "Great."

These reflections demonstrate participants' willingness to continue engaging with reading activities and indicate that the session was perceived positively. The response "I want to read another book" is particularly relevant because it reflects an expressed intention to continue reading beyond the story used during the session.

The facilitator observations further indicated that participants remained attentive, responded to questions, and demonstrated interest during the discussion following the reading. Several participants who were initially less active became more willing to interact after open-ended questions were introduced and opportunities were provided for them to express their views.

Table 6

Theme 5: Reflection on the Reading Experience

Subtheme	Illustrative evidence	Interpretation
Continued reading intention	"I want to read another book."	Participants expressed an intention to continue reading.
Willingness to return	"I want to come again."	Participants indicated willingness to participate in future sessions.
Enjoyment	"It was enjoyable listening to the story."	Participants described the reading experience positively.
Positive overall response	"Great."	Participants provided favourable reflections on the session.
Increased interaction	Participants became more willing to interact following open-ended questioning.	Facilitation techniques appeared to support participation during the session.

Cross-Theme Analysis

Analysis across the five themes indicates a progression from engagement with the reading activity to understanding the story and interpreting its broader meanings. Participants first demonstrated positive responses towards the Read Aloud experience, followed by evidence of literal understanding of the story. Their responses then demonstrated inferential comprehension through the identification of messages related to helping others, friendship, and positive behaviour.

The findings further show that story comprehension and appreciation of moral values were interconnected. Participants' interpretations of the story frequently took the form of behavioural and interpersonal lessons. For example, statements concerning helping others and maintaining friendships demonstrate how participants moved from understanding story content towards identifying values that could be related to everyday life.

The fifth theme, reflection on the reading experience, complements these findings by showing participants expressed willingness to engage with reading again. Facilitator observations also indicated sustained attention, responses to questions, and participation in discussion. Thus, the thematic findings collectively portray the Read Aloud session as an interactive reading experience involving engagement, comprehension, interpretation, and reflection.

Table 7

Summary of Thematic Findings

Main Theme	Key Pattern Identified	Relationship to Research Objective
1. Interest and Engagement	Enjoyment, positive responses, willingness to return	Objective 1: Interest in Read Aloud
2. Literal Story Comprehension	Identification of character and storyline	Objective 2: Story understanding
3. Inferential Story Comprehension	Interpretation of implicit messages and lessons	Objective 2: Story understanding
4. Appreciation of Moral Values	Helping others, friendship, affection, caring	Objective 3: Moral values
5. Reflection on Reading Experience	Desire to read again and participate again	Supports understanding of participants' overall experience

Summary of Findings

The thematic analysis identified five themes that describe participants' experiences during and following the Read Aloud session. Participants expressed positive responses towards the activity and demonstrated engagement through attention, responses to questions, and participation in discussion. They also demonstrated literal comprehension through their identification of the main character and understanding of the storyline.

Beyond literal comprehension, participants demonstrated inferential understanding by interpreting messages concerning helping others, friendship, and positive behaviour. The most prominent moral value identified was helping others, while friendship, affection, and caring attitudes also appeared in the participants' responses. Participants' reflections further indicated a willingness to continue reading and participate in similar activities.

Overall, the findings provide evidence of participants' engagement with the Read Aloud activity at three interconnected levels: participation in the reading experience, construction of story meaning, and appreciation of values embedded in the narrative. These findings form the basis for the discussion in Section 5.0, where the themes are interpreted in relation to previous research and Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory.

Discussion

Overview of the Discussion

The findings of this study provide insights into children's experiences of participating in a Read Aloud activity within a community literacy programme. Across the five themes identified, participants demonstrated positive engagement with the reading activity, understanding of both explicit and implicit aspects of the story, appreciation of moral values, and willingness to participate in further reading activities. These findings suggest that the Read Aloud session provided participants with opportunities to engage with the story at both literacy and meaning-making levels.

The discussion below interprets these findings in relation to previous research and Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism Theory. Attention is given to three areas corresponding to the research objectives: participants' interest in Read Aloud activities, their understanding of the story, and their appreciation of moral values. The discussion also considers the implications of implementing interactive Read Aloud activities within a community literacy context.

Participants' Interest and Engagement in Read Aloud Activities

The first research objective focused on identifying participants' interest in Read Aloud activities. The findings indicated that participants responded positively to the reading session, as reflected in expressions such as "Enjoyable," "Great," "Happy," and "I want to come again." These responses, together with facilitator observations of participants' attention and participation, suggest that the session created a positive reading experience for the children. This finding is consistent with the view that children's attitudes towards reading can be shaped by the nature of their reading experiences. Ledger and Merga (2018) reported positive attitudes among children towards being read to, highlighting the importance of shared reading experiences in developing positive relationships with reading. The present findings similarly suggest that children responded favourably when reading was presented as an interactive and socially engaging activity rather than solely as an individual literacy task.

The positive responses may also be understood in relation to the interactive features of the Read Aloud session. The activity incorporated expressive reading, questioning, prediction, discussion, and opportunities for participants to express their views. These features allowed participants to become actively involved in the reading process. This interpretation is consistent with Wiseman (2011), who emphasised the importance of interaction and dialogue in Interactive Read Aloud, and with Axelsson and Lundqvist (2025), who highlighted the role of reading aloud in supporting children's engagement and language experiences.

The finding is particularly relevant to the community literacy context of Kota Baca. Because participants joined the programme voluntarily and the activity was conducted outside a formal classroom environment, creating an enjoyable reading experience was an important aspect of encouraging participation. The participants expressed willingness to return and read

another book suggests that the session was positively received. However, this finding should be interpreted as evidence of participants expressed interest within the session, rather than as evidence of a long-term increase in reading motivation.

Participants' Literal and Inferential Story Comprehension

The second research objective examined participants' understanding of the story being read. The findings indicated evidence of both literal and inferential comprehension. At the literal level, participants were able to identify the main character, recognise aspects of the storyline, and describe basic information presented in the story. Most participants identified Iman as their favourite character and associated the character with positive qualities.

These findings are consistent with Isbell et al. (2004), who found that story reading can support children's story comprehension and oral language development. Story reading provides children with opportunities to listen to narrative structures, identify characters and events, and develop an understanding of relationships within a story. In the present study, participants' ability to identify Iman and recall elements of the storyline indicates that they were able to process and retain important information presented during the reading session. More importantly, the participants also demonstrated evidence of inferential comprehension. Their responses included statements such as "We must help others," "Do not fight with friends," "Be a good person," and "Love our friends." These responses move beyond the identification of characters or events and indicate participants' interpretation of the broader messages conveyed through the narrative. The findings therefore suggest that participants were able to derive lessons from the story and express these lessons in terms of behaviours and relationships relevant to their everyday lives.

This pattern is consistent with the interactive nature of the reading strategy used in the study. Participants were not simply exposed to the story; they were encouraged to answer questions, make predictions, discuss the content, and reflect on the lessons presented. Mohd Asraf and Abd Halim (2024) similarly reported that Read Aloud activities can support story comprehension when children are actively engaged with the reading process. The present findings extend this understanding to a community literacy setting, where children interacted with the story through a less formal but structured reading experience.

The findings can also be interpreted through Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism Theory. Participants' ability to explain story messages and relate them to everyday situations suggests that comprehension was developed through interaction rather than through exposure to the story alone. Questions, explanations, and discussions provided opportunities for participants to construct and refine their understanding of the narrative.

Appreciation of Moral Values

The third research objective focused on identifying the moral values gained from the story. The findings showed that helping others was the most prominent value identified by participants. Other values included friendship, affection, and caring attitudes. Participants expressed these values through statements such as "Helping others," "Help people more," "Be good friends," "Do not fight with friends," and "Love our friends."

The prominence of helping others is meaningful because it represents a transition from understanding the events of a story to interpreting the behavioural meaning embedded within those events. Rather than merely recalling what happened to the characters, participants identified behaviours that they considered appropriate and applicable to their own lives. This suggests that the story provided a context for participants to engage in moral meaning-making.

The finding is consistent with Ocampo (2025), who reported that storybook reading incorporating positive psychology themes could contribute to children's socio-emotional development, including empathy and social relationships. Although the present study did not quantitatively measure empathy or other socio-emotional outcomes, the participants' responses demonstrate their ability to recognise and articulate positive interpersonal values following engagement with the story.

The role of the main character is also relevant to this interpretation. Most participants selected Iman as their favourite character and associated the character with being good or helpful. The character therefore appeared to function as a narrative example through which participants could recognise positive behaviour. This suggests that characters and events within children's stories can provide concrete contexts for discussing abstract concepts such as kindness, friendship, and caring.

Nevertheless, the findings should not be interpreted as demonstrating that the Read Aloud activity directly changed participants' behaviour or character. The data demonstrate appreciation and recognition of moral values, based primarily on participants' responses following the reading session. Evidence of sustained behavioural change would require additional longitudinal or observational research.

Interpreting the Findings Through Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory

Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism Theory provides a useful theoretical lens for interpreting the findings because the Read Aloud activity was designed around interaction between the facilitator and participants. The theory emphasises that learning develops through social interaction and that children can construct new understanding with the support of more knowledgeable individuals.

Three aspects of the theory are particularly relevant to the present findings: social interaction, scaffolding, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). During the Read Aloud session, social interaction occurred through questioning, discussion, responses, and exchanges between the facilitator and participants. These interactions provided opportunities for participants to clarify their understanding and express interpretations of the story.

These facilitation practices can be interpreted as forms of scaffolding in the way the facilitator guided participants through different stages of the reading process. Before reading, stimulus questions were used to activate prior knowledge. During reading, comprehension questions, predictions, vocabulary explanations, and expressive reading were incorporated. Following the reading, discussion and reflection were used to encourage participants to identify lessons and moral values. This sequence provided progressively structured opportunities for participants to engage with the story.

The findings concerning inferential comprehension are particularly relevant to the concept of ZPD. Participants were able to move beyond identifying the main character and storyline towards interpreting messages concerning helping others and maintaining friendships. While the present study did not directly measure participants' independent comprehension before the intervention, the interaction during the session provided opportunities for guided meaning-making. Therefore, the findings are consistent with the theoretical proposition that social interaction can support the construction of knowledge.

The theoretical interpretation also helps explain the relationship between literacy and socio-emotional learning observed in the study. Participants did not construct meaning from the story in isolation. Instead, the reading material, facilitator guidance, questions, discussion, and participants' own experiences interacted to support the interpretation of the narrative. In this sense, Read Aloud functioned as a socially mediated literacy activity.

Read Aloud in the Community Literacy Context

An important contribution of the present study lies in its focus on a community literacy programme rather than a conventional classroom setting. Previous studies cited in this research have primarily examined Read Aloud in educational contexts involving preschool or school-aged children. The Kota Baca programme provides a different context in which children participate in reading activities within a community environment.

The findings indicate that interactive reading can generate engagement and meaning making even within a relatively informal community setting. Participants responded to questions, discussed the story, identified moral lessons, and reflected on their reading experience. This suggests that literacy learning opportunities do not necessarily need to be restricted to formal classroom environments.

At the same time, the findings should be understood within the specific characteristics of the Kota Baca programme. The study involved only 10 participants and was conducted during a limited reading session. Consequently, the findings provide context-specific qualitative insights rather than evidence that can be generalised to all community literacy programmes. The study nevertheless contributes to the understanding of how Read Aloud can be implemented as a community literacy activity that combines reading engagement with story comprehension and reflection on moral values. This provides a basis for further research involving larger groups, different community settings, and repeated reading sessions.

Implications for Literacy and Socio-Emotional Development

The findings have several implications for literacy practice. First, the positive responses from participants suggest that Read Aloud can provide an accessible and engaging way of introducing children to reading materials. The use of expressive reading, questioning, and discussion creates opportunities for children to interact with stories even when they are not independently reading the entire text.

Second, the findings indicate that story comprehension can be supported through interaction. The distinction between literal and inferential comprehension observed in the participants' responses highlights the importance of providing opportunities for children to discuss what they have heard and to interpret the messages contained within stories.

Third, the identification of helping others, friendship, affection, and caring attitudes suggests that carefully selected storybooks can provide opportunities to integrate literacy experiences with discussion of positive social values. This does not mean that reading alone produces behavioural change, but it indicates that stories can provide meaningful contexts in which children recognise and discuss values relevant to their everyday relationships.

For community literacy programmes, these findings suggest that Read Aloud sessions may be designed not only around the completion of a story but also around structured interaction before, during, and after reading. Such an approach is consistent with the social and interactive nature of learning emphasised by Vygotsky (1978).

Researcher Reflection and Programme Implementation

The researcher's reflections provide additional insight into how the Read Aloud activity was implemented. Participants appeared to respond positively to expressive intonation, questioning, and opportunities to share their opinions. Several participants who were initially less active became more willing to interact when open-ended questions were used.

This observation highlights the importance of facilitation in interactive reading. A Read Aloud activity may not produce the same level of engagement when children are positioned solely as passive listeners. The facilitator's questions and responses can create opportunities for children to contribute their own interpretations and experiences.

The experience also demonstrated the importance of selecting reading material that is understandable and relatable to participants. *Warna-Warni Dunia Iman* incorporated familiar situations and positive values, which appeared to facilitate participants' ability to connect the narrative with their own experiences.

These observations reinforce the theoretical interpretation of the study: the reading experience was shaped not only by the text itself but also by the interaction between the facilitator, participants, and reading material.

Limitations of the Study

The findings should be interpreted considering several limitations. First, the study involved only 10 participants, all of whom participated in the specific Read Aloud Programme at Kota Baca. The small and context-specific sample means that the findings are not intended to be generalised to the wider population of children.

Second, the study was conducted around a limited Read Aloud experience. As a result, it was not possible to determine whether participants' positive responses represented sustained changes in reading interest, comprehension, or appreciation of moral values over time.

Third, the findings were based substantially on participants' written responses, facilitator observations, and researcher reflections. These sources provide valuable qualitative insights but reflect participants' reported experiences and the researcher's interpretation of the observed session. Future studies could strengthen the evidence by incorporating additional data sources and repeated observations.

These limitations do not invalidate the findings. Rather, they indicate that the study should be understood as a context-specific exploration of children's experiences within a community literacy programme and as a basis for further empirical investigation.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could extend the present study by involving larger and more diverse groups of participants across different community literacy settings. Research conducted in schools, public libraries, community centres, and other literacy initiatives could provide comparative insights into how context influences children's experiences of Read Aloud.

Future studies could also employ a pre- and post-intervention design to examine changes in reading interest, story comprehension, or other literacy-related outcomes. Longitudinal research would be particularly useful for examining whether positive responses observed during individual reading sessions are sustained over longer periods.

In addition, interviews, systematic observations, and document analysis could be incorporated to obtain richer accounts of children's experiences. Further research could also examine how different types of storybooks, facilitation techniques, and interaction strategies influence children's engagement, comprehension, and interpretation of moral values.

Discussion Summary

Overall, the findings indicate that participants experienced the Read Aloud activity positively, demonstrated understanding of both explicit and implicit story content, and identified several moral values, particularly helping others and maintaining positive friendships. These findings are broadly consistent with previous literature highlighting the potential contribution of Read Aloud to children's engagement, comprehension, language experiences, and socio-emotional development.

The findings can also be interpreted through Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory, particularly the roles of social interaction and scaffolding in supporting children's meaning-making. The interactive nature of the Kota Baca reading session provided opportunities for participants to construct interpretations of the story through questions, discussion, and reflection.

Taken together, the study suggests that Read Aloud has potential as a community-based literacy practice that combines engagement with reading, story comprehension, and opportunities to reflect on positive moral values. However, given the small sample and limited duration of the study, these findings should be interpreted as context-specific qualitative evidence rather than as evidence of causal or long-term effects.

Conclusion

This study explored children's experiences, understanding, and appreciation of moral values through a Read Aloud activity conducted as part of the Read Aloud Programme at Kota Baca. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and thematic analysis of participants' responses, facilitator observations, and researcher reflections, the study identified five interconnected themes: interest and engagement in Read Aloud activities, literal story comprehension,

inferential story comprehension, appreciation of moral values, and reflection on the reading experience.

In relation to the first research objective, the findings indicate that participants responded positively to the Read Aloud activity. Expressions of enjoyment, happiness, and willingness to participate again, together with observations of active participation during questioning and discussion, suggest that the interactive reading environment provided a positive reading experience. The findings therefore highlight the potential of expressive and interactive Read Aloud activities to encourage children's engagement with reading within a community literacy setting.

In relation to the second objective, participants demonstrated both literal and inferential understanding of the story. They were able to identify the main character and recall aspects of the storyline, while also interpreting broader messages concerning helping others, friendship, and positive behaviour. This indicates that the Read Aloud session provided opportunities for participants to engage with the story beyond the recall of explicit information and to construct meanings from the narrative.

In relation to the third objective, participants identified several moral values presented in *Warna-Warni Dunia Iman*, with helping others emerging as the most prominent value, followed by themes related to friendship, affection, and caring attitudes. The participants' ability to express these values in their own words and relate them to everyday interpersonal behaviour suggests that story reading provided an opportunity for reflection on positive social values.

The findings can be understood through Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism Theory, particularly the role of social interaction and scaffolding in children's meaning-making. The questioning, discussion, explanation, and reflection incorporated into the Read Aloud session provided opportunities for participants to engage collaboratively with the story and develop interpretations of its content and messages. The study therefore contributes context-specific qualitative insight into the potential of Read Aloud as a community-based literacy activity that integrates reading engagement, story comprehension, and reflection on moral values.

However, the findings should be interpreted within the scope of the study. The research involved only 10 participants and was based on a limited Read Aloud experience; therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence of long-term or causal effects on children's reading behaviour or socio-emotional development. Future research involving larger and more diverse samples, repeated reading sessions, and additional data collection methods could provide further evidence concerning the sustained contribution of Read Aloud activities to children's literacy and socio-emotional development.

Overall, this study suggests that Read Aloud can provide a meaningful community literacy experience in which children engage with stories, develop understanding, and reflect on positive moral values. Its potential value lies not only in the reading of stories but also in the interactive processes through which children discuss, interpret, and construct meaning from the reading experience.

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