

Image Media to Improve Skills Reading for Elementary School Students

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Abstract

Reading is a fundamental skill at the elementary school level, serving as the foundation for students' intellectual and social progress. However, reality shows that students' reading ability tends to remain low due to the use of unattractive learning models and concentration barriers. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of using visual media in improving students' motivation and reading ability, both at the beginning and comprehension levels. The method used was a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) by searching the Google Scholar database between 2021 and 2025. Based on strict inclusion criteria, 10 key articles were selected for further analysis. The results showed an increasing trend in publications regarding visual media, peaking in 2025. Findings from the reviewed articles concluded that the use of visual media, whether in the form of letter cards, a series of images, or digital media such as PowerPoint animations, significantly improves students' initial reading ability and comprehension. This visual media can provide concrete representations that help students connect letters with meaningful concepts, while increasing motivation and active participation in learning. Therefore, teacher creativity in integrating visual media with innovative methods is essential to achieve optimal learning outcomes according to the characteristics of elementary school students.

Keywords: Image Media, Reading Ability, Elementary School Students

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesian education, developing language skills is a crucial aspect taught from an early age, as it forms the foundation for students' intellectual and social progress. The language skills taught in the Indonesian curriculum include reading, listening, speaking, and writing (Oktaviyanti et al., 2022). Reading is a language skill that must be mastered at the beginning of elementary school, as it forms the foundation for students' intellectual and social progress. Ideally, everyone should have reading skills, as they are essential for quickly and accurately obtaining information (Muhaimin et al., 2023). This not only improves students' reading abilities but also helps them develop literacy skills in a more holistic and meaningful way (Mahendra et al., 2025). Consistent reading activities can significantly increase intellectual capacity and broaden the scope of knowledge. Although reading is a fundamental element of life, the facts on the ground show a contradictory reality. Elementary school students' reading ability tends to be low (Indriani & Rahmadani, 2024).

This reading ability is often not achieved optimally due to various obstacles faced by students in the learning process. According to Primary (2022), reading ability is a key asset for students to continue their education to a higher level. Because books are a primary source of knowledge, children are required to be proficient readers. Students in lower grades tend to prefer playing to studying, so a more engaging and enjoyable approach is needed to encourage students to understand and learn to read (Hilaliyah, Jamaludin & Yudha, 2025). However, the lack of understanding of students about reading skills is caused by the learning

model chosen not being in accordance with students' reading abilities so that students find it difficult to understand, students' attitudes that are less enthusiastic, such as student participation in question and answer sessions, need to be improved, because currently their concentration is still often diverted during the learning process. Students' attitudes that are less enthusiastic, such as student participation in question and answer sessions, need to be improved, because currently their concentration is still often diverted during the learning process (Hoerudin, 2024).

To overcome the barrier of reading disability and increase student motivation and comprehension, educators need to implement a more interactive and engaging approach to the reading learning process. One way to help improve reading in children is by using engaging learning media. The use of learning media will significantly enhance the effectiveness of delivering the message of the learning content (Abdullah & Iye, 2022). Learning media plays an important role in encouraging teacher creativity in designing and implementing interesting and effective learning strategies (Usman & Sulistio, 2020). Learning media can also be an effective tool in helping to overcome delays in reading and writing in students, but the learning media developed must be innovative and digital media so that students can easily understand (Daeli et al., 2023).

One particularly effective type of media in this context is visual media, which can be integrated into digital approaches to make learning more engaging and easier for students to understand. Visual media is the most commonly used medium. Students tend to absorb information more easily through images than through written text. Especially if the visual media is presented in an engaging manner and adheres to appropriate design principles, it will significantly stimulate their enthusiasm for learning (Djafar, 2024). The use of visual media in learning is expected to help students understand the teacher's explanations. Therefore, teachers should be skilled at using and utilizing technology (Sukendro & Sirait, 2023). An example of a picture media that can be used to improve the reading skills of elementary school students is a picture story poster that tells a simple adventure, such as the picture sequence: (1) Ani went to the park (text: "Ani went to the park."), (2) She saw a beautiful bird (text: "She saw a beautiful bird."), (3) The bird flew high (text: "The bird flew high."), Moreover, (4) Ani went home happily (text: "Ani went home happily."). This media helps students learn to read the sequence of stories and basic vocabulary visually and enjoyably.

The use of media like this not only enhances conceptual understanding but also contributes to students' overall learning motivation. Student motivation is a crucial aspect of achieving learning success. Many students experience low learning motivation simply because they feel bored with the lessons their teachers deliver (Supriyadi & Husna, 2023). The use of learning media has a positive impact on student learning outcomes related to conceptual understanding and learning motivation. Students are more active and able to understand learning technology. Although the use of learning media provides benefits, there are several obstacles and challenges faced by teachers in implementing it (Wardani et al., 2024).

It is very important for teachers to know the characteristics of elementary school students, because they can be used as a reference in formulating learning strategies (Chistyakov et al., 2023). According to Widiyani et al., student characteristics are aspects or qualities of individual students, consisting of interests, attitudes, learning motivation, learning styles, thinking skills, and initial abilities. Characteristics of students at elementary school age include a tendency to play, be active, collaborate in groups, and have a strong preference for kinesthetic learning through direct demonstration. Therefore, the development of students' abilities in school is influenced by the learning process they undergo. The learning process will be formed based on the teacher's views and understanding of student characteristics and the nature of learning (Suroto, 2024).

One of the main objectives of this study is to evaluate whether the use of image media can increase students' motivation in learning to read and the impact on improving students' reading abilities (Setiawati et

al., 2024). This research on visual media is important because it not only explains how children absorb information when reading but also has a real impact on the development of more effective learning methods in the classroom. Through this approach, students are expected to be more enthusiastic about learning to read, even though this subject is often considered difficult and unenjoyable. By integrating elements of play and group competition through visual media, visual media titles have the potential to create interactive, fun, and challenging learning conditions, thereby increasing student engagement throughout the learning process.

METHODS

In this research, the SLR (Systematic Literature Review) method was used to find, track, and evaluate various relevant studies to answer the research questions (Istiqomah & Juansah, 2024). A systematic literature review aims to synthesize existing research findings, identify gaps in the current knowledge base, and provide a comprehensive overview of the methodologies used to improve educational practice in a selected topic (Abdullah et al., 2025).

The research implementation phase begins with planning, which involves formulating clear and specific research questions as the basis for the search. Next, a systematic literature search is conducted to identify all studies relevant to the research questions. In the study selection phase, researchers use keywords and inclusion criteria, including the year of publication and the type of research, to ensure the results meet the needs. Data extraction is then performed by gathering important information such as research design, authors, year, methods, findings, and conclusions. The next stage is a study quality assessment to ensure the validity, reliability, and relevance of each study reviewed. Data analysis is then conducted to answer the research questions by identifying patterns, consistencies, contradictions, and gaps in the literature. Finally, the results are reported in a clear, structured, and transparent manner for easy understanding by both academic and practitioner readers.



Figure 1. Stages of the Systematic Literature Review Method.

Inclusion Criteria

This study utilized the Google Scholar database as the primary source. The literature search process began with the initial keyword "Image Media." At this initial stage, the search was limited to publications between 2021 and 2025, resulting in 20,600 documents. Subsequently, a second keyword, "Reading Ability,"

was added to narrow the results, reducing the number of documents to 6,070. The search was further refined by adding a third keyword, "Elementary School Students," resulting in 2,650 documents. All documents were then rigorously screened and re-selected to obtain the most relevant and high-quality sources according to the research topic. From this selection process, 10 primary documents were obtained, which were used in this study. The following are the stages of the literature search conducted using Google Scholar.

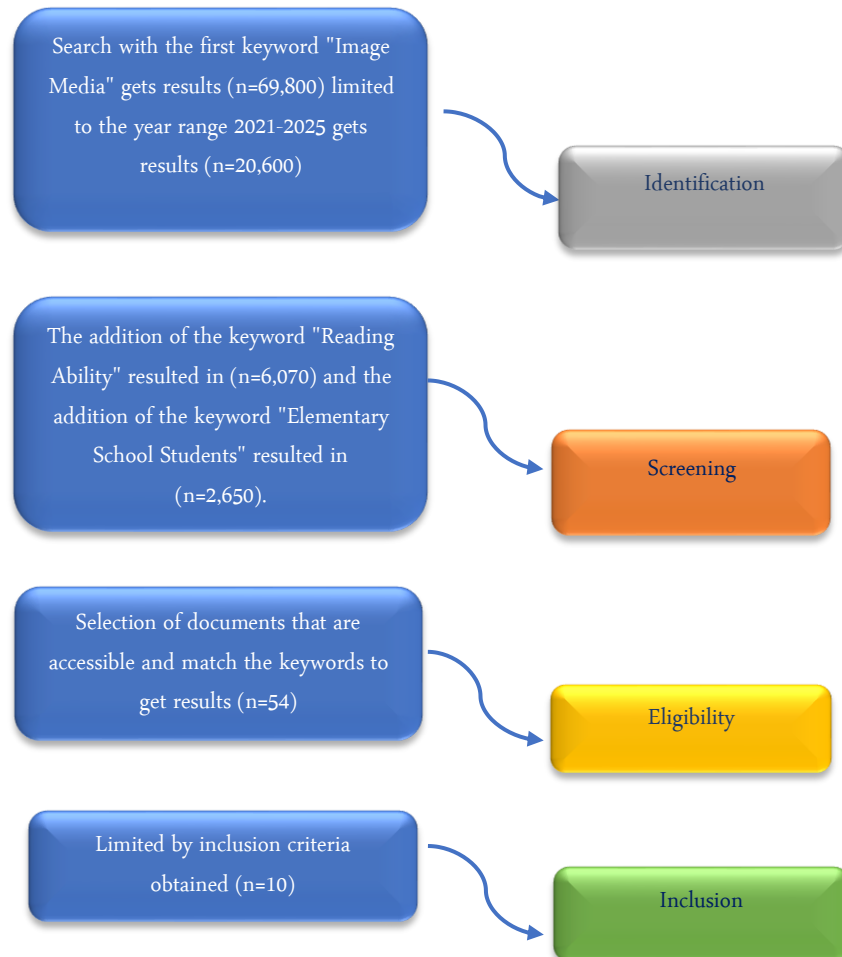


Figure 2. Inclusion criteria in the Google Scholar database.

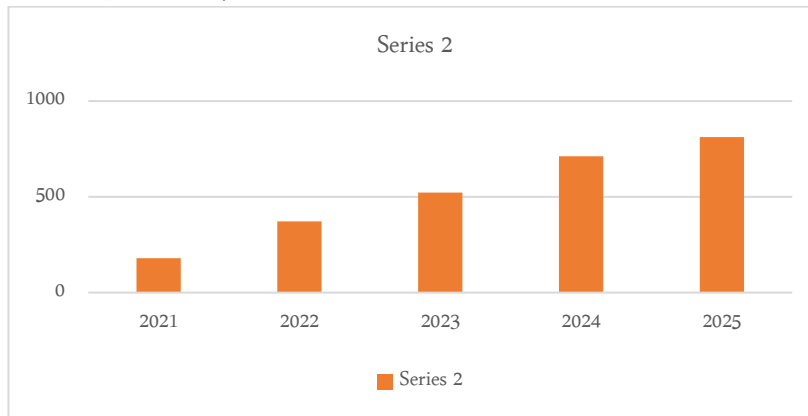
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results section is the main component of a scientific article, presenting the final data without the analysis process, including the results of hypothesis testing. The presentation of results can be strengthened by using tables or graphs to clarify the information verbally. Meanwhile, the discussion section is the most crucial element of the entire article. The purpose of the discussion is to answer the research problem, interpret the findings, connect the research findings to existing knowledge, and develop new theories or refine previously developed ones.

This study uses data covering trends in the number of articles published on the research topic and the results of analyses of these articles. All data were obtained from Google Scholar, an academic literature

search platform. Between 2021 and 2025, the number of published articles on this topic fluctuated annually, depending on the number of published studies. To clarify this pattern of change, we present the graph below depicting the annual publication dynamics.



Based on Chart 1, the development of published articles on image media to improve elementary school students' reading skills shows an increase every year. In 2021, there were 181 published documents. This figure increased to 372 documents in 2022 and 521 documents in 2023. The number of publications continued to increase in 2024 and 2025, reaching 712 and 813 documents, respectively. 2025 recorded the highest number of publications compared to previous years, which has attracted researchers to publish documents using image media to improve elementary school students' reading skills.

After presenting the trend in the number of articles published from 2021 to 2025, this study also presents the results of an analysis of the reviewed articles. These articles were selected based on specific criteria established by the authors to ensure their quality and relevance. From the selection process, 10 articles met the requirements and passed the screening and due diligence stages. The results of the review of these articles are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Results of the review of articles related to the research topic

No.	Title and author	Method	Research result
1.	Utilization of PowerPoint-Based Animated Image Media to Improve Elementary School Students' Beginning Reading Skills (Desinatalia & Ilham, 2022).	The data analysis technique in this research is descriptive qualitative.	shows that the form of initial reading learning in this school is done in a simple way, namely by writing the letters of the alphabet on the blackboard and pronouncing the letters aloud together.
2.	The Use of Image Media in Indonesian Language Learning to Improve Reading Skills in Elementary Schools (Kurniati, & Munisah, 2025).	This research uses a systematic literature review using data accessed from Google Scholar.	The results suggest that teachers who move away from "monotonous" methods toward visual-centric instruction see a marked increase in student proficiency. This validates the recommendation for schools to invest in visual literacy resources.
3.	Use of Picture Media to Improve the Descriptive	The research method used is a quasi-	The results of the study showed that the use of image media was proven

	Writing Skills of Grade III Students of SD Ketapang Indah (Safinah & Jarmini, 2025).	experimental design approach with a non-equivalent control group design.	to be effective in improving the initial reading skills of grade 1 students at SDN 1 Lemahabang.
4.	The Effect of Visual Media on Elementary School Students' Beginning Reading Ability: An Experimental Study (Kambu et al., 2025).	The method used is experimental research, with the type of data quantitative.	It was concluded that there was a significant influence of image media on the initial reading ability of grade 1 students at SD YPK VI Rafidim, Sorong City.
5.	The Use of Picture Media and Letter Cards to Improve the Beginning Reading Skills of Grade I Students at SDN Bokong 2 (Nali, 2021).	The type of research used in this study is Classroom Action Research.	Observations on student activity showed an improvement from the poor and sufficient criteria in cycle I to the good criteria in cycle II. Similarly, teacher activity in managing learning also improved to good criteria.
6.	The Directed Reading Thinking Activity Learning Model Assisted by Image Media Influences Students' Reading Comprehension Skills (Putri, 2023).	This type of research is a quasi-experimental research design with a non-equivalent control group design.	It was concluded that the DRTA learning model assisted by image media had an effect on the reading comprehension abilities of fifth-grade elementary school students.
7.	Increased Interest in Reading and Writing in Students of SB Kampung Bharu Kuala Lumpur Malaysia through Image Media (Hidayat et al., 2024).	experimental research with a quantitative approach.	This study proves that picture series media effectively improve students' early reading skills by providing visual representations that increase motivation, stimulate imagination, and help students connect letters with meaningful concepts.
8.	Application of the Synthetic Analytical Structural Method Assisted by Image Media as an Effort to Improve Elementary School Students' Beginning Reading Skills (Yunsacitra et al., 2025).	Classroom Action Research (CAR) using a qualitative approach.	The results of this study are that there was an increase in initial reading skills in grade 1 students of SDN 207/IV Jerambah Bolong after the application of the Structural Analytical Synthetic (SAS) method at each meeting in each cycle.
9.	Analysis of the Influence of Image Media on Improving Early Reading Skills in Elementary School Children (Switaningsih, 2024).	using the literature review method.	The results of this literature study indicate an improvement in elementary school students' beginning reading skills through the use of visual media. This is evidenced by analyzing eight articles that showed an average percentage increase. Therefore, the use of visual

					media significantly assists students in improving their beginning reading skills in elementary school.
10.	Pengaruh Berantuan Terhadap Membaca Permulaan Negeri 1 Tamblang (Bagiada & Laksmi, 2023).	Metode Media Gambar Dan Menulis Siswa Kelas I Sd	Sas Gambar Kemampuan Menulis	quantitative approach. Quasi-experimental research design with a non-equivalent pretest-posttest model.	This shows that the SAS method has a significant influence on the initial writing skills of first-grade students at SD Negeri 1 Tamblang.

Based on 10 articles that have been conducted and reviewed by researchers, several findings were obtained, including the following:

1. Visual Media as a Solution to Conventional Learning. Several studies have shown that simple beginning reading lessons (just writing the alphabet on a chalkboard and reciting it together) significantly increase in effectiveness when they begin integrating visual media and technology, such as PowerPoint animations.
2. Quantitatively Significant Influence. There is a significant and effective influence of image media on the beginning reading skills of first-grade elementary school students. The series of image media has been proven to help students connect letters with meaningful concepts, stimulate imagination, and increase learning motivation.
3. Collaboration of Image Media with Specific Methods. The combination of the SAS method with image media has been proven to improve early reading and writing skills in each cycle gradually. Image media is also effective in supporting the DRTA model in improving reading comprehension. The use of image media accompanied by letter cards can increase student activity and teacher performance from the "poor/sufficient" category to "good."

Discussion

The ability to read is one of the language skills that must be mastered at the beginning of education, namely, the elementary school level, because it forms the foundation for students' intellectual and social progress. Ideally, everyone should have reading skills, because reading skills are needed when someone wants to get information quickly and accurately. However, students' lack of understanding of reading skills is caused by the chosen learning model not being in accordance with students' reading abilities, making it difficult for students to understand. Students' lack of enthusiasm, such as student participation in question and answer sessions, needs to be improved, because currently their concentration is still often diverted during the learning process. Through this approach, students are expected to be more enthusiastic in learning to read, even though this subject is often considered difficult and unpleasant. By integrating elements of games and group competitions through image media, image media titles have the potential to create interactive, fun, and challenging learning conditions, thereby developing student engagement during learning activities.

Based on the results of the research (Desinatalia & ilham, 2022), the use of PowerPoint animated images has been proven to help students improve their initial reading skills. Furthermore, the research results (Kurniati, & Munisah, 2025) indicate that there is a significant influence of image media on the initial reading ability in Indonesian language learning at SD Negeri 29 Prabumulih. Research by Safinah & Jarmini shows that the use of image media has proven effective in improving the initial reading skills of grade 1 students at SDN 1 Lemahabang.

Research by [Kambu et al. \(2025\)](#). It can be concluded that there is a significant influence of image media on the initial reading ability of grade 1 students of SD YPK VI Rafidim, Sorong City the results of the study ([Nali, 2021](#)). The results of observations on student activity showed an increase from the criteria of insufficient and sufficient in cycle I to good in cycle II. Likewise, teacher activity in managing learning also increased to a good level.

Next research results ([Putri, 2023](#)) show that the DRTA learning model assisted by image media has an influence on the reading comprehension abilities of fifth-grade elementary school students. Research by [Hidayat, Karsa, & Savandha, \(2024\)](#). shows that picture series media effectively improve students' early reading skills by providing visual representations that increase motivation, stimulate imagination, and help students connect letters to meaningful concepts.

Based on research ([Yunsacitra et al., 2025](#)), the results of this study indicate that there was an increase in initial reading skills in grade 1 students of SDN 207/IV Jerambah Bolong after the application of the Structural Analytical Synthetic (SAS) method at each meeting in each cycle. Furthermore, the study ([Switaningsih, 2024](#)) The results of this literature study indicate an increase in elementary school students' early reading skills using visual media. This is proven by analyzing eight articles that show an average increase in percentage results. Thus, the use of visual media is very helpful in improving students' early reading skills in elementary school. Finally, the study ([Bagiada & Laksmi, 2023](#)) concluded that the SAS method had a significant influence on the initial writing skills of first-grade students at SD Negeri 1 Tamblang.

Based on the research results, it was concluded that the integration of image media, both in static visual formats and digital animation, was significantly effective in improving the early reading skills and basic literacy of elementary school students. The use of this media was proven to be able to optimize cognitive processes through visual representations that strengthen conceptual understanding, increase motivation, and facilitate the mastery of letter symbols compared to conventional methods. This success was increasingly consistent empirically when image media was combined with structured learning methods such as SAS (Structural Analytical Synthetic), which simultaneously improved the quality of teacher instructional interactions and student learning outcomes in a sustainable manner.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the systematic literature research presented, it can be concluded that the use of visual media is significantly effective in improving elementary school students' reading skills, both at the beginning reading level and comprehension. This media works by providing visual representations that help students connect letters with meaningful concepts, making information more easily absorbed than through writing alone. In addition to improving cognitive aspects, the integration of visuals in learning has been proven to stimulate motivation, reduce boredom, and increase active student participation in class.

Analysis of various studies shows that the effectiveness of visual media is increasingly optimal when combined with innovative methods such as the Structural Analytical Synthetic (SAS) method, the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) model, or the use of digital technology such as PowerPoint animation. The trend of publications on this topic in Indonesia also shows a rapid increase every year until 2025, reflecting the urgency of developing visual media to support the strengthening of early literacy. Therefore, teachers are expected to be creative in utilizing varied and interesting visual media to create an interactive and challenging learning atmosphere in accordance with the developmental characteristics of elementary school children.

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