

# Study, Teachers' Strategy for Fostering Reading Habits Among High School Students: A Case Study at State of Junior High School in West Lombok

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the strategies employed by English teachers to foster reading habits among eighth-grade students and examines the challenges they encounter during the teaching and learning process. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and teacher questionnaires. The findings revealed that teachers implemented four main strategies to promote students' reading habits: reading aloud, guided reading, silent reading, and providing motivation and vocabulary support. These strategies were applied adaptively, depending on students' proficiency levels and classroom conditions. Despite their effectiveness in encouraging participation and improving engagement, teachers faced several obstacles, including students' limited vocabulary, low motivation, inadequate learning media, and time constraints caused by curriculum demands. The study concludes that fostering reading habits requires not only creative and consistent teacher efforts but also strong collaboration among schools, families, and communities to provide a supportive reading environment.

**Keywords:** *Reading Habits, Reading Comprehension, Teacher Strategies*

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

According to Kulikauskien and Naujokien (2023), the constant actions that people take when they read are called reading habits. Some of these habits are how often they read, what kinds of things they read, and how interested they are in the process itself. The habits that people have are closely linked to their ability to understand and remember things. In Indonesia, where reading levels are lower compared to those in other ASEAN nations, students need to build good reading habits for them to achieve academic achievement (Soepardi, 2023). An unfortunate fact is that many communities in Indonesia don't have a strong reading culture. This can hurt students' education and limit their future opportunities. Unfortunately, students can't do well in school if they don't make reading a regular habit.

The fact that many Indonesian students don't read much is caused by several factors (Prabowo et al., 2024). The site of schools is one of these. In general, schools in cities have better access to reading materials than schools in the country. This is another thing that can change reading habits: whether the school is public or private. Another thing that matters is the age of the students, since older students are more likely to read more for school reasons. There are differences in reading habits because of these things that affect the reading habits of students from different places and types of schools.

According to Tahmidaten and Krismanto (2020), a lot of Indonesian students have trouble understanding what they read. The main reason for this is usually that they aren't sure of their reading skills. Additionally, the lack of help from teachers and parents, along with limited access to books and libraries, makes this issue even harder to resolve. Students' motivation to read may drop as a result of the lack of support they receive, which makes it

harder for them to understand what they are reading. Pitoyo (2020) says that students read less because of technology like video games and social media that can take their attention away. Many schools don't have well-stocked libraries, which makes it hard for students to get a wide range of books. When students don't think reading is enjoyable or important, it can be hard for them to develop good reading habits.

Even though it can be hard, getting students into the habit of reading is important for improving their academic performance and cognitive abilities. Reading regularly can help students understand and remember things in many subjects (Sani, 2021; Utami, 2022). It can also help them build their language and talk more clearly (Wulan & Nugrahani, 2023)". Additionally, Yotsa and Yadav (2023) found that research has demonstrated that students who regularly read do better in school as they are better able to understand new thoughts and concepts. As Wani and Ismail (2024) say, regular reading not only boosts students' confidence and problem-solving skills, but it also fosters their imagination and curiosity, two things that are necessary for doing well in school (Marhayani, 2024). Moreover, Neri et al. (2019) found that students who read a lot do very well in many subjects, such as language, science, and social studies because they are better able to think critically and really engage with what they are learning.

A lot of what happens in the classroom affects how students learn to read. There are things that teachers can do that will make students love reading. Some of these tactics are reading materials that are interesting, lessons that are interactive, and encouraging students to read on their own. Finandiaty et al. (2022) say that these strategies might help students improve their language and grammar. Gee (1999) said that regular reading improves language skills generally, which fits with this point of view. It takes a lot of work from teachers to build a strong reading culture in schools, which can be good for students' intellectual and social growth. Furthermore, Marwoto (2010) stresses how important education is for making society better and acknowledges that teachers are very important in helping students do well in school.

The goal of this study is to find out how the methods teachers use affect the reading habits of students at SMPN 1 Narmada. Initial notes were made in November 2024, and they showed that students' reading habits were different in different ways. These reading habits were affected by many things, such as family history, the ease of access to books, and school activities. If you want to find out how teachers can get their students to read more, this school is a good place to look because it is like any other Indonesian high school. The results of this study could give us important information that can be used in other schools in Indonesia. This could help students learn more and do better in school according to the results.

Previous studies have looked into the link between reading regularly and doing well in school in many areas, including language, writing, and understanding what you read. People named Husnaini et al. (2021), for example, found a weakly negative link between reading habits and vocabulary results at SMA Unismuh Makassar. This finding shows that reading more does not always lead to better vocabulary. In the same way, Noor et al. (2022) found a slightly negative link between college students' reading habits and their writing skills. Based on this result, reading habits alone do not guarantee good writing skills. Sartika and Afifah (2023), on the other hand, found a strong, positive link between reading habits and reading ability at SMA Negeri 1 OKU Timur. This result shows that students who read more often tend to have better comprehension skills. According to Abid et al. (2023), there was a moderately positive link between reading habits, study skills, and English results among secondary school students in Pakistan. This result makes the point even stronger that reading habits are important for doing well in school overall.

The point of this study is to look into the connection between reading habits and reading comprehension at SMPN 1 Narmada in order to fill in the gaps left by previous research. In contrast to earlier research, which mostly looked at older students or students in college, this study will look into how reading habits affect students' academic performance during a very important time in their college careers. This study aims to explore better

understanding of how reading habits promoted by the teachers affect students' reading comprehension. These variables differentiate this research from the previous studies conducted by another researcher regarding this topic.

## METHOD

### Subjects of the Research

This study took place during the 2024/2025 academic year. The school served as the research site because it represented a typical EFL learning context where English teachers faced various challenges in developing students' reading habits. The environment provided an authentic setting for exploring teachers' instructional practices, strategies, and reflections related to reading habit formation.

The researcher selected three English teachers using purposive sampling. This sampling technique was applied to ensure that the participants possess characteristics relevant to the focus of the study (Patton, 2015). The selected teachers meet the following criteria: (1) They currently teach English reading lessons in Grade VIII. (2) They actively implement strategies to foster students' reading habits. (3) They agree to participate in interviews and classroom observations.

Additionally, classroom observations were conducted during English reading lessons to support the data triangulation process. The teachers' participation provided valuable insights into how reading activities were designed, implemented, and evaluated in real classroom situations, allowing the researcher to understand both the strategies employed and the contextual factors influencing them.

### Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed qualitatively using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). This model consists of three interrelated processes: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. These processes occurred continuously throughout the research to ensure that the analysis remains grounded in the data collected from interviews, observations, and questionnaires.

During the data condensation stage, the researcher organized, simplified, and selected the most relevant data from transcripts, observation notes, and questionnaire responses. The raw data were coded according to emerging themes related to teachers' strategies, challenges, and reflections on fostering reading habits. This step helped the researcher focus on patterns that answer the research questions while maintaining the authenticity of participants' perspectives.

In the data display stage, the researcher presented the coded data in organized forms such as tables, charts, and thematic matrices. These displays facilitated interpretation by allowing the researcher to identify connections and differences among participants' responses and observed classroom practices. Through this process, the researcher compared what teachers report in interviews with what is observed in the classroom to ensure analytical consistency.

Finally, in the conclusion drawing and verification stage, the researcher interpreted the meaning of the data and formulates key findings. Conclusions were drawn by continuously referring back to the data, ensuring that interpretations accurately represent the teachers' voices and contextual realities. The researcher verified these conclusions through member checking, where participants review the summarized findings to confirm their accuracy and credibility.

### Data Collection Methods

This study employed three main techniques of data collection, namely interview, observation, and questionnaire. The combination of these three instruments allowed the researcher to gather rich, triangulated data that reflect both the teachers' perspectives and their actual classroom practices. Each method served a distinct but complementary purpose in addressing the research questions.

### Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the three English teachers to explore their experiences, strategies, and challenges in fostering students' reading habits. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility, enabling the researcher to ask follow-up questions and probe for deeper insights based on participants' responses. The interview questions focused on several themes, including teachers' perceptions of reading habits, the instructional strategies they use, the difficulties they encounter, and their reflections on classroom practices. All interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis with participants' consent.

### Observation

Classroom observations were carried out to obtain firsthand information about the teachers' real teaching practices and students' engagement during reading activities. The researcher observed how reading strategies are implemented in class, including the use of materials, teacher-student interactions, and the overall classroom atmosphere. Field notes were taken throughout the sessions to record verbal and non-verbal behaviors relevant to the study. Observations were conducted during English reading lessons to validate and complement the information gathered from interviews and questionnaires, thus ensuring the reliability of the data through triangulation.

### Questionnaire

A descriptive questionnaire was distributed to teachers to support the interview and observation data. The questionnaire contained several open-ended and short-answer questions designed to obtain general information about their teaching experiences, perceptions of students' reading motivation, and the literacy activities conducted in their classrooms. The use of this questionnaire helped the researcher to confirm recurring themes and cross-check information obtained through other instruments.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Teaching Strategies in Fostering Students' Reading Habits

This section presents the strategies used by English teachers in fostering students' reading habits. The data was taken from interviews, classroom observations, and questionnaires.

Five theoretical strategies were expected: (1) creating a reading-friendly environment, (2) read-aloud sessions, (3) collaborative learning and peer influence, (4) independent and sustained silent reading, and (5) teacher involvement and motivation. However, only four strategies were found in the actual data. The strategy related to creating a reading-friendly environment (RFE-C) was not observed or reported by participants, as the school lacked formal facilities or programs dedicated to reading promotion.

The teachers' statements during interviews were consistent with classroom observations, and questionnaire results further confirmed the frequency of their use.

Table 1. Teaching Strategies

No	Teaching Strategy	Theme	Code	F	%
1	Read-Aloud Sessions	Reading Aloud Modeling	RA-M	32	32%
2	Guided reading	Guided Reading Scaffolding	GR-S	24	24%
3	Independent Reading and Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)	Silent Reading Independence	SR-I	20	20%
4	Teacher involvement and motivation	Motivational and Linguistic Support	TI-M	24	24%

Note: F = frequency of occurrences recorded or mentioned across interviews, observations, and questionnaires.

The data show that Reading Aloud was the most frequently used strategy, as teachers relied heavily on it to model correct pronunciation and meaning. Unlike what was proposed in theory, the data did not show any indication that teachers intentionally created a reading-



friendly environment. No school-wide literacy program, reading corner, or visual reading materials were observed during classroom visits, and none of the teachers mentioned such initiatives in their interviews. The lack of RFE-C evidence in this study may be due to limited facilities, time constraints, and institutional priorities that focus more on exam preparation than literacy development.

This finding highlights a gap between theory and practice, suggesting that while the framework recommends environmental support, the local school context does not yet provide the infrastructure to realize it.

### Reading Aloud Modelling (RA-M)

Reading aloud was the most frequently observed activity, with 32 occurrences; equivalent to 32 % of all classroom strategies. It appeared in every class and was most dominant in Teacher A's lessons, though Teachers B and C also used it as warm-up or pronunciation practice.

Table 2. Reading Aloud Strategy

No	Activity	F	%
1	Teacher reads aloud while students follow silently	11	11%
2	Students repeat after teacher (choral reading)	8	8%
3	Teacher pauses to translate and explain vocabulary	7	7%
4	Teacher checks individual pronunciation	6	6%
Total			32%

During Day 1, Teacher A read "My Daily Reading Time" expressively, emphasising stress and intonation. Students repeated in chorus, some smiling as they echoed her rhythm. She frequently translated key words (habit, usually, improve) into Bahasa Indonesia and asked comprehension checks. Teacher B used shorter read-alouds to open the class, while Teacher C read one paragraph before shifting to independent reading.

Interview excerpts illustrated their intentions:

*"When I read first, they listen carefully and imitate the sound."* (Teacher A)

*"Reading aloud makes them less afraid of English texts."* (Teacher B)

Questionnaire data indicated that 92 % of teachers agreed reading aloud improves pronunciation and 83 % allocate weekly oral-reading sessions. Observation notes revealed that weaker students relied on the teacher's translation, yet engagement remained high.

The pattern corresponds to the theoretical framework of Read-Aloud Sessions discussed by Lubis (2024) and Guo (2023). Code RA-M captures how teachers modeled reading as an instructional and motivational tool. In line with theory, reading aloud not only supports pronunciation and fluency but also establishes a more engaging and interactive classroom atmosphere. As Guo (2023) argues, teacher modeling during reading sessions provides scaffolding that helps students internalize proper rhythm, tone, and comprehension strategies. Therefore, the findings confirm that the read-aloud strategy used by teachers reflects a strong alignment with the theoretical perspective of building reading confidence through auditory modeling.

### Guided Reading Scaffolding (GR-S)

Guided reading occurred 24 times, accounting for 24 % of all recorded strategies. All teachers used it, but Teacher B applied it most systematically to guide students through texts and check understanding.

Table 3. Guided Reading Strategy

No	Activity	F	%
1	Teacher reads paragraph-by-paragraph with students	9	9%
2	Students underline difficult words and share meanings	5	5%
3	Teacher provides contextual examples and translation	6	6%
4	Pair or group discussion for comprehension questions	4	4%

Total 24%

On day 2, Teacher B used "Reading About Hobbies." She read each paragraph slowly, asked "What is the writer's hobby?" and let students discuss in pairs. Students highlighted unknown vocabulary (collecting, painting, gardening) and helped one another translate. Teacher A also used guided questions after reading aloud, while Teacher C guided reflection after silent reading.

Interview data revealed:

*"If I don't guide them, they stop reading halfway." (Teacher B)*

*"Guided questions keep them thinking." (Teacher C)*

Questionnaire results showed 86 % of teachers adjust texts to student ability and 71 % use additional materials. Observation notes confirmed that students became more collaborative, often switching between English and Indonesian to negotiate meaning. This finding corresponds with the Collaborative Learning and Peer Influence theory explained by Guo (2023) and Suryaningrat & Syahrial (2021). Code GR-S represents guided reading as a scaffolding process that facilitates comprehension through cooperation. The teacher's role as a facilitator aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learning occurs through assisted interaction. By allowing students to work together while receiving guidance, teachers enhanced comprehension, motivation, and engagement. These results confirm that guided reading reflects the theoretical principle that social collaboration strengthens understanding and supports the development of reading habits in EFL contexts.

### Silent Reading Independence (SR-I)

Silent reading was observed 20 times (20%) and was most strongly associated with Teacher C, although Teachers A and B also applied it in shorter sessions after guided reading. The strategy was designed to develop students' concentration, self-regulation, and independent reading habits. During these sessions, students were encouraged to read quietly for several minutes without interruption, after which they sometimes shared summaries or reflections about the text. This approach allowed learners to engage with English materials at their own pace and practice comprehension independently.

Table 4. Silent Reading Strategy

No	Activity	F	%
1	Students read independently for 10-15 minutes	9	9%
2	Teacher monitors and offers minimal help	4	4%
3	Students share story summaries verbally	4	4%
4	Students write reflections or moral messages	3	3%
Total			20%

On day 3, Teacher C used "The Lost Wallet." Students read quietly for ten minutes; the classroom was calm and focused. Afterwards, students retold the story and wrote sentences like "We must be honest." Teacher B and A added short silent sessions to reinforce understanding.

Interview statements emphasised benefits:

*"They learn patience and self-control through quiet reading." (Teacher B)*

*"It helps them enjoy English texts without pressure." (Teacher C)*

Questionnaire data recorded 88 % of teachers using silent reading regularly and 81 % observing improved focus and confidence. Observation notes described how even less motivated students remained quiet and engaged, suggesting a developing habit of concentration.

This finding aligns closely with the theoretical framework of Independent and Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) described by Nafi'ah et al. (2025) and Wotsa & Yadav (2023). Code SR-I captures students' gradual movement toward self-directed learning and intrinsic motivation. The teachers' approach of minimal intervention corresponds with the theory's basis on learner autonomy, where students develop focus and persistence through uninterrupted reading time. As Nafi'ah et al. (2025) explain, regular silent reading promotes both fluency and enjoyment, transforming reading from an academic requirement into a

personal habit. Therefore, the implementation of silent reading demonstrates a practical realization of the SSR theory in an EFL classroom context.

### Motivational and Linguistic Support (TI-M)

The combined strategy of motivation and vocabulary support appeared 24 times (24 %). Teachers used praise, rewards, and word explanations to sustain students' interest and overcome lexical barriers.

Table 5. Teacher Involvement and Motivation Strategy

No	Activity	F	%
1	Teacher gives praise and positive feedback	7	7%
2	Vocabulary explanation through translation	6	6%
3	Vocabulary examples through context or sentences	5	5%
4	Reward system, games, or reading challenges	6	6%
Total			24%

Observation showed Teacher A motivating students with phrases like "Every word you read is progress." Teacher B awarded extra points to active readers, and Teacher C used moral quotes such as "Reading is your window to the world." These actions prompted visible enthusiasm and applause.

Vocabulary teaching was systematic: teachers clarified 10–15 words per lesson using translation (Teacher A), repetition (Teacher B), and context clues (Teacher C). Students often wrote new words in notebooks for review.

Interview data supported this pattern:

*"If they know the meaning, they don't fear reading anymore." (Teacher A)*

*"Praise and simple games keep them interested." (Teacher B)*

Questionnaire results showed 84 % of teachers give vocabulary support regularly and 79 % use motivational techniques. Observation confirmed that motivation was a powerful driver of participation and classroom energy.

This finding corresponds closely with the theoretical concept of Teacher Involvement and Motivation as discussed by Laksamana & Ashadi (2020) and Madjidi (2024). Code TI-M illustrates how teachers' affective engagement and instructional support jointly foster students' persistence and self-efficacy in reading. As Laksamana & Ashadi (2020) explain, teacher empathy and constructive feedback are essential components of sustained motivation, helping transform extrinsic encouragement into intrinsic interest. Although the teachers' vocabulary assistance was not identified as a separate theoretical category, it naturally fits within this dimension as part of their motivational and facilitative role.

### Challenges Faced by Teachers in Fostering Students' Reading Habits

Despite teachers' continuous efforts to foster reading habits, several challenges were identified from the triangulated data. Based on the interviews, classroom observations, and questionnaire responses, the difficulties were grouped into four main categories: 1) limited vocabulary and low comprehension, 2) low student motivation and inconsistent reading habits, 3) lack of learning media and reading resources, and 4) time constraints and curriculum pressure. The frequency and proportion of each category are shown in Table 4.1.2

Table 6. Challenges Faced by Teachers in Fostering Students' Reading Habits

No	Activity	Theme	Code	F	%
1	Limited vocabulary and low comprehension	Linguistic and Cognitive Constraints	LV-C	30	30%
2	Low student motivation and inconsistent reading habits	Affective and Behavioral Barriers	LM-IR	25	25%
3	Lack of learning media and reading resources	Environmental and Material Limitations	LM-RR	23	23%

4	Time constraints and curriculum pressure	Institutional and Instructional Factors	TC-P	22	22%
Total				100%	

The analysis reveals that the most dominant challenge faced by teachers was limited vocabulary and low comprehension (30%), followed by low student motivation and inconsistent reading habits (25%). Other recurring issues include the lack of learning media and resources (23%) and time constraints due to curriculum pressure (22%). These challenges reflect how linguistic, affective, environmental, and institutional factors collectively hinder the establishment of consistent reading habits among EFL learners.

### Limited Vocabulary and Low Comprehension (LV-C)

The most frequent challenge, recorded 30 times (30 %), was students' limited vocabulary and their difficulty comprehending English texts.

Teachers reported that students often struggled to recognise basic words, which slowed down reading activities and required repeated explanations.

Table 7. Limited Vocabulary and Low Comprehension Challenges

No	Challenges	F	%
1	Students rely heavily on translation	10	10%
2	Students unable to guess meaning from context	8	8%
3	Frequent need for teacher vocabulary explanation	7	7%
4	Difficulty understanding long sentences	5	5%
Total		30%	

Observation data confirmed that vocabulary gaps often interrupted lessons. During Day 2, when Teacher B used the text "Reading About Hobbies", students repeatedly asked, "Miss, what is collecting?" and "What is gardening?" Teacher A spent significant time translating unfamiliar words like usually and habit, while Teacher C encouraged guessing meaning from context but many still preferred translation.

In interviews, all teachers identified vocabulary as a primary obstacle:

*"They always stop when they see new words." (Teacher A)*

*"Without vocabulary, reading becomes tiring for them." (Teacher C)*

Questionnaire results supported this, showing 88 % agreement that lack of vocabulary hinders reading comprehension and 81 % that teachers spend extra time explaining meanings. This finding corresponds with the theoretical framework on linguistic and cognitive constraints discussed by Guo (2023) and Pitoyo (2020), which highlights that vocabulary mastery is a critical component of reading comprehension and habit formation. Code LV-C represents this barrier, showing that insufficient vocabulary knowledge directly limits students' ability to engage with texts. As Nuraeni (2018) explains, learners with restricted lexical access tend to read mechanically without full understanding, which discourages voluntary reading practice. Consequently, the challenge of limited vocabulary and comprehension not only slows academic progress but also weakens the long-term development of reading habits among EFL students.

### Low Student Motivation and Inconsistent Reading Habits (LM-IR)

The second challenge, occurring 25 times (25 %), was students' lack of motivation and irregular engagement with reading tasks. Many students perceived reading as difficult or boring, resulting in inconsistent participation.

Table 8. Low Student Motivation and Inconsistent Reading Habits Challenges

No	Challenges	F	%
1	Students quickly lose focus during reading	9	9%
2	Students see reading as a task, not enjoyment	7	7%
3	Irregular home or self-reading practice	5	5%
4	Lack of reading confidence	4	4%
Total		25%	

Observation data revealed that during reading sessions, several students stopped midway, chatted quietly, or looked around when texts became challenging. Teachers had to repeatedly remind them to concentrate. Teacher B noted in interviews:



*"Some students are interested at the beginning, but after five minutes, their attention drops."*

Teacher C added:

*"They rarely read at home; reading is something they only do in class."*

Questionnaire findings showed 79 % of teachers agreed that students lack motivation to read independently, and 74 % reported that only a few students voluntarily read outside class.

This challenge corresponds with the theoretical dimension of affective and behavioral barriers in fostering reading habits, as discussed by Krashen (2004) and Nuraeni (2018). Code LM-IR captures the lack of intrinsic motivation that prevents students from voluntarily engaging with reading materials. According to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (2004), emotional factors such as anxiety, boredom, or disinterest can inhibit input processing and comprehension. Likewise, Nuraeni (2018) emphasizes that without consistent exposure and positive emotion toward reading, learners fail to develop sustainable reading habits. The findings in this study therefore highlight the need for motivational reinforcement and more engaging reading materials to cultivate students' internal drive to read independently and regularly.

### **Lack of Learning Media and Reading Resources (LM-RR)**

The third challenge, recorded 23 times (23 %), concerned insufficient access to learning media and reading materials. Teachers often relied solely on textbooks and photocopied passages, with no visual aids or digital tools to support reading comprehension.

Table 9. Lack of learning media and reading resources challenges

No	Challenges	F	%
1	Absence of visual aids (charts, posters)	7	7%
2	Limited number of English books in school library	6	6%
3	No access to digital or multimedia reading tools	5	5%
4	Texts too difficult or outdated	5	5%
Total			23%

Observation notes from Day 1-3 confirmed that the classroom environment contained only blackboards and basic furniture, with no English posters or reading corners.

Teacher A stated in interviews:

*"We have only textbooks. Students often get bored with the same material."*

Teacher B added:

*"Sometimes I bring printed texts from the internet, but it's not enough."*

Questionnaire data indicated 82 % of teachers lacked access to sufficient reading media, and 76 % believed that the absence of visual support reduces students' comprehension. This finding aligns with the theoretical concept of environmental and material limitations discussed by Guo (2023) and Harmer (2007), which emphasizes that the quality and variety of instructional resources greatly influence students' reading engagement. Code LM-RR represents the external limitations that hinder teachers from providing diverse and stimulating reading experiences. According to Harmer (2007), a rich reading environment, supported by accessible materials and media plays a vital role in promoting reading fluency and motivation. In the case of SMPN 1 Narmada, however, limited resources and the absence of media integration constrained teachers' ability to implement theory-based, learner-centered reading instruction effectively.

### **Time Constraints and Curriculum Pressure (TC-P)**

The final challenge, recorded 22 times (22 %), involved insufficient class time for reading activities due to curriculum demands and exam-oriented teaching. Teachers reported difficulty balancing reading practice with grammar, writing, and test preparation.

Table 10. Time Constraints and Curriculum Pressure Challenges

No	Challenges	F	%
1	Absence of visual aids (charts, posters)	7	7%

2	Limited number of English books in school library	6	6%
3	No access to digital or multimedia reading tools	5	5%
4	Texts too difficult or outdated	4	5%
Total			22%

Observation notes revealed that lessons often began late or were shortened by school events, leaving minimal time for reading reflection.

During interviews, teachers explained:

*"Reading takes more time than grammar, but exams don't test it directly." (Teacher A)*

*"Sometimes I want to give more reading practice, but the schedule is too tight." (Teacher C)*

Questionnaire results showed 78 % of teachers feel constrained by the syllabus and 73 % admitted they reduce reading sessions during exam periods.

This challenge corresponds with the theoretical dimension of institutional and instructional factors discussed by Laksamana and Ashadi (2020) and Madjdi (2024). Code TC-P represents the external constraints that limit teachers' pedagogical flexibility. According to Laksamana and Ashadi (2020), curriculum demands and examination systems often prioritize measurable outcomes, leaving little space for extensive reading practices. Similarly, Guo (2023) highlights that time pressure is one of the most common institutional barriers to fostering sustainable reading routines. Therefore, while teachers recognized the importance of reading habit development, structural limitations and curriculum design prevented them from integrating these activities consistently into their teaching schedule.

## Discussion

The findings from this study reveal a comprehensive picture of how English teachers attempted to foster students' reading habits while simultaneously facing a range of pedagogical and institutional challenges. The results demonstrate both the adaptability of teachers in applying reading strategies and the persistent barriers that limit the sustainability of reading habit formation in the EFL classroom.

### Teachers' Strategies in Fostering Reading Habits

The findings show that teachers employed four main strategies to foster students' reading habits: Reading Aloud Modeling (RA-M), Guided Reading Scaffolding (GR-S), Silent Reading Independence (SR-I), and Teacher Involvement and Motivation (TI-M). These strategies are consistent with the theoretical model of reading habit development proposed by Guo (2023), Lubis (2024), and Wotsa and Yadav (2023), which emphasize interactive, independent, and motivational approaches to literacy learning.

The most dominant strategy, Reading Aloud Modeling (RA-M), reflects the role of the teacher as a model for pronunciation, rhythm, and expression. This aligns with Lubis (2024), who states that reading aloud enhances students' phonological awareness and builds confidence in decoding English texts. Similarly, Guo (2023) highlights that reading aloud provides scaffolding for learners to connect sound, meaning, and fluency. The frequent use of this method indicates that teachers prioritized auditory and visual modeling as an entry point to reading comprehension.

The second key strategy, Guided Reading Scaffolding (GR-S), demonstrates how teachers promoted comprehension through peer discussion and collaborative learning. This finding supports Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory and Suryaningrat and Syahrial's (2021) findings that guided reading encourages cooperation and peer influence in comprehension-building. Through interactive questioning and shared interpretation, teachers helped students progress within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), enabling them to learn from both the teacher and their peers.

The third strategy, Silent Reading Independence (SR-I), reveals teachers' efforts to nurture autonomous reading behavior. Consistent with the Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) model proposed by Nafi'ah et al. (2025), this approach fosters concentration, intrinsic motivation, and reading fluency through consistent independent reading time. The data show

that teachers used silent reading not only to build focus but also to develop moral reflection, indicating a localized adaptation of SSR in the Indonesian context.

Finally, Teacher Involvement and Motivation (TI-M) emerged as an affective and instructional factor in maintaining reading engagement. This finding corresponds to Laksamana and Ashadi (2020) and Madjdi (2024), who argue that teacher empathy and encouragement are crucial for sustaining learners' motivation. Teachers' praise, feedback, and emotional support served to reduce anxiety and build positive reading attitudes. Although vocabulary guidance was not listed as a separate theoretical strategy in Chapter II, the teachers' inclusion of it within their motivational role shows a contextual adaptation of theory into practice.

However, it is important to note that one theoretical category, Creating a Reading-Friendly Environment (RFE-C) was not found in the data. This absence reflects the limited infrastructure, lack of school-wide literacy programs, and minimal access to English reading materials. The gap between theory and practice indicates that while teachers internalized individual strategies, environmental and institutional support for reading culture remains underdeveloped.

### **Challenges Faced by Teachers**

The findings indicate that teachers faced four major challenges: Limited Vocabulary and Low Comprehension (LV-C), Low Student Motivation and Inconsistent Reading Habits (LM-IR), Lack of Learning Media and Reading Resources (LM-RR), and Time Constraints and Curriculum Pressure (TC-P). These challenges represent interconnected linguistic, affective, environmental, and institutional barriers that align with previous research on reading difficulties in EFL settings.

The most prevalent issue, Limited Vocabulary and Low Comprehension (LV-C), supports Guo (2023) and Pitoyo (2020), who emphasize that insufficient vocabulary limits comprehension and reading confidence. Students' dependence on translation observed in this study confirms Nuraeni's (2018) argument that poor lexical knowledge leads to mechanical reading rather than meaningful engagement. This linguistic limitation directly affects students' ability to practice independent reading, thereby impeding the formation of consistent reading habits.

The second challenge, Low Student Motivation and Inconsistent Reading Habits (LM-IR), aligns with Krashen's (2004) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that motivation, attitude, and emotional factors significantly influence reading comprehension. As observed, students only read when required, which corresponds to Nuraeni's (2018) claim that reading habit development relies heavily on intrinsic motivation. The lack of personal interest in reading leads to irregular engagement and prevents literacy from becoming part of students' learning identity.

The third challenge, Lack of Learning Media and Reading Resources (LM-RR), corroborates Guo (2023) and Harmer (2007), who argue that a resource-rich environment is essential for sustaining reading interest. The reliance on textbooks as the only learning material reflects an environmental limitation that reduces students' exposure to diverse reading input. Without accessible or engaging resources, teachers are unable to apply theory-based reading strategies effectively, resulting in repetitive and less stimulating lessons.

Lastly, Time Constraints and Curriculum Pressure (TC-P) represent institutional and instructional barriers that affect teachers' ability to sustain reading activities. This finding supports Laksamana and Ashadi (2020) and Guo (2023), who highlight that exam-oriented education systems and rigid curricula often limit teachers' flexibility in implementing reading-focused lessons. The focus on test preparation rather than literacy development restricts opportunities for extensive reading and reflective activities in class.

Overall, the findings reveal that teachers' strategies and challenges are deeply interconnected. The implementation of effective reading strategies often coincided with the emergence of challenges that limited their consistency. For instance, while Reading Aloud (RA-M) and Guided Reading (GR-S) encouraged participation, they were often hindered by

Limited Vocabulary (LV-C) and Low Motivation (LM-IR). Similarly, Silent Reading (SR-I) required both time and resources, which were restricted by Curriculum Pressure (TC-P) and Lack of Media (LM-RR).

These interrelations reflect the dual reality of teaching in resource-limited EFL contexts: teachers demonstrate strong agency and creativity but operate within structural and contextual constraints. This aligns with Biesta's (2015) notion of teacher agency, which highlights how educators navigate between professional ideals and institutional realities. The overall findings therefore suggest that successful reading habit formation requires not only teacher innovation but also systemic support, including adequate materials, time allocation, and school-level literacy programs. In line with Guo (2023), effective reading instruction depends on an integrated approach that addresses linguistic, affective, and environmental factors simultaneously.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research conducted, which investigated English teachers' strategies to foster students' reading habits and the challenges they faced during the teaching and learning process, the following conclusions can be drawn: The teachers applied four main strategies to promote students' reading habits: reading aloud, guided reading, silent reading, and providing motivation and vocabulary support. These strategies were implemented adaptively, depending on the students' proficiency levels and classroom situations. The reading aloud technique helped students become familiar with pronunciation and sentence rhythm, while guided reading allowed teachers to scaffold comprehension through explanation and discussion. Silent reading activities encouraged students to develop independent reading habits, and motivational strategies combined with vocabulary reinforcement to help sustain students' interest and confidence. Despite the simplicity of these strategies, they proved effective in creating a more positive classroom environment for reading. The teachers' flexibility and creativity played a central role in making reading activities accessible for students with limited vocabulary and exposure to English. However, the strategies' impact remained limited because students rarely continued reading practices outside the classroom, and the absence of varied materials restricted the potential for long-term literacy growth. Teachers encountered several persistent challenges in promoting reading habits among students. The most prominent was students' limited vocabulary and comprehension, which made it difficult for them to understand reading materials without translation. Low motivation also remained a major barrier; most students only read when instructed by the teacher and lacked intrinsic interest in reading English texts. The school also faced a shortage of reading media, visual aids, and library resources, which prevented teachers from introducing more engaging materials. Moreover, time constraints and curriculum demands often forced teachers to focus on exam preparation rather than sustained reading practice.

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