



The Influence of Flash Card Media in Overcoming Reading Difficulties of First Grade Elementary School Students

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of flash card media in overcoming reading difficulties of first grade elementary school students. This study is a quantitative study with an experimental research type with the type of One Group Pretest-Posttest Design (initial test-final test single group). The population in this study amounted to 81 people with a total sample of 27 people. Determination of the research sample used the Purposive Sampling technique. The results of the study, based on the data obtained from the pretest results of the effect of flash card media in overcoming reading difficulties of elementary school students and the frequency distribution data in the appendix can be described as follows: the average value of students is 64.40; Variance = 20.59; Standard Deviation (SD) = 4.54; maximum value = 73; minimum value = 55, with a range of values (Range) = 18. While the data obtained from the posttest results of the effect of flash card media in overcoming reading difficulties of elementary school students can be described as follows: the average value of students is 81.57; Variance = 24.63; Standard Deviation (SD) = 5.12; maximum value = 80; minimum value = 62, with a range of values (Range) = 18. The Independent Sample t-test in overcoming reading difficulties of grade I Elementary School students is known to be 2.973 and 2.05 so that $T_{count} > T_{table}$. Based on these data, it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted so that it can be concluded that there is an influence of flash card media in overcoming reading difficulties of grade I Elementary School students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental activity that plays a very important role in the learning process and the development of students' intellectual abilities. (Munthe et al., 2023) Reading activities are not just pronouncing words from written texts, but more than that, they include the process of understanding the meaning contained in the text and capturing the message that the author wants to convey. Reading is a window to open a broad and deep horizon of knowledge. In the context of education, reading is a basic skill that is the foundation for achieving other competencies. According to Choirul Huda. (2024), reading for students functions as the main means to recognize, understand, and apply the knowledge gained in school. (Huda, 2024) This confirms that reading is not only a linguistic skill, but also a critical thinking skill. Thus, reading plays a

role as a primary tool in the process of accumulating and filtering complex information. Without good reading skills, students will have difficulty understanding the various concepts of the lessons taught. Therefore, reading skills must be instilled early on so that students can follow learning effectively. Targeted reading activities can be a solid foundation in building lifelong learning skills. ([Maghfiroh et al., 2019](#))

In today's modern society, reading skills are a primary requirement for someone to be able to follow the development of science and technology. ([Adisaputro, 2020](#)) By reading, a person can access information from various fields ranging from science, history, culture, to social development. In this case, reading acts as a bridge between humans and the world of knowledge that continues to develop. In line with this, Farr, stated that "reading is the heart of education" or reading is the heart of education. This statement shows that the entire educational process is highly dependent on students' reading skills. Without adequate reading skills, students will face major obstacles in following the teaching and learning process. Someone who cannot read well will have difficulty understanding teacher instructions, textbook content, or other information. Therefore, reading is not only important in the context of school, but also in everyday life. This skill is an important provision for exploring the world of knowledge and becoming an intelligent citizen. Therefore, learning to read must be a top priority in basic education. ([Aprilia et al., 2021](#))

However, the reality on the ground shows that the reading ability of students in Indonesia is still in the low category. This condition is reflected in the results of an international study conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2022. The results were announced on December 5, 2023, and showed that Indonesia was only ranked 68th out of all participating countries. The reading score obtained was 371, far below the international average. This figure shows a large gap in the reading literacy skills of Indonesian students compared to other countries. This is certainly a serious concern for all stakeholders in the world of education. Moreover, at the elementary education level, reading skills are the foundation for learning at the next level. These low results indicate that many students do not yet have good basic reading skills. This condition can have an impact on their overall academic abilities. Therefore, concrete steps are needed to improve students' reading literacy from an early age. ([Azkiya & Ridhuan, 2023](#))

Similar conditions were also found in the results of observations conducted by researchers at SD Muhammadiyah 18 Medan, especially in class IC. This observation was conducted on Monday, February 12, 2024, to identify students' reading abilities. The results showed that most students still had difficulty in reading. Of the 27 students who took the initial reading test, 17 students were declared to have difficulty, which means around 62% of the total students in the class. This data is very worrying because it shows that more than half of the students have not mastered basic reading skills optimally. This difficulty hinders the learning process and understanding of other subject matter. Without good reading skills, students will continue to lag behind in learning in class. This problem needs to be addressed immediately so that it does not have a further impact on their academic development. Therefore, an effective and sustainable solution is needed to improve students' reading abilities. Teachers and schools must work together to find the best strategy to help students overcome these difficulties. ([Juhaeni et al., 2022](#))

Various factors are the cause of the low reading ability of students in the class. Technically, some students still have difficulty in distinguishing letters that have similar shapes such as F and V, M and N, and P and Q. In addition, many students have not been able to recognize and spell letters that are rarely used such as Q, V, W, and Z. This error has an impact on their ability to compose and recognize words correctly. Not only that, students are also not able to pay attention to punctuation marks properly, which makes it difficult for them to understand the meaning of the reading. Another difficulty is low concentration during the learning process. These factors indicate that reading barriers do not only come from cognitive aspects, but also from visual aspects and student concentration. In the long term, this can have an

impact on decreasing learning motivation. Therefore, a fun and targeted learning approach is needed. Teachers need to understand the characteristics and needs of students to design appropriate learning strategies. ([Adini et al., 2023](#))

In addition to internal factors, there are also external factors that contribute to students' low reading ability. One of the significant external factors is the lack of learning media that supports the reading learning process. Many students do not get visual aids that can help them recognize letters and words better. This is a serious problem, especially for students who have low absorption. The right learning media can be a bridge between students' difficulties and the material being taught. Without interesting and appropriate media, learning becomes less effective. Teachers also have difficulty in delivering material optimally. This condition shows the need for innovation in the learning methods and media used. Visual and interesting learning media can increase students' attention and concentration in following lessons. Therefore, choosing media that suits the characteristics of students is very important. ([March, 2019](#))

One solution that can be applied to overcome students' reading difficulties is to use appropriate and interesting learning media. ([Fate, 2022](#)) Learning media is a tool used by teachers in delivering lesson materials so that they are easier for students to understand. According to Elfiza et al. (2025), learning media is an important tool in the teaching process, especially for teachers who teach at the elementary education level. Choosing the right media will help students receive and understand the information conveyed. ([Elfiza et al., 2025](#)) In learning to read, media can visualize the shape of letters and words, so that they are easier for students to recognize. Media can also increase learning motivation because learning becomes more interesting. Therefore, teachers must be able to choose and use media creatively and innovatively. The use of appropriate media will have a positive impact on the achievement of student learning outcomes. In this context, flash card media is one of the effective and efficient choices. ([Ndraha et al., 2022](#))

Learning media can be classified into several main types, namely audio media, visual media, and audiovisual media. Audio media is related to the sense of hearing and can be in the form of sound recordings, music, or educational songs. This media is suitable for strengthening understanding through sound. Meanwhile, visual media relies on the sense of sight and includes images, posters, and flash cards. This media is very effective in attracting attention and helping students understand the forms of letters and words. Meanwhile, audiovisual media is a combination of sound and images, such as in the form of learning videos. This combination can increase students' absorption of the material being taught. For first grade elementary school students, visual media is the most appropriate choice because they tend to respond better to visual stimuli. Visual media can also be used flexibly and adjusted to students' needs. One of the most popular forms of visual media is flash cards. ([Astuti & Nugraheni, 2021](#))

Flash cards are visual media in the form of small cards containing letters, words, or images that are used to help the learning process. These cards are designed with an attractive appearance to strengthen students' memory of the information presented. In the context of reading learning, flash cards are very effective in introducing new letters, words, and vocabulary to students. Flash cards can be used repeatedly to strengthen information retention in students' memory. In addition, the use of flash cards also provides a game feel in learning, which makes students feel happy and motivated. This media can be modified according to the learning needs and characteristics of students. Flash cards can also be used individually or in groups, so they are flexible in their application. Thus, flash cards are a very useful tool in overcoming students' reading difficulties. Teachers can integrate the use of flash cards in various reading learning activities. ([Fadholi et al., 2022](#))

The effectiveness of using flash cards has been proven in various previous studies. One study that highlights the benefits of this media is a study conducted by Nanda Sari (2022) at MIN 2 Banda Aceh. The study was entitled "The Effect of Flash Card Media on the Beginning Reading Skills of Grade I Students" and showed very positive results. In this study, the t-value was obtained at 25.53, which was much higher than the t-table value of 1.68. This shows that the

use of flash card media has a significant effect on improving students' beginning reading skills. Thus, flash card media has proven to be effective as an aid in the process of learning to read. These results reinforce that flash cards are not just aids, but can also act as a targeted learning strategy. Teachers can use them to build an interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere. The use of this media can be used as a good practice in learning to read at the elementary level. ([Khairina et al., 2023](#))

According to Muammar Ecça & Hanafi, reading difficulties are obstacles in beginning reading which create a gap between students' actual abilities and learning expectations. ([Ecça & Hanafi, 2025](#)) In this context, flash card media can be a tool that can bridge the gap. Flash cards function not only as visual tools, but also as play media that can increase children's interest in learning. Children tend to be more active and involved when the learning process is packaged in the form of games. Arsyad, explained that flash cards are usually 8 x 12 cm in size and can be adjusted by teachers to meet students' learning needs. With an attractive color display and varied designs, flash cards can foster students' curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. This media is very flexible and practical to use in classroom learning activities. In addition, flash cards can also train students to recognize patterns, symbols, and relationships between words. Therefore, the use of flash card media is highly recommended in early reading learning. ([Siagian & Sapri, 2024](#))

Based on the overall description above, it can be concluded that flash card media is an effective learning strategy in overcoming reading difficulties in grade I elementary school students. This media not only helps students recognize letters and words visually, but also encourages them to learn actively and enjoyably. Flash cards provide a strong stimulus for students to pay attention to the material presented by the teacher. In addition, this media can also foster learning motivation because it is packaged in an attractive form. In the process of learning to read, the use of flash cards can increase student participation and involvement. Teachers can develop flash cards according to the learning context and student abilities. With a creative approach, this media can be an effective solution in improving basic literacy skills. Therefore, the application of flash card media needs to be seriously considered as part of innovation in reading learning at the elementary education level. ([Pramesti, 2018](#))

These flash cards are a learning tool specifically designed as educational toys by Doman. These cards contain pictures and words that aim to improve memory skills, develop independence, and expand students' vocabulary. ([Januarti et al., 2016](#))



Figure 1.
Forms of Flash Card Media

2. RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the researcher applied a quantitative approach with an experimental research type. Quantitative research is the identification of work processes that take place

briefly, limitedly and sorting problems into parts that can be measured in numbers. This research was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah 18 located at Jalan Pelita II No. 5, Sidorame Barat I, Medan Perjuangan District, Medan City, North Sumatra. The population in this study was taken from all students in grades I - A, I - B, I - C of SD Muhammadiyah 18 semester II 2023/2024. The population in classes IA, B and C was 81 students. The sample was taken using a purposive sampling technique with consideration of the homeroom teacher, so that a sample of class IB was obtained totaling 27 students. This research design uses quantitative research with a pre-experimental design method of the one group pretest-posttest type (initial test - final test of a single group). Arikunto, said that one group pretest posttest design is a research activity by giving an initial test (pretest) before being given treatment, and giving a final test (posttest) after being given treatment. Data collection techniques are used by conducting reading tests on students.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the first hypothesis in this study indicate that the use of flash card media has a positive effect in overcoming reading difficulties in grade I Elementary School students. This is evidenced by an increase in the average score of students from pretest to posttest. At the pretest stage, the average score of students was only 64.40 with a variance of 20.59 and a standard deviation (SD) of 4.54. The maximum score obtained by students was 73, while the minimum score was 55. The range of scores of 18 indicates a difference in the level of reading mastery among students before the application of flash card media. After the treatment was given, namely by using flash card media for several meetings, the posttest results showed a significant increase. The average posttest score reached 81.57 with a variance of 24.63 and SD 5.12. The maximum score became 95 and the minimum score increased to 62, remaining with a range of 18. The average difference between the pretest and posttest was 17.17 points, which reflects a significant increase in reading ability.

Furthermore, to test the significance of the influence of flash card media on students' reading ability, the researcher used the Independent Sample t-test statistical test. From the results of the analysis, the t-count value was obtained at 2.973 and the t-table value was 2.05 at a significance level of 5%. Because the t-count value is greater than the t-table ($2.973 > 2.05$), the decision taken is to reject H_0 and accept H_a . This means that statistically there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, which indicates that flash card media has an effect on improving students' reading ability. These results strengthen the quantitative findings that show an increase in scores after using flash card media. This proves that this learning strategy using visual media not only attracts students' attention, but is also empirically effective in improving their reading comprehension.

These findings are in line with Sadiman's (2012) opinion which states that flash cards are an effective method in improving students' reading skills, especially in the early stages. Flash cards work by showing words quickly, about one second per word, so that students are required to recognize and understand instantly. This technique stimulates visual comprehension and strengthens students' memory of word and letter forms. In the context of first grade elementary school students, this method is very suitable because it is in accordance with the characteristics of their cognitive development which is still dominant in concrete learning. Repetition and interesting visual presentation in flash cards allow students to recognize and remember words more quickly. Thus, this method not only improves letter decoding skills but also understanding of word structures as a whole.

This finding is also in accordance with the theory of reading difficulties put forward by Muammar (2020), which states that reading difficulties in children are an obstacle in early reading, which causes a gap between the abilities that should be possessed and the actual abilities of students. This difficulty can be in the form of an inability to recognize letters, spell, or understand the meaning of reading. Flash cards are present as a solution that can bridge this

gap by providing repetitive and directed practice. This media allows students to interact directly with words visually and accelerates the process of understanding letter symbols. With a fun and interactive approach, students are more motivated to learn and slowly overcome obstacles in the reading process. Thus, flash cards are a strategic alternative to improve basic literacy from an early age.

The implications of the results of this study are very important for the implementation of the learning process in elementary schools, especially in teaching early reading. Flash cards have been proven to be able to increase active student participation, strengthen visual memory, and facilitate the recognition of letters and words. With the increase in students' reading ability, the learning process in the classroom becomes smoother because students can understand instructions and other learning materials better. Teachers can integrate the use of flash cards in daily teaching and learning activities as part of a varied and enjoyable learning method. In addition, the use of this media can also increase interaction between teachers and students, and encourage students who were previously passive to become more active. Therefore, flash cards are not only a teaching aid, but also a means that can motivate and overcome learning difficulties faced by students.

This finding is also supported by the visual learning approach that emphasizes the important role of visual media in stimulating students' understanding and memory. In cognitive learning theory, it is explained that visual information is easier for the brain to process because it is concrete and attracts attention. Flash cards as visual media help students to focus more on recognizing the shape of letters and words. With attractive colors, images, and designs, students not only see words passively, but are also actively involved in the learning process. This makes learning more fun and meaningful, especially for students at the beginning level who need visual stimulation in understanding the basic concepts of reading. In addition, the visual approach also helps students who have a dominant visual learning style to learn more effectively.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that teachers and schools develop more variations of visual-based learning media such as flash cards. The media should be adjusted to the local context and students' needs to make them more relevant and easy to understand. For example, the words in the flash cards can use language that is familiar to students, including words that reflect their surroundings. In addition, teachers also need to receive training on how to design and use flash card media optimally in the learning process. Thus, learning media is not only a complement, but also an integral part of the literacy improvement strategy. The development of creative and targeted media can be a concrete solution to overcome reading difficulties in elementary school students, while encouraging innovation in teaching practices in the classroom.

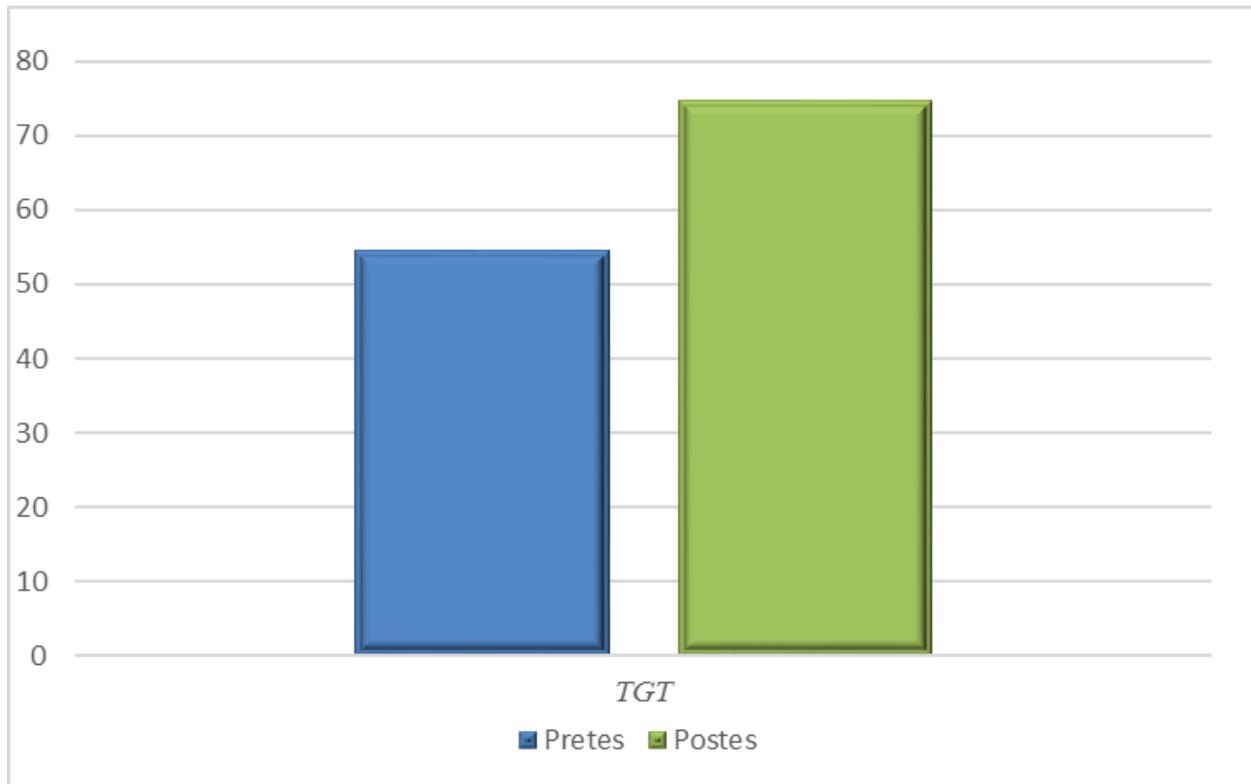


Figure 2.
Histogram Comparison of the Effect of Flash Card Media in Overcoming Reading Difficulties of Grade I Elementary School Students

In relation to this, as a prospective teacher and a teacher, it is appropriate to be able to choose and use learning media in the teaching and learning process at school. This is because students are not passive and do not experience boredom. In addition, the selection of the right learning media is the key to the success or failure of a learning process that is carried out, such as in this study that Flash card media has an effect on overcoming reading difficulties in grade 1 Elementary School students.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The use of this media can be a strategic solution in overcoming reading difficulties experienced by students at the early elementary school level. Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it is known that there is a significant increase in students' reading ability after the use of flash card media. Before being treated, the average reading results of students only reached 53.24. However, after treatment using flash card media, the average reading results increased to 74.54. Thus, there was an increase of 22 points.

Statistical test using Independent Sample t-test shows that the t-count value of 2.973 is greater than the t-table value of 2.05. Because $t\text{-count} > t\text{-table}$, then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. This means that there is a significant influence between the use of flash card media on improving the reading ability of grade I Elementary School students. These results strengthen previous findings and show that flash card media is not only effective in a theoretical context, but also proven to be effective when applied practically in the field.

From these findings, it can be concluded that flash card media is an effective alternative in helping to overcome students' early reading difficulties. This media not only provides strong visual stimulus, but also arouses students' motivation and interest in learning to read. Therefore, teachers are expected to be able to utilize this media optimally in the learning process. The use of flash cards integrated with a play approach and fun activities will enrich students' learning experiences and form a strong foundation of literacy from an early age.

As for suggestions for further researchers, this study can be further developed by using digital-based teaching media that are in line with current developments in educational technology. In addition, it is also recommended to expand the scope of the variables studied, and involve larger and more varied populations and samples so that the research results can be generalized more widely. Further research can also explore other aspects of basic literacy skills such as writing and reading comprehension as an integral part of learning Indonesian at the elementary level.

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