

Multimodal Literacy as an Effort to Enhance Students' Reading Interest at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik

Nabilatur Rohmah¹, Kumutha Raman², Eni Nurhayati³

^{1,3}*Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia,*

²*Inti International University, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia*

Email nbl.rhnh1@gmail.com

A B S T R A C T

This study aims to analyze the application of multimodal literacy in enhancing students' reading interest at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik. This study employed a qualitative narrative-descriptive approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and textual analysis involving teachers and students at the elementary and secondary levels. The findings show that multimodal literacy supports students' learning through the use of various modes, including texts, images, videos, and audio. The use of diverse media also encourages students' participation in both conventional and digital reading activities. Differences were found between MI and MTs students, particularly in their ability to select media according to their learning needs and their use of digital resources. MI students, especially those in the lower grades, still required guidance in selecting appropriate and reliable media, whereas MTs students generally demonstrated greater independence in choosing media and using digital resources. MTs students also showed stronger digital skills in searching for information and evaluating the credibility and relevance of online sources. These findings indicate that multimodal literacy can support the development of students' reading engagement and digital literacy through varied forms of information and media. The study contributes to the integration of multimodal literacy and technology in learning at the MI and MTs levels.

Keywords: multimodal literacy; reading interest; digital literacy; elementary education; secondary education

INTRODUCTION

Reading interest is one of the crucial aspects influencing the success of education, particularly in enhancing human resources (HR). Based on a survey conducted by UNESCO, reading interest in Indonesia reaches only 0.001%. This means that only one out of every 1,000 Indonesians has an interest in reading (Larasati, 2024). This reflects a serious problem regarding the low reading habits in Indonesia, which can affect the

progress of literacy and knowledge among society. The phenomenon of low reading interest can still be found in many schools. This issue is increasingly evident among students at the elementary school level (SD sederajat) and junior high school level (SMP sederajat), including at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik.

In addressing this challenge, multimodal literacy is considered an effective approach to attract students' reading interest. Multimodal literacy is not limited to the ability to read text; it also encompasses the ability to understand and interpret information presented in various forms of media such as texts, images, audio, video, and other digital interactions. Essentially, multimodal literacy combines various resources to enhance students' comprehension and foster their curiosity about the material being studied (Serafini, 2017). The ability to understand and combine information from various formats is essential for deepening comprehension of subject matter. Multimodal literacy encourages students to be more active and critical in processing information, nurturing curiosity, and increasing their reading interest and engagement in learning.

Jewitt (2008) asserts that to prepare the future digital generation, reading skills have shifted from text-based to multimodal literacy skills. This statement reveals that in preparing the future digital generation, reading skills are no longer limited to text alone but have evolved into multimodal literacy skills. This is due to changes in the learning environment, which is now increasingly multimodal, where access to information can be obtained through various semiotic systems, such as visual, audiovisual, and other forms of communication. In today's digital era, students are already very familiar with various types of digital media that include texts, images, and video. Therefore, literacy education approaches that rely solely on printed textbooks are considered less effective. Multimodal literacy provides opportunities for students to learn in ways that are more engaging and suited to their current needs. By implementing multimodal literacy in classroom learning, students will be encouraged to be more active in reading, analyzing, and interpreting various media they encounter in their daily lives.

MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik, as educational institutions under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementrian Agama), face challenges in improving students' reading interest. One of the challenges is low motivation. Therefore, a more creative and innovative approach is needed to motivate students to become more interested in reading. One solution that can be applied is integrating multimodal literacy into the learning process. The use of various media, such as educational videos, podcasts, infographics, posters, and other interactive learning applications, can enhance students' reading interest, especially for subject matter that is perceived as less interesting.

Several previous studies have shown that the use of multimodal literacy in schools can improve students' reading interest and comprehension of lessons. A study by Kustini et al. (2020) indicates that developing students' digital literacy through multimodal-based

instruction is crucial and is considered an effective method for developing students' digital literacy skills, as this approach allows them to learn through more diverse and engaging media channels. Furthermore, a study by Kayati (2022) states that multimodal texts can be a useful tool in teaching Indonesian Language, providing students with opportunities to interact with various forms of text and media that are more relevant to the digital world. This can strengthen students' reading literacy, not only in terms of reading written text but also in accessing and interpreting information from different media channels. Additionally, a study by Purnama et al. (2024) found that literacy using multimodal texts has a more significant effect compared to unimodal texts. In other words, by using a multimodal literacy approach, students have better reading abilities than students who only learn with unimodal texts.

Several previous studies have discussed the importance of implementing multimodal literacy to improve students' literacy skills. These three studies agree that the use of multimodal-based approaches involving various media channels can enrich students' learning experiences and strengthen their comprehension. However, these studies have not specifically examined the implementation of multimodal literacy in the madrasah environment, particularly in MI and MTs under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In fact, *madrasahs* have different socio-cultural and religious characteristics from public schools, so the literacy strategies implemented need to be adjusted accordingly. Therefore, this study offers novelty by exploring the contextual implementation of multimodal literacy at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik, as well as analyzing the differences in responses between elementary-level (MI) and secondary-level (MTs) students. Thus, the implementation of multimodal literacy at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik becomes highly relevant to be applied in order to enhance students' reading interest.

This study aims to explore the implementation of multimodal literacy as an approach that can enhance students' reading interest at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik. In its implementation, multimodal literacy is expected to address the challenge of low reading interest among students, which is often caused by material perceived as boring or difficult to understand. By utilizing more diverse media, students can more easily access information and develop their literacy skills in a more enjoyable and interactive way. Furthermore, this study aims to determine the extent to which the use of multimodal literacy can increase student engagement in the learning process, and how this impacts the improvement of their comprehension and reading interest. Additionally, it is hoped that the results of this study can make a significant contribution to the field of education, particularly in designing more innovative, relevant, and effective learning approaches. Thus, this study is not only beneficial for MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik but also for

the development of education in Indonesia as a whole, so that it can keep up with the times and meet the literacy needs of students in the future.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a methodological framework that seeks to comprehensively understand, investigate, and analyze the complex aspects of human encounters, behavior, and events in society. It relies on non-numerical data sources, including interviews, observations, and textual analysis (Ardyan et al., 2023). In accordance with this design, data were collected through interviews, observations, and text analysis, and were then processed using narrative and descriptive analysis techniques. Narrative analysis was used to explore and analyze the stories or narratives conveyed by participants, focusing on story structure, construction, and meaning-making. Meanwhile, descriptive analysis was used to provide an in-depth description of the collected data by detailing, organizing, and presenting them systematically so that readers can understand the context of the phenomenon under investigation (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Data Analysis and Coding Procedure:

The data analysis was carried out in four systematic stages. *First*, data transcription, in which all raw data from interviews and observation notes were transcribed verbatim. *Second*, data reduction, in which the researchers selected, focused, and simplified information relevant to the research focus—namely, the implementation of multimodal literacy and students' reading interest—while discarding irrelevant data. *Third*, data display, in which the reduced data were organized and presented in tables and descriptive narratives. The tables in this study (Table 1 and Table 2) employ a qualitative coding scale of N (No/ *Tidak*), A (Almost/ *Hampir*), and Y (Yes/ *Ya*) to capture the degree to which each indicator was manifested. *Fourth*, conclusion drawing and verification, in which the researchers interpreted patterns and relationships within the data, drew tentative conclusions, and verified them against the raw data and theoretical frameworks.

The criteria for determining the indicator codes were established as follows. N (No) was assigned when a participant did not demonstrate or perceive the presence of the indicator. A (Almost) was assigned when a participant demonstrated or perceived the indicator partially, inconsistently, or only to a limited extent, reflecting an emerging capacity. Y (Yes) was assigned when a participant consistently and clearly demonstrated or perceived the indicator, indicating that the behavior, skill, or perception had been well established. The assessment was conducted by triangulating data from interviews, classroom observations, and documentation, ensuring that each code was grounded in multiple sources of evidence rather than a single data point.

Data Validity and Trustworthiness:

To ensure validity and trustworthiness, this study employed triangulation of sources and triangulation of techniques. Triangulation of sources was conducted by comparing data from different participant groups—MI teachers, MTs teachers, and students from various grade levels (grades IV, V, and VI at MI; grades VII, VIII, and IX at MTs)—to identify convergent themes and divergences in perspectives. Triangulation of techniques was carried out by comparing interviews, observations, and document analysis; for instance, teacher interview data on students' digital skills were cross-checked against classroom observations and students' learning artifacts. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming interview results and preliminary interpretations with participants to ensure accuracy and minimize misinterpretation. These combined strategies strengthened the dependability, credibility, and confirmability of the findings.

This research was conducted at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik, located in Imaan Village, Dukun District, Gresik Regency, East Java Province. The participants consisted of three MI teachers (initials K, M, and NH), three MTs teachers (initials MN, NK, and MAF), and students from grades IV, V, and VI of MI and grades VII, VIII, and IX of MTs. These participants were selected to provide a comprehensive perspective on the implementation of multimodal literacy across different educational levels in both *madrasahs*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Multimodal literacy can serve as an effective strategy to enhance students' reading interest at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik by integrating various types of media and communication channels into learning activities. Unlike conventional literacy, which focuses solely on written text, multimodal literacy encompasses the use of visual text, sound, and digital media, thereby expanding students' learning experiences. The utilization of video, images, infographics, and other digital tools can make the learning process more engaging and interactive, thus attracting the attention of students who might otherwise be less interested in ordinary reading texts. Through this approach, students do not merely read texts; they also interpret and construct meaning through various forms of media, which ultimately enhances their participation in reading activities. Multimodal literacy provides students at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik with opportunities to explore various topics in more engaging ways aligned with technological developments, thereby encouraging them to read and learn more actively.

The following presents the results and discussion regarding multimodal literacy as an effort to enhance students' reading interest at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik.

Multimodal Literacy as an Effort to Enhance Students' Reading Interest

In classroom learning, the use of various media or modalities can be an effective strategy to enhance students' reading interest at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik. Media or modalities refer to various forms of communication or tools used to convey information, such as written texts, images, video, audio, and other digital technologies. By combining these various media, learning materials are not presented in a single format but in multiple, more diverse and engaging forms. This aims to make learning more enjoyable and easier for students to understand, especially for those who may feel less interested in conventional text-based reading.

The influence of multimodal literacy on students' reading interest can yield positive impacts when implemented appropriately and wisely. Multimodal literacy, which involves the use of various types of media such as texts, images, video, and sound, has the potential to enhance students' reading interest. This is because materials presented through a multimodal approach tend to be more attractive and varied, preventing students from feeling bored or fatigued while studying the material. Furthermore, multimodal literacy enables students to comprehend the material more deeply because information is conveyed in multiple complementary forms. Consequently, students can more easily absorb information and feel more motivated to continue the learning process, which ultimately enhances their reading interest. The following describes the results of implementing the multimodal literacy approach at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik based on the perspectives of teachers and students.

Table 1. Results of Interviews and Observations of MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik Teachers Regarding the Implementation of Multimodal Literacy

No.	Participant	Indicator*														
		1			2			3			4			5		
		N	A	Y	N	A	Y	N	A	Y	N	A	Y	N	A	Y
1.	K			√			√			√			√			√
2.	M			√			√			√			√			√
3.	NH			√			√			√			√			√
4.	MN			√			√			√			√			√
5.	NK			√			√			√			√			√
6.	MAF			√			√			√			√			√

Indicator Descriptions:

1. Students understand and interpret information delivered by the teacher through texts, images, video, and audio.
2. Students can evaluate information delivered by the teacher through texts, images, video, and audio.

3. Students can use and utilize various information sources to deepen their understanding of the material, such as articles, digital books, educational videos, PowerPoint presentations, podcasts, etc.
4. Students can use technology effectively to search, select, and analyze texts and media relevant to the learning topic, such as computers, laptops, projectors, etc.
5. Students show increased participation in reading, both through conventional texts and digital technology, such as using e-book reader applications, literacy websites, or social media related to books and literacy.

Code Description: N = No; A = Almost; Y = Yes

Based on the interviews and observations of three MI teachers (K, M, and NH) and three MTs teachers (MN, NK, and MAF), indicators (1) and (2) indicate that students at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik have been able to understand, interpret, and evaluate information delivered through texts, images, video, and audio. The teachers revealed that the use of various media as teaching aids strongly supports students in gaining a deeper understanding of the material being taught. For instance, the use of images in learning helps students associate visual information with written explanations, making it easier for them to understand learning concepts more clearly. This result is relevant to the role of multimodal literacy, which combines various forms of media, in developing students' reading interest. Through a multimodal literacy approach, students can more easily absorb information presented in various formats, thereby improving the quality of learning and their engagement in the learning process.

Regarding indicator (3), according to the three teachers from MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik, most students have demonstrated good abilities in using and utilizing various digital information sources to deepen their understanding of the subject matter. Various media such as articles, posters, educational videos, and PowerPoint presentations have proven effective in enriching the learning process. For example, the use of educational videos often helps students understand learning concepts in a more engaging and easily comprehensible manner. However, the results of interviews and observations with MI teachers (K, M, and NH) indicate that some students at the elementary level (MI) still struggle to utilize digital information sources optimally. These students tend to lack adequate skills to explore and utilize digital media effectively, as they still have limited digital experience. This lack of experience makes them less familiar with how to access and use available information sources, and they do not fully understand how to select relevant and valid information. This condition highlights the importance of the role of multimodal literacy in developing students' reading interest, where students need to be equipped with the skills to understand and use various media such as texts, images, audio, and video critically and effectively. Therefore, teachers,

especially MI Ihyaul Islam Gresik teachers, provide additional assistance in more intensive digital learning to equip students with the necessary skills, so that they can utilize technology optimally in the learning process, and in turn, enhance their reading interest and ability through the various available media formats.

Regarding indicator (4), the results show that according to the teachers, most students are almost able to use technology effectively to search, select, and analyze texts and media relevant to the learning topic. The use of technological devices such as computers, laptops, and projectors is increasingly becoming an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Teachers stated that students are beginning to demonstrate skills in searching for information online, whether through articles or educational videos that support the learning topic being studied. For example, in a lesson on reading comprehension for Grade VIII MTs students, educational videos can present stories or narrative texts combined with animation or images to help students understand the intrinsic elements of stories, such as theme, plot, characters, or characterization, etc. Additionally, the use of projectors to display presentations or PowerPoint related to the material also helps students understand more complex concepts visually. Nevertheless, MI teachers (K, M, and NH) stated that there are still some students who need further guidance in sorting out appropriate and relevant information, as well as avoiding inaccurate or invalid information. These results indicate that although significant progress has been made, further assistance is still needed so that students can more effectively utilize technology to explore learning topics independently and critically. This also underlines the important role of multimodal literacy in developing students' reading interest, where students do not only rely on written text but also other media such as images, video, and visual presentations that can enhance their understanding of the subject matter.

Regarding indicator (5), which is the most important indicator in this study, the results show that teachers stated that most students, especially MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik students, have shown a significant increase in their participation in reading activities, both through conventional texts and digital technology. Teachers stated that students are now more active in reading, not only through physical books but also by utilizing various digital technologies that support literacy activities. For example, the use of e-book reader applications is increasingly popular among students, allowing them to access various books and learning materials in digital format easily. Additionally, students are also increasingly engaged with literacy websites that provide articles, short stories, and various educational content that encourage them to read more. Furthermore, MTs teacher MN explained that MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik also has a computer laboratory that plays an important role in supporting multimodal literacy, namely the ability to understand and produce information through various modes of communication such as text, images,

audio, and video. In the computer laboratory, students can access and utilize various digital information sources that support the development of their literacy. For instance, students can read articles or e-books, watch educational videos, listen to podcasts, or even interact with social media related to literacy.

Overall, the use of technology and digital media in learning at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik is highly relevant to the role of multimodal literacy in enhancing students' reading interest. Multimodal literacy involves students' ability to access, understand, and combine various media formats such as text, images, video, and audio in learning. In both madrasahs, students have begun to develop these skills well, which helps them gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter. For example, the use of images and educational videos in learning allows students to see and hear information that supports the text, making it easier for them to relate to and understand learning concepts. This not only enriches students' learning experiences but also increases their interest in the subject matter, which in turn can enhance their reading interest.

Moreover, by utilizing various digital information sources such as articles, e-books, and literacy websites, students are more active in seeking additional information relevant to the topics they are studying. Access to various media gives students the opportunity to read more material in a more interactive and enjoyable way, which makes them more motivated to continue reading. The availability of a computer laboratory at MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik also provides space for students to access and combine various multimodal elements in their learning. For example, through e-books and educational videos, students can read and explore topics in a more engaging way, which makes them increasingly interested in continuing reading activities. Nevertheless, there are some students, especially at the MI level, who still require additional guidance in utilizing digital technology optimally.

Table 2. Results of Interviews and Observations of MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik Students Regarding the Implementation of Multimodal Literacy

No.	Participant	Indicator*														
		1			2			3			4			5		
		N	A	Y	N	A	Y	N	A	Y	N	A	Y	N	A	Y
1.	Grade IV Students	√				√			√		√					√
2.	Grade V Students		√			√			√			√				√
3.	Grade VI Students		√				√			√		√				√
4.	Grade VII Students			√			√			√			√			√
5.	Grade VIII Students			√			√			√			√			√
6.	Grade IX Students			√			√			√			√			√

Indicator Descriptions:

1. Students feel they can choose the form of media that best suits their learning style (e.g., reading text, watching videos, listening to podcasts, etc.).
2. Students feel more motivated to read books or other learning materials after experiencing various forms of engaging information delivery through multimodal media.
3. Students feel more engaged with the material being taught when the learning is delivered through various media such as video, podcast, poster, PowerPoint, etc.
4. Students feel they have shown improvement in digital skills, such as the ability to search for information online, evaluate information sources, and use various applications to support reading activities.
5. Students feel they have shown an increase in their own reading activities, both through conventional texts and digital technology, such as using e-book reader applications, literacy websites, or social media related to books and literacy.

Code Description: N = No; A = Almost; Y = Yes

Based on the results of student interviews and observations on indicator (1), the findings show that overall, Grade IV MI students have not been able to choose media that suits their learning style. Most students tend to use common methods, such as reading conventional texts, without considering the effectiveness of other media, such as watching videos. This indicates a lack of understanding of the relationship between their individual learning styles and the types of media that can enhance material comprehension, potentially hindering the optimization of the learning process. Meanwhile, Grade V and VI students are beginning to demonstrate the ability to choose media that suits their learning styles, showing increased awareness of more effective learning methods, although there is still room for further development in optimizing media selection based on individual preferences. On the other hand, MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik students overall have been able to choose media that suits their learning styles. They are more inclined to utilize various forms of media, such as reading texts, watching videos, and listening to podcasts, according to their personal needs and preferences in understanding the material. This indicates that MTs students have developed the ability to adjust their learning methods, which potentially enhances the effectiveness of the learning process. This result is relevant to the role of multimodal literacy in developing students' reading interest, where understanding and selecting media that suits individual learning styles can help students utilize various media formats such as text, images, video, and audio to enhance their interest and comprehension of the subject matter.

On indicator (2), the results show that Grade IV and V students are almost motivated to read books or other learning materials after being exposed to various forms

of engaging information delivery through multimodal media. The use of combined media, such as video, audio, and text, has successfully increased students' interest in the learning material by activating their various senses. This triggers curiosity and enthusiasm to explore further through reading, indicating that a varied learning approach can strengthen students' learning motivation. Meanwhile, Grade VI students and MTs students overall have been motivated to read books or other learning materials after experiencing various forms of engaging information delivery through multimodal media. The use of media such as video, graphics, interactive text, and audio has proven effective in increasing student interest and engagement. These multimodal media not only enrich the learning experience but also make it easier for students to understand the material in a more enjoyable and engaging way. As a result, students become more encouraged to delve deeper through reading, which directly enhances their reading activities and learning process. This result is relevant to the role of multimodal literacy in developing students' reading interest, where the diversity of media used can expand the ways students access, understand, and become interested in exploring various information further, especially regarding learning materials, while also developing their reading skills more effectively.

The results of indicator (3) describe that the use of various media, such as video, podcast, poster, and PowerPoint, has a significant impact on the engagement of Grade IV, V, VI, and all MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik students in learning. Grade IV and V students almost feel actively engaged with the material when it is delivered using these media, while Grade VI and MTs students show higher engagement. The use of diverse media has proven effective in increasing student interest and focus because the delivery is more interactive and varied. Visual and auditory media, such as video, help clarify understanding of the concepts being taught, as well as motivate students to participate more actively in learning. This indicates that a multimodal learning approach involving various types of media can create a more engaging and enjoyable learning experience. In this context, multimodal literacy has an important role in enhancing students' reading interest. Multimodal literacy refers to students' ability to interpret and understand information conveyed through various media channels, not limited to text. When students engage with various forms of media, they develop the skills to access information from various sources, which can expand their interest in seeking more knowledge through reading. In other words, multimodal-based learning not only increases student engagement in learning but also encourages them to expand their reading interest through broader and more varied access to information.

On indicator (4), the results show that Grade IV MI Ihyaul Islam students do not yet feel they have shown significant improvement in digital skills, such as the ability to search for information online, evaluate information sources, and use various applications

to support reading activities. Although some students have access to technology, many of them still struggle to optimize digital tools for learning and reading activities. They tend to be accustomed to traditional methods and have not fully developed the skills needed to search for information effectively in the digital world or utilize e-book reader applications and other digital sources. Meanwhile, Grade V and VI students are almost showing significant improvement in digital skills. Whereas MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik students overall already feel they have shown improvement in their digital skills. Many MTs students are now more confident in exploring the internet to find additional learning materials, and are able to evaluate the credibility of the information sources they find. Additionally, they have also begun to utilize e-book reader applications and other digital literacy platforms to support their reading activities, thereby expanding their insights and literacy skills. This increase in digital skills indicates that MTs students have begun to optimize technology to enhance their learning process and reading habits.

Indicator (5), which is the most important indicator, shows that all MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik students feel an increase in their reading interest and skills, both through conventional texts and digital technology. The use of e-book reader applications, literacy websites, and social media focused on books and literacy has proven to increase student engagement in reading activities. These digital media provide easier and more engaging access, allowing students to explore learning materials more broadly and interactively. This is closely related to multimodal literacy, which refers to students' ability to access, understand, and interpret information presented in various formats, whether text, images, sound, or video. By combining various types of media, multimodal literacy encourages students to be more active in reading and learning through various platforms, which in turn can strengthen their reading interest. Multimodal literacy not only develops traditional reading skills based on conventional texts but also opens opportunities for students to develop richer and more varied reading habits through digital technology.

Overall, MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik students are better at choosing the right media and tend to utilize various forms of media according to their personal needs. These results also indicate that multimodal media, which combines various forms of media such as video, audio, and text, has successfully increased students' reading interest and engagement in learning. The use of these media activates students' various senses, triggers curiosity, and increases enthusiasm for further reading. This reflects the importance of multimodal literacy in developing students' reading interest, because by choosing media that suits their learning styles, students can access information through various channels such as text, images, audio, and video, which can enrich the learning experience and enhance material comprehension. Additionally, students' digital skills have also improved, especially at the MTs level, where they are already able to utilize

technology to search for information online, evaluate information sources, and use e-book applications to support reading activities. In general, multimodal literacy not only increases student engagement in learning but also expands their reading interest through various engaging and interactive digital platforms.

Deeper Discussion: Pedagogical and Psychological Explanations for the Differences Between MI and MTs Students

The differences in responses between MI and MTs students toward the implementation of multimodal literacy can be explained through pedagogical and psychological perspectives. Pedagogically, MI students are at the stage of concrete operational cognitive development (Piaget), where they still require direct guidance and concrete examples in utilizing digital media. They are not yet fully capable of independently selecting media due to limited experience and metacognitive skills. Therefore, teacher assistance becomes crucial. In contrast, MTs students are at the formal operational stage, which enables them to think abstractly, independently select learning strategies, and evaluate information critically. This aligns with social-cognitive learning theory (Bandura), which emphasizes the importance of self-regulation in learning. MTs students have developed better self-regulation skills, enabling them to choose media that suits their learning styles and utilize them effectively.

From a psychological perspective, the intrinsic motivation of MI and MTs students also differs. MI students tend to be motivated by external factors such as rewards and teacher recognition, so visually and auditorily engaging multimodal media can enhance their extrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, MTs students are more capable of developing intrinsic motivation, where they read out of awareness of the benefits and personal interest in specific topics. Multimodal literacy provides a diverse range of media options that can fulfill these intrinsic motivational needs, making their reading interest more internalized.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory offers additional insight. MI students are still highly dependent on the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD), where they require scaffolding from teachers or more capable peers to master digital literacy skills. The intensive assistance provided by MI teachers reflects this scaffolding process. In contrast, MTs students have internalized much of this scaffolding, allowing them to function more independently and even assist their peers. This explains why MTs students demonstrate greater autonomy in selecting media and evaluating information sources.

Additionally, from the perspective of information processing theory, MI students have more limited working memory capacity and are still developing their executive functions, such as planning, organizing, and monitoring their learning. This makes it challenging for them to navigate complex digital environments without guidance. MTs

students, with more developed executive functions, can more effectively manage multiple sources of information, filter irrelevant content, and integrate multimodal inputs into coherent understanding. This cognitive maturity explains their superior performance in indicators (3), (4), and (5).

Therefore, the implementation of multimodal literacy needs to be adjusted to the developmental stage and psychological characteristics of students. At MI, a more structured approach with intensive scaffolding is required, while at MTs, a more independent and project-based approach can be more effective. These pedagogical and psychological considerations are essential for optimizing the impact of multimodal literacy on students' reading interest across different educational levels.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn. The use of technology and digital media in learning at MI and MTs Ihyaul Islam Gresik strongly supports the development of students' multimodal literacy. By combining various media formats—text, images, video, and audio—students gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the material. Multimodal media also enrich learning experiences in a more interactive and enjoyable manner, increasing students' interest and motivation to read more. This creates a more engaging learning environment that encourages students to actively explore and understand information through various media channels. Furthermore, students at the MTs level are better able to choose media suited to their learning styles. They utilize various formats—video, audio, and text—to understand materials more deeply, enhancing learning effectiveness. Their digital skills have also improved significantly, including searching for information online, evaluating source credibility, and using e-book applications. This broadens access to information sources and makes learning more engaging, interactive, and enjoyable, ultimately increasing their reading interest.

However, this qualitative case study has several limitations. First, the findings cannot be generalized broadly to all madrasah or school contexts due to the specific socio-cultural and religious characteristics of the research sites. Second, reliance on teachers' and students' perceptions through interviews and observations may contain subjectivity bias. Third, the study did not quantitatively measure improvement in reading interest, only describing perceptions and experiences. Fourth, the limited duration may not capture long-term changes in students' reading habits. Fifth, the relatively small number of participants, while appropriate for qualitative inquiry, may not fully represent broader population diversity.

Based on these limitations, several recommendations are proposed for future research. First, future studies should employ quantitative or mixed-methods designs to objectively measure the impact of multimodal literacy on reading interest and learning outcomes. Second, the sample scope should be expanded to include more madrasahs with diverse characteristics for broader generalization. Third, longitudinal studies are recommended to examine the sustainability and long-term effects of multimodal literacy. Fourth, future research should develop multimodal literacy models specifically tailored to the madrasah context, considering religious and local cultural aspects. Fifth, additional variables such as parental support, school policies, teacher professional development, and infrastructure availability should be incorporated for a more holistic analysis. Finally, practical recommendations for educators include continuous scaffolding for MI students, adequate digital infrastructure, and integration of multimodal literacy into the school curriculum to foster a sustainable reading culture.

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Address for correspondence:
Nabilatur Rohmah
Faculty of Languages and Arts
Universitas Negeri Surabaya
Surabaya, Indonesia
24021475009@mhs.unesa.ac.id

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