

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

God gave us the greatest Commandment in the Bible which is to love Him with all our being and with all that we have (abilities, possessions, time and effort). ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ Mark 12:30. One of the ways to show our love for Him is by reading and meditating on His Word day and night.

Both of the activities above (read and meditate on God’s word) can only be done if people are interested in reading and get used to read, otherwise they would have difficulty in reading, meditating and understanding God’s word. Many think that reading is a boring activity and a waste of time and energy. In Indonesia, it must be admitted that reading activities are not much preferred by the society. Reading interest in Indonesia is still low; in fact it is the lowest in ASEAN.

There were several studies and research conducted both here and overseas about reading interest in Indonesia; in 2009 Organization for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD) reported that reading culture in Indonesia occupies the lowest position of 52 countries in East Asia, in the same year, HDI (Human Development Index) reported that the reading habit of Indonesian people ranked 96 among all countries in the world and it is in the same place with Bahrain, Malta and Suriname. In 2011, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) recorded that the index of reading interest in

Indonesia only reached 0.001. This means that in every 1,000 people, there is only one person who has interest in reading (Perpusnas: Minat Baca Masyarakat Indonesia Rendah, [www.republika.co.id](http://www.republika.co.id)). This number is much lower compared to Singapore, in which the index was 0.45. There were also research reports conducted in several provinces in Indonesia, South Sulawesi, Riau, South Kalimantan, North Sulawesi, North Sumatera, and East Kalimantan since 1995, stated that the average reading habit score of respondents from the six provinces is 3.2 from scale 1 (the lowest) to 7 (the highest). It was obviously quite low (Mustafa, 2012). Head of Indonesian Library, Sri Sularsih (May 12, 2015, <http://www.acdp-indonesia.org>) said, “The Indonesian public’s interest in reading is very low, according to the latest data of the Central Statistics Agency (BPS). Only 17% of Indonesian people have interest in reading, while 91.68 % prefer to watch television.” This lack of reading interest in Indonesia has an extensive effect, not only on individuals but also on national development.

This is very unfortunate because there are a lot of benefits that can be obtained from reading. Reading is one of the main doors to access knowledge. By reading books, one can get information, improve the ability to think critically and systematically, develop the ability to imagine, relieve stress and improve language skills as well as reading skills (Chettri & Rout, 2013, p. 14). Therefore, reading interest must be nurtured and developed from an early age so that it will be carried over into adulthood and becoming a life-long habit, which eventually create a reading culture in our society. “Without reading interest and habit, a child will have difficulty in learning, especially when dealing with tasks that require reading at any level. Therefore, the issue of reading, whether it is for learning or leisure is

important because it helps broaden the experience and knowledge of young people” (Chettri & Rout, 2013, p. 14). Certainly, this attitude of reading cannot be achieved by children themselves. Family (parents) and school (teachers and school library) play a significant role to perform this job; it is because children spend most of their time with people in those two environments. Therefore, parents and schools should promote reading interest among children from an early age.

Schools are considered as second homes for children (Reist, 2013). The students spend half of their days at school and here, they acquire knowledge and skills to maximize their potential; therefore, schools clearly have an important role to promote reading interest in children. Schools should facilitate and provide students with the skills of learning to read and reading to learn in order to maximize their overall capacity and ability for lifelong learning and personal development. Schools need to promote the reading culture, both inside and outside the classroom.

This research specifically discusses how school promotes reading interest among third grade students and the researcher chose to study more deeply about this topic is because not all schools in Indonesia really pay attention to the students’ reading interest and try to promote reading interest among their students. The researcher considers XYZ School as unique and special, a rare finding regarding its efforts to promote reading interest among the students.

## 1.2 Research Question

1. How does XYZ School promote reading interest among third grade students?

### 1.3 Objective of the Study

This educational research aims to study more deeply about how XYZ School promotes reading interest among third grade students.

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

#### 1. For schools

As an input and knowledge for other schools to improve and promote reading interest among primary students, particularly third grade students.

#### 2. For students

The existence of this research will further encourage students to love reading and to maximize the facilities provided by the school related to reading activities.

#### 3. For the society

To give a big picture that schools have a very important role in promoting reading interest from an early age, particularly at third grade level.

### 1.5 Definition of Terms

#### 1. Reading

According to Olanlokun (1999), reading is a complex activity that connects the eyes to the mind to interpret and evaluate written symbols.

Devarajan and Gray, as cited in Tella and Akande (2007) described reading as an art of interpreting printed and written words. Henry Guntur

Tarigan believes that reading is a process in which the readers get a

message delivered by the author through the medium of words or written language.

## 2. Reading interest

Reading interest refers to a readers' perception in which he enjoys reading or considers it potentially exciting or interesting (Thomas, 2001). Tarigan (1999) stated that the position of interest in reading occupies the highest level, because without interest, it is difficult for someone to start reading.

