



## Trends in learning and assessment used in elementary schools in Indonesia: Opportunities and challenges

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Article info	Abstract
Keywords learning, reading assessment, elementary school	This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of research trends in learning and assessment practices in Indonesia. A total of 274 documents were initially collected, from which 100 articles that met the predetermined criteria were selected for in-depth analysis. The data reveals a distribution of research across 34 provinces, with 20 provinces being represented in the final sample. The findings indicate a predominant focus on media-based approaches in reading instruction, reflecting a growing interest in integrating media into learning strategies. In terms of assessment, the use of combined or hybrid assessment methods emerges as the most common practice, suggesting an effort to capture a more holistic understanding of student performance. Despite these developments, the overall impact of the research remains limited, as most studies are still conducted on a local scale and have not significantly influenced national educational policy or practice. This highlights the need for broader dissemination and application of research findings to enhance their relevance and utility at the national level. Strengthening the connection between educational research and practice is essential for advancing the quality of learning and assessment in Indonesia.

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### 1. Introduction

In terms of students' reading comprehension skills in Elementary School, the most important thing the students should have (Ardhian, 2020) is seen from their reading comprehension skills developed based on students' experiences (Broek, 2011), which can have a better improvement and sum up the relationship between cause and effects within a text (Jacobs, 2000). Students who consistently read the textbook will improve their reading comprehension more than those who do

not enjoy reading. Therefore, a reading method is needed that enables students to effectively utilize the textbook (Kurniaman et al., 2020). The learning system in elementary school emphasizes the learning and assessment of students' reading comprehension skills, as used by teachers (Kurniaman et al., 2019). Techniques that teachers apply in learning should tend to improve students' reading comprehension skills. Learning about reading becomes essential for enhancing students' reading comprehension skills by utilizing effective models, methods, and strategies that teachers apply in class (Boakye, 2021). Thus, a teacher should comprehend the strategy used and how to assess the student's reading comprehension skills to determine the effect of the teaching and learning process.

The importance of article reviews in evaluating the learning and assessment methods used by researchers lies in describing the learning and students' reading comprehension skills in Indonesian elementary schools, as well as addressing the issue of students' low reading comprehension. Based on the research developed in implementing reading learning, the school faces a problem that needs to be addressed. Problem-solving faced in the school field often involves applying the models, methods, and strategies used by researchers as an alternative approach. The teacher was unable to use the appropriate strategy during the teaching and learning process because the problem stemmed from the student's reading difficulties. Therefore, students have less motivation and interest in reading activities (Magfirah, 2018). The analysis by Lu and Liu (2015) reveals that half of the students experience primary anxiety during teaching and reading activities instructed by the teacher. They add that the students still require the teacher's help in learning activities, as they are not yet self-confident enough to comprehend the lesson study. In addition, based on Başar's (2017) statement, reading and comprehension skills are not only learned by students during education but also in every life context. The students who can read and understand quickly tend to succeed academically. Through this approach, students' reading comprehension should be developed to the first-grade level in elementary school. Hence, to measure students' reading comprehension skills, we need to have an indicator of the learning impact as part of their assessment.

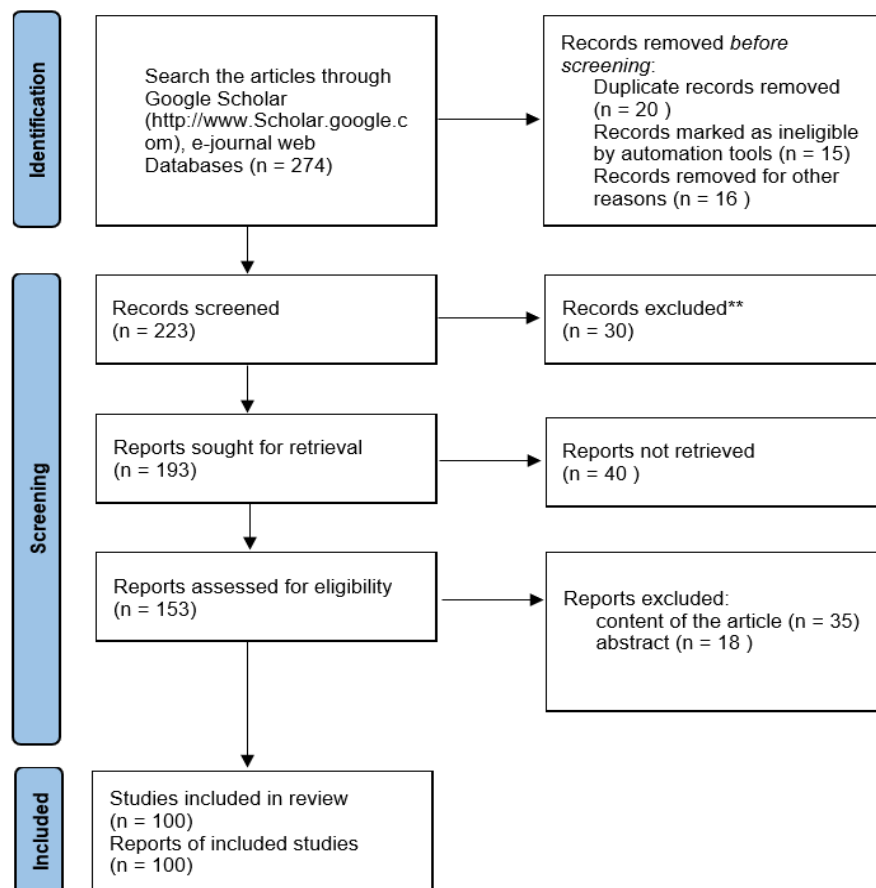
The assessment used in this study is similar to the teacher assessments in elementary schools in Indonesia. The Tendency of the result of this article review will show the reader's contribution to solving the reading problems. Reading assessment is regulated in the 2013 Curriculum based on the indicator of learning objectives. Accordingly, researchers must collect data on students' reading comprehension skills to assess successful learning at school (Hugo, 2021). This article review describes the literature on learning, use, and reading assessment in elementary schools in Indonesia. Thus, it can produce findings on practical learning and assessment to improve students' reading comprehension skills. This study involved the research questions that can be seen as follows:

- RQ1. What is the tendency of learning applied by using the media, model, strategy, and method in learning about reading in elementary school?
- RQ2. What is the learning spread plan applied by using the media, model, strategy, and method in learning about reading in elementary school?
- RQ3. What is the tendency of the assessment to measure the student's comprehension skills in elementary school?
- RQ4. Is there any contribution to the research on students' reading comprehension skills in elementary school?

## 2. Method

The review was conducted to identify a digital database (Tang et al., 2020) that is predominantly used and comprehensive, ensuring extensive search capabilities. It aims to provide literature

accessible through the Google Scholar information center (<http://www.scholar.google.com/>) and e-journal websites used by both state and private universities in Indonesia. Researchers collected articles with the keywords "pembelajaran membaca di sekolah dasar" because, in the keyword, every learning activity would be assessed as a successful measuring instrument used in the learning process. The articles searched were 274 articles saved in the research data document. After documentation, the article was analyzed based on the criteria by evaluating learning and assessment in reading in elementary school. Furthermore, it was found that 100 articles met the criteria. The review process is illustrated in the following manner (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1.** Research procedure for article review

According to the research procedure described above, the first step is to search for the article through Google Scholar and e-journal websites to detail the data of the review results and conduct a discussion. The SINTA journal accredits the type of article used in this study. The article published in the proceedings is not the data of the article review. It was an obstacle to making the distinction between learning and assessment in the content of the article conference. In this regard, Agussuryani et al. (2022) stated that the scientific process is organized explicitly and demonstrates completeness, unbiasedness, transparency, and accountability. Technique analysis of this study involves 1) developing the schema code on the article based on the research questions, 2) putting in Ms. Excel to save and analyze the data, 3) analyzing and classifying the article based on the category, and 4) reviewing based on the code result, frequency, and proportion accumulated and reported in the table form, and explaining the details by discussing the pattern appeared based on literature and theories of the study.

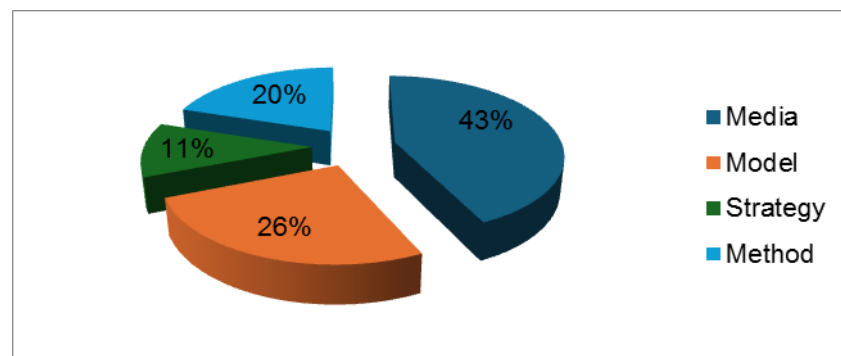
### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Learning to read in elementary school

The type of this study is a literature review, conducted using reliable sources to obtain evidence that serves as the basis for recommendations. The article review procedure has been described in **Figure 1**. Therefore, the valid data could be analyzed and used to answer the research questions. Several researchers studied the learning and assessment of reading. This is because proper learning in reading helps students memorize material for a long time (Syafitri, 2018) by applying the right strategy in learning based on their basic skills, thereby increasing academic achievement (Verlaan, 2017). The Programme for International Assessment (PISA) result related to students' reading comprehension skills was still categorized as very low. Almost 70% of students' reading comprehension skills were categorized as low-level (Fahlevi, 2021). It is caused by teaching and learning styles, which are a rule of reading learning; thus, students focus primarily on understanding the text. Hence, it is essential to design a mapping of learning, especially in reading, which is generally used in Indonesia to enhance students' reading comprehension skills. There is a classification of research on reading learning in elementary schools, which is seen from the media variables, models, strategies, and methods applied in this research. This classification can be seen in **Table 1** and **Figure 2** below:

**Table 1.** Classification of learning on reading in elementary school

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Media	Library	6	6%
	Reading Corner Utilization	5	5%
	Picture/Comic	6	6%
	Teaching Material	5	5%
	Picture Story E-Book	5	5%
	Big Book	4	4%
	Contextual Learning-based Reading Train	3	3%
	Jigsaw Puzzle	3	3%
	Letter Card	6	3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43%</b>
Models	Multiliteracy	2	2%
	Total Reading	4	4%
	Problem-based Learning (PBL)	5	5%
	Mind Map	4	4%
	Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC)	5	5%
	Picture and Picture	6	6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26%</b>
Strategies	Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)	7	7
	Mind Mapping	4	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11%</b>
Methods	Scramble	6	6%
	Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review (SQ3R)	4	4%
	Synthetic Analytical Structure (SAS)	6	6%
	Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)	4	4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Total of Articles</b>		<b>100</b>	



**Figure 2.** Percentage of learning on reading

Based on Table 1 and Figure 2 described above, it is observed that 43 articles, or 43%, utilize learning media. Furthermore, 26 articles are used in applying the learning model, which accounts for 26% of the total. Hereafter, 11 articles are used, applying the learning strategies at a rate of 11%. Additionally, 20 articles are used, applying the learning methods in a 20% proportion. Based on the description in Table 1, media are primarily used to teach reading in elementary school. This is because early reading focuses on identifying a symbol or sign related to the letter; hence, as the teacher's indicator in applying media (Kurniaman & SB. Sismulyasih, 2019). When applying learning media, researchers should consider the illustrations used to convey a message to students (Rahmatullah et al., 2020). The use of the library as reading literacy media is commonly applied to 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. It is not possible to apply for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders based on the 'must read' program in 15 minutes that is programmed by the Indonesian government on *Permendikbud* no. 23 in 2015 through the reading corner program that is a school or academic library in order to increase students' reading comprehension skills (Aswat & G. Nurmaya, 2020). The use of library services in elementary school is highly beneficial for students, as it significantly increases their interest in accessing reading materials tailored to their reading level (Sonah et al., 2020). Optimizing potential library school services aims to enhance the implementation of library activities, promote reading habits, and support collection-building programs (Loertscher & Woolls, 2021). That is why using the library as a medium influences the students' reading comprehension.

Using various media, such as pictures, comics, teaching materials, big books, e-books, reading trains, letters, and jigsaw puzzles, is a media the teacher applies in teaching reading activities in Indonesia. Picture books, as a form of media, are also important for 1st and 2nd graders (see Merga, 2020; Rahmasari, 2022). This is evident from the diverse characters, contexts, and experiences of various students (Gilman & Norton, 2020). Using image media, whether in the form of e-books or reading exercises that display high-quality images, enables students as readers to engage their imagination, aesthetic sense, and empathy. So, it becomes an alternative for students to adapt to learning new things based on learning material (Niland, 2021). Every reader has different life experiences, so the students can bring their knowledge and identity to comprehend the content contained in the textbook (Nisak et al., 2021). When beginners read or are read a book, they look inside and outside to think about how to understand the world from the language, story, and pictures shown in every textbook. Pictures in the textbook can work as mirrors, windows, or sliding glass doors for readers. Perhaps beginners feel like they are insiders or outsiders who are looking inside. In elementary school, the teacher used various pictures as a medium for first, second, and third-grade students to address their low reading comprehension problems.

Nevertheless, students often find it challenging to remain motivated to read after they graduate. This weakness prompted the researchers to address this issue. Consequently, the researchers can

enhance learning by intensively applying the model, strategy, and method, thereby improving students' reading motivation, reading comprehension skills, and problem-solving abilities.

A reason concerning problem-solving in Indonesia, as stated by Aziz (2020), regarding the application of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model, suggests that using the appropriate learning model can increase students' interest in learning by involving them in group activities. Based on the description in Table 1, it can be seen that 24% were interested in using the model. This means few articles have used this model in elementary school. The use of models, methods, and strategies will be differently influenced based on the different classes, the number of students, and the IQ levels of students at school (Chang, 2014). Therefore, the models cannot be applied generally to enhance students' comprehension. In addition to people's worries about students' reading comprehension, educators and researchers perceive it based on their reading interests (Ünal, 2010). It can be said that one of the reasons for students' low reading interest is the mismatch between students' needs at different levels and the instruction provided by the teacher (Schiefele, 2013), which is not tailored to meet students' needs (Reis, 2011). This study showed that the students were infrequently encouraged and guided to teach. It is caused by the lack of time and attention given by the teacher. Additionally, the distribution of the learning research map in Indonesia is illustrated in Figure 3.

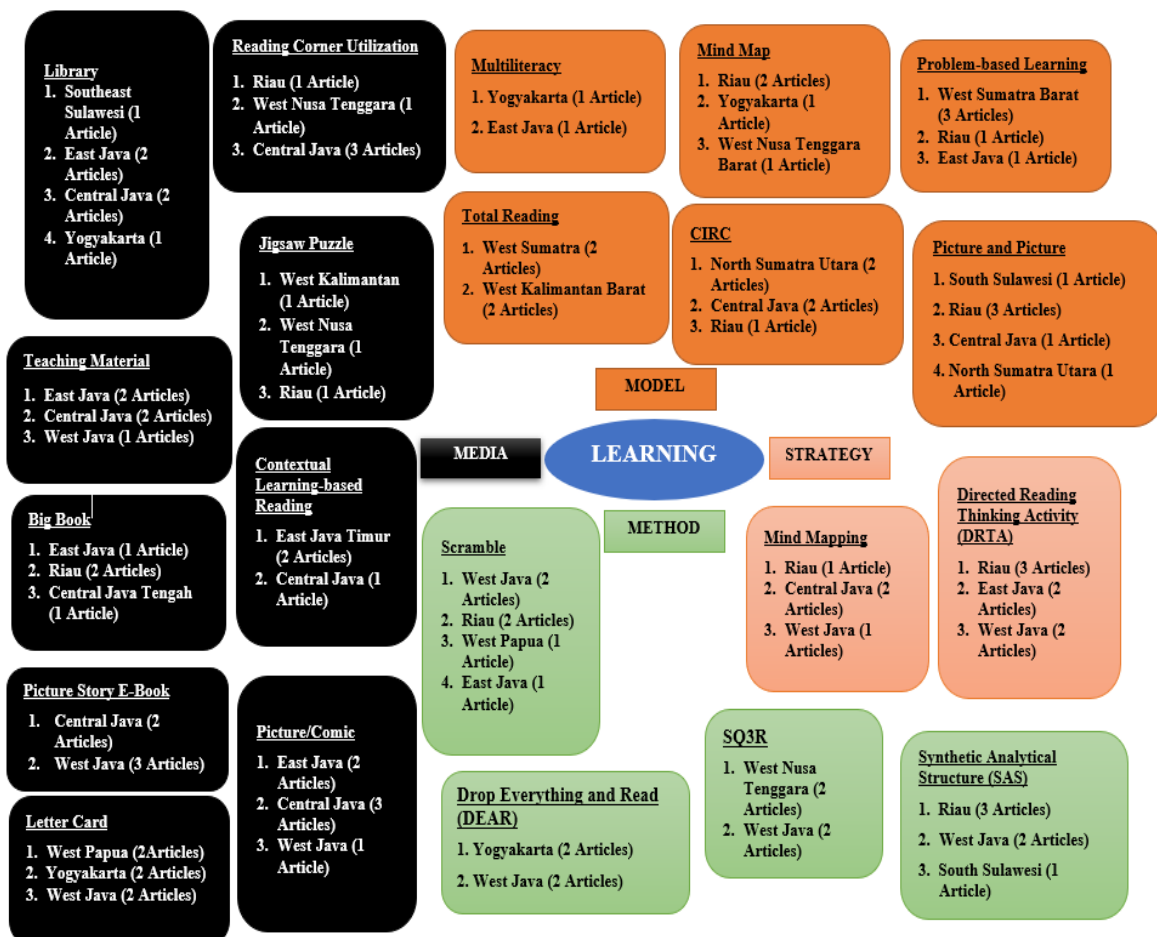


Figure 3. Distribution of learning on the reading map in Indonesia



Based on 100 articles as a sample of the study described, the distribution of learning on the reading map in Indonesia serves as a case study for this study. A case study is conducted in this research to gain insight into reading practices in Indonesia. Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country, with approximately 270 million people spread throughout the country today. Each island is divided into several provinces. Currently, Indonesia has 34 provinces, each led by a governor. The education policy in Indonesia is primarily responsible for educating children, as teachers should apply effective teaching methods to address the problem of students' reading comprehension. Due to the island country's breadth, the learning distribution will differ based on the map in Figure 3, which consists of 20 provinces, as studied in this study. Although the study's conclusion suggests that applying media, models, methods, and strategies can improve students' reading comprehension skills, this study has several shortcomings due to its limited implementation. In educating and teaching students, the teacher serves as a role model who can inspire, act as a scientist, motivator, intellectual, and thoughtful guide in providing effective teaching and learning (Jariono et al., 2021).

### 3.2 Basic assessment of learning on reading in elementary school

Assessment in learning is a crucial factor in determining the successful learning approach used by researchers, where greater variation in assessment influences the decisions made in the study (Damaianti et al., 2020). Assessment in learning is a self-evaluation of the teacher's achievement in teaching reading and determination of the student's strengths and weaknesses in increasing reading in elementary school (Saat & Özenç, 2022). Reading skills tests used at school must be suitable and accurate based on the criteria (Salceda, 2014). The assessment indicator standard is based on the Competency Standard at the elementary school level (Botting, 2020). The teacher's measurement is objective to ensure fairness for students (Plourde, 2017). The assessment conducted by the teacher on students' reading comprehension skills is based not only on cognitive factors but also on their own affective and psychomotor (Proctor, 2020). Therefore, students can evaluate themselves to provide the appropriate learning based on the reading text and the learning model, thereby increasing the effectiveness of their reading comprehension. The assessment used in this study to collect data on students' reading comprehension skills and the effect of the learning process is classified into two assessments: a single assessment and a combined assessment. This is evident in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Assessment classification of learning on reading

Classification of Assessment	Assessment Form	Frequency	Percentage
Single Assessment	Reading Comprehension Test	16	16
	Interview	6	6
	Observation	12	12
	Documentation	5	5
	Questionnaire	2	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41%</b>
Combined Assessment	Observation + Interview + Questionnaire + Documentation	1	1
	Observation + Interview + Documentation	9	9
	Questionnaire + Reading Comprehension Test	8	8
	Observation + Interview + Questionnaire	3	3
	Reading Comprehension Test + Interview + Questionnaire	2	2

Classification of Assessment	Assessment Form	Frequency	Percentage
	Observation + Interview	3	3
	Reading Comprehension Test + Observation + Interview + Documentation	2	2
	Reading Comprehension Test + Observation	17	17
	Reading Comprehension Test + Observation + Questionnaire + Documentation	2	2
	Reading Comprehension Test + Observation + Documentation	3	3
	Reading Comprehension Test + Observation + Interview	2	2
	Questionnaire + Interview	4	4
	Questionnaire + Observation	3	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59%</b>
	<b>Total of Articles</b>		<b>100</b>

Based on Table 2, described above, the table shows that the average score of the single assessment is 41% and the combined assessment is 59%. It means that the implementation of the combined assessment is better than the implementation of the single assessment. Hence, we can see the result of students' reading comprehension skills percentage in the Elementary School. About the explanation of each assessment form, the reading test is an integrated language skill test. By this means, a reading test is combined with the components that have been a test goal. The components involve reading, language, and composition (P. Lin, 2019). In this relation, authentic assessment can be applied to support successful teaching and learning in reading (Susani, 2018). The form of authentic assessment consists of tasks used to assess students' learning activities in reading accurately. Authentic assessment can also describe improving students' learning activity to observe, ask questions, explain why, and communicate with others. The teacher can use this method to help students complete their tasks by demonstrating the problem-solving method in a practical and engaging way (Prescott, 2018). According to the explanation of authentic assessment, it can be concluded that one of the authentic assessments that teachers can develop is a task form (Ehm, 2014). As part of the learning process, reading tests aim to help students optimize their reading comprehension by applying an appropriate strategy to identify relevant information, as reading is essential for comprehending the text (Hasan, 2017).

In addition to another assessment form, the interview is a technique used to gather data or information about the strengths and weaknesses of students' reading comprehension skills in exchanging ideas and information through question-and-answer sessions with students as respondents (See Easterbrooks, 2021; Lin, 2020). Hence, in conducting interviews, the interviewer has prepared the research instruments through written questions and optional answers (Fung, 2020). With this structured interview, every respondent is presented with similar questions, and the results of the interview are recorded as part of the data collection process (Pfost, 2012). In conducting a semi-structured interview, this interview has been categorized as an in-depth interview (Rogiers, 2020). In the implementation, this in-depth interview gives more access to questions than the structured interview. The interview method used in this study was a structured interview to obtain data on students' interests and students' reading comprehension (Marcos, 2020). An interview was conducted with the teacher prior to the research implementation, and a follow-up interview was administered to the students afterwards.

Hereafter, the documentation from the reading assessment conducted in this study was used as a portfolio of every activity and student's work in reading, noting the teaching and learning



process (Ludewig, 2020). The document forms are daily notes, picture activities, reading comprehension improvement notes, and student name notes in borrowing library books (Zhu et al., 2020). The teacher should monitor students' reading improvement by collaborating with parents to enhance students' skills (Sabatini et al., 2020). Monitoring the learning process and reading assessment is conducted to track progress and evaluate successful teaching and learning activities, particularly in enhancing the teacher's performance within the teaching and learning context.

In terms of a questionnaire as an assessment form, it aims to determine the students' affective assessment results based on their activities, especially to motivate students and assess their affective learning outcomes in reading (Kendeou, 2009). According to Table 2, described above, the questionnaire was used to determine the improvement in students' reading comprehension skills, with a 2% increase achieved through open questions (Safaruddin et al., 2020). The design of the questionnaire is used to collect data from students' and teachers' responses, as well as to identify the obstacles encountered in learning to read in class (Kurniaman et al., 2018). Although questionnaires are often used to determine non-cognitive outcomes, several researchers use questionnaires to measure reading comprehension skills (Bahrudin & Febriani, 2020). To determine students' reading motivation. Students are guided to fill in the items in the questionnaire based on their background knowledge because student motivation psychologically influences reading comprehension. Hence, the students' interests are also highly influenced by their activities, as children can naturally become interested in something without the teacher's or parents' prompting (Schultz-Jones & Ledbetter, 2021). Notwithstanding, the questionnaire report of this study has a limitation in obtaining perception data and students' interests since students' reading comprehension was limited in answering the questions in the questionnaire (Cunha, 2014). To address the students' weaknesses, the researchers primarily employed reading comprehension tests, observation, and interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning process and students' reading comprehension.

Based on the previous description in Table 2, the percentage shows that 59% of research used a combined assessment to measure students' reading comprehension skills in elementary school. After that, 41% of the research used a single assessment, comprising reading comprehension tests, observation, documentation, and questionnaire assessment. By using this assessment, comprehensive data would be obtained. The questionnaire was used to assess the students' perception of their interest in participating in the activities, as this is related to their motivation, which is an essential interest. Hence, their reading comprehension can be developed increasingly (Holmes et al., 2020). The questionnaire was administered to students to assess their reading difficulties, which could suggest to the teacher the need to modify the teaching method or strategy in class (Cilliers, 2020). Based on several research results, this assessment (Shanahan, 2020) should be tested using validity and reliability before being distributed in data collection. In contrast to the previous theory, another theory emphasizes the importance of applying this method to conduct triangulation and validate data (Lammertink, 2020), as a requirement for validity evidence, even though several studies did not provide information regarding the validity and reliability assessments developed independently. Without validity, this assessment is challenging for the researcher to use in measuring students' reading comprehension skills in elementary school, particularly on high-stakes tests.

### 3.3 Government policy in learning about reading

The Indonesian government should address the students' reading comprehension problems based on the learning and assessment conducted by the researchers. Consequently, it is recommended that the government establish a policy addressing these issues (Hodges et al., 2020). Government policies are commonly published online or in print media, including newspapers, and

other outlets. The policy announced by the Indonesian Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, explained that the study results of PISA provide suggestions for improving education quality in Indonesia. Based on other perspectives, Indonesia was invited to see how other countries perceived Education in Indonesia and provided objective suggestions for future improvement (Tugtekin & Koc, 2020). Based on this perception, the Indonesian government formulated a strategy, specifically aimed at achieving educational equity. The study results described the note on students' reading comprehension in Indonesia, which was suitable for single texts but low for multiple texts. Indonesian students are competent in finding, evaluating, and reflecting on information. They struggle to understand the information. The results of the PISA 2018, released by the OECD, showed that Indonesian students' reading comprehension achieved an average score of 371 in the low performance category, with high equity. Hence, it was found that the gender gap in learning performance between male and female students was high, but female students demonstrated better comprehension than male students in every PISA field.

The Indonesian government remains committed to addressing the weaknesses identified in the PISA findings. Accordingly, one of the recommendations is to optimize information and communication technology, which is necessary for achieving an increasingly effective learning system (Pitoyo, 2020). Hence, in answering the challenges of increasing literacy, the government instructed every school to involve the students more in reading activities, ensure the teacher performed to give a summary of reading material dominantly while teaching but not duplicate the textbook content, enrich the type of reading text, and encourage and adjust students to read in their spare time (Putrislia & Airlanda, 2021). The study on learning that has been conducted has not yet had a sufficiently high effect on students' reading comprehension in Indonesia. The studies conducted are still limited in scope or small-scale. Thus, conducting a national research-based policy that describes and maps the students' reading problems in Indonesia is essential.

#### 4. Discussion

Based on the results of learning to read in elementary school in Indonesia, the tendency of the assessment to measure students' comprehension skills by using media, models, strategies, and methods in reading was determined through combined assessments that utilized observation and tests as reading instruments. The researcher mostly used the reading skill test and observation technique, which is easier to measure the student's reading comprehension skills in elementary school. Elementary schools provided more concrete learning opportunities when they incorporated media into reading instruction. Additionally, this research contributed to the students' reading literacy in elementary school and supported the Indonesian government's policy. Furthermore, based on the results described in this article, several studies still have not investigated the effect of students' reading comprehension improvement acquired through PISA. This is because the studies were still categorized as nationally based research. Accordingly, the Indonesian government still needs policies to enhance learning in elementary school, aiming to increase students' reading comprehension skills in comprehending and interpreting information. The researchers must conduct international-based research to change the students' reading comprehension skills in Indonesia. This research contributed to elementary school students' reading literacy and supported the Indonesian government's policy. The limitation of this research is that it only collects data from articles accessed through Google Scholar (<http://www.scholar.google.com>), an e-journal web platform based in the United States, and therefore does not provide a comprehensive picture. It is recommended to future researchers to consider adding Scopus or internationally based data to encourage more contributions to research.

## 5. Conclusion and Implications

Based on the results of learning to read in elementary school in Indonesia, the tendency of the assessment to measure students' comprehension skills by using media, models, strategies, and methods in reading was determined through combined assessments that utilized observation and tests as reading instruments. The researcher mostly used the reading skill test and observation technique, which is easier to measure the student's reading comprehension skills in elementary school. Elementary schools provided more concrete learning opportunities when they incorporated media into reading instruction. Additionally, this research contributed to the students' reading literacy in elementary school and supported the Indonesian government's policy. Furthermore, based on the results described in this article, several studies still have not investigated the effect of students' reading comprehension improvement acquired through PISA. This is because the studies were still categorized as nationally based research. Accordingly, the Indonesian government still needs policies to enhance learning in elementary school, aiming to increase students' reading comprehension skills in comprehending and interpreting information. The researchers must conduct international-based research to change the students' reading comprehension skills in Indonesia. This research contributed to elementary school students' reading literacy and supported the Indonesian government's policy. The limitation of this research is that it only collects data from articles accessed through Google Scholar (<http://www.scholar.google.com>), an e-journal web platform based in the United States, and therefore does not provide a comprehensive picture. It is recommended to future researchers to consider adding Scopus or internationally based data to encourage more contributions to research.

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