

## Design and Development of a Best Practices Profile for Students' Reading Habits Based on Local Expert Consensus

Mohd Fauzan bin Zulkifli<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Faizal bin A. Ghani<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

This study aimed to design and develop a Best Practices Profile of Students' Reading Habits grounded in the consensus of local literacy experts. Employing a Design and Development Research (DDR) methodology, the study was conducted in three iterative phases involving fifteen (15) literacy experts comprising teacher educators, school leaders, and ministry officers. In the first phase, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis were used to identify nine (9) core components and 27 subcomponents that reflect effective reading habits. The second phase focused on developing 428 detailed implementation strategies aligned with those components. In the third phase, the Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM) was applied to validate and prioritise the strategies based on expert consensus. The findings revealed that components such as "Recognition of Reading Achievement", "Reading Vision and Mission", and "Cultivating a Reading Culture" were given the highest priority. The study contributes both theoretically and practically by offering a structured, expert-validated profile that supports literacy practices in Malaysian schools. This profile is expected to serve as a strategic framework for school leaders and policymakers in fostering sustainable reading cultures through evidence-based practices.<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** *reading habits, best practices profile, implementation strategy, literacy development, expert consensus, design and development research, Fuzzy Delphi Method*

### 1. Introduction

Reading is a fundamental literacy skill that forms the foundation for academic achievement, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. In the Malaysian context, the importance of cultivating reading habits among students has been consistently highlighted in national education policies, including the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). This document underscores the need to instil a strong reading culture within schools to prepare

<sup>1</sup> University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, [fauzan.phd@gmail.com](mailto:fauzan.phd@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Education University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia [mdfaizal@um.edu.my](mailto:mdfaizal@um.edu.my)

students for the demands of the 21st century. Despite numerous national-level campaigns and initiatives aimed at promoting reading, including “Program NILAM” and “Dekad Membaca Kebangsaan,” the desired transformation in students’ reading behaviour remains elusive.

Reports from the National Library of Malaysia (2023) continue to indicate a decline in reading interest, particularly among school-aged children. Contributing factors include a lack of structured and consistent implementation at the school level, insufficient integration between school leadership and community stakeholders, and an absence of a comprehensive model to guide effective literacy practices. Moreover, many schools operate in silos, implementing reading programmes without strategic alignment or support mechanisms that ensure sustainability.

In light of these challenges, there is an urgent need to develop a coherent and research-informed best practices profile that outlines the core components and implementation strategies for cultivating reading habits. Such a profile must not only reflect current literacy theories and contextual realities but also be validated by the consensus of experts in the Malaysian education landscape. This study responds to that need by adopting a design-based approach to develop and prioritise the components of a best practices profile for reading habits among students, informed by iterative expert input and rigorous methodological procedures.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

Despite national initiatives to promote reading, the lack of a comprehensive, school-level strategy continues to hinder the formation of sustainable reading habits among Malaysian students. While campaigns such as NILAM and the National Reading Decade have laid the groundwork, many schools struggle to translate these policies into actionable, context-specific practices. This gap is further compounded by the absence of an integrated framework that consolidates expert knowledge, stakeholder collaboration, and practical implementation strategies tailored to the local educational ecosystem.

Existing studies have primarily focused on isolated elements such as motivation, access to reading materials, or parental involvement, without offering a holistic model that brings these components together in a unified profile. Consequently, school administrators and educators lack a strategic reference point to implement reading initiatives that are evidence-based, contextually appropriate,

and aligned with broader educational goals. Addressing this gap is critical to ensuring that literacy development efforts are sustainable, measurable, and impactful across diverse school environments in Malaysia.

## 1.2. Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted with the following objectives:

- i. To identify and prioritise the core components of a best practices profile for students' reading habits based on the consensus of local literacy experts.
- ii. To develop and rank implementation strategies for the best practices profile of students' reading habits in accordance with the priorities agreed upon by expert panels.

## 1.3. Research Question

In line with the study's objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

- i. What are the prioritised core components of the best practices profile for cultivating students' reading habits as agreed upon by local literacy experts?
- ii. What are the implementation strategies, prioritised according to expert consensus, that support the effective adoption of the best practices profile in school contexts?

## 1.4. Hypothesis

As this study employed a design-based methodology involving expert consensus, no formal hypotheses were formulated. Instead, the research was guided by exploratory research questions that aimed to identify and prioritise core components and strategies based on qualitative and quantitative consensus from expert respondents.

## 1.5. Significance of the Study

This study contributes meaningfully to the field of literacy education in several ways. First, it addresses a critical gap in current practices by offering a structured, expert-informed profile that consolidates key elements of effective reading habit development. The profile serves as a practical tool for school leaders, teachers, and policymakers in designing, implementing, and evaluating literacy programmes that are both evidence-based and contextually relevant to Malaysian schools.

Second, the integration of the Fuzzy Delphi Method within a design-based research framework introduces a novel methodological contribution to literacy studies in the local context. It enables the quantification of expert consensus while preserving the qualitative depth necessary for understanding complex educational constructs. This hybrid approach not only enhances the robustness of the findings but also sets a precedent for future research in areas requiring structured input from expert panels.

Finally, the profile developed through this study provides a scalable model that schools can adapt to suit their unique environments. It aligns closely with national education goals such as those articulated in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025, reinforcing the government’s vision of fostering a reading nation through strategic and sustained school-level interventions.

### **1.6. Delimitations**

This study is delimited in several ways to ensure focus and methodological coherence. First, the research is confined to the Malaysian educational context, particularly within primary and secondary schools under the purview of the Ministry of Education Malaysia. Although the findings may offer conceptual insights for broader applications, their practical relevance is tailored to the national schooling system.

Second, the panel of experts involved in the three-round Fuzzy Delphi process consisted exclusively of local professionals with recognised expertise in literacy, education leadership, and teacher training. The study did not include international participants, in order to maintain contextual specificity.

Third, the data collection process spanned a specific time frame within the 2024 academic year. Any shifts in educational policy or literacy programmes introduced thereafter were not captured within the study's scope.

Lastly, the focus was limited to the development of components and strategies for a best practices profile. It did not extend to field-based implementation or empirical testing of the profile’s effectiveness in real school settings, which is recommended for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

The literature on students' reading habits has consistently identified several key dimensions influencing literacy engagement: intrinsic motivation, environmental support, instructional leadership, and systemic alignment. Clark and Rumbold (2006) asserted that reading for pleasure is strongly associated with improved cognitive achievement and emotional well-being. Likewise, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) emphasised that students' reading engagement is shaped by factors such as access to reading resources, teacher modelling, and formal recognition of effort. These foundational ideas continue to influence literacy practices globally.

Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding reading behaviour as a socially constructed activity, shaped by modelling, reinforcement, and self-efficacy. In the Malaysian context, this theoretical lens is echoed in recent findings by Nor Shidrah and Halimah (2021) as well as Haron and Ishak (2022), who highlighted the critical role of instructional leadership and systemic support in fostering school-wide literacy behaviour. Their studies suggest that leadership commitment, policy coherence, and collaborative vision are instrumental in influencing students' literacy outcomes.

In parallel, Katz and Kahn's (1978) Open Systems Theory situates schools within a dynamic and interactive system. This theory posits that schools must adapt and respond to their external environments—parents, communities, and policy systems—to function effectively. Such responsiveness is especially crucial in reading interventions, where community involvement and stakeholder support significantly enhance the sustainability of reading initiatives (Wong, Kamarulzaman, & Tan, 2023).

More recent scholarship has further refined our understanding of successful reading cultures. Merga and Moon (2022) identified daily reading routines, meaningful community engagement, and value-based reward systems as core drivers of effective reading culture in schools. Similarly, Nurhafizah Azizan and Yusnita Sokman (2023) reported that digital reading interventions should

complement—not replace—physical reading habits, especially for students in transitional reading stages.

Emerging studies in 2024 and 2025 have advanced this field by exploring innovations in literacy strategy implementation. Lee and Halim (2025) demonstrated that school-based digital tools that integrate reading goals with gamification features improve motivation among early readers. Meanwhile, Balansag (2025) found that early literacy leadership—especially where principals play active roles in modelling reading values—has a direct influence on students’ intrinsic motivation and reading autonomy.

Despite the breadth of studies, there remains a critical research gap: few studies translate these rich insights into a comprehensive, practical profile of best practices for school-level application, particularly within the Malaysian context. Existing frameworks often address individual components (e.g., reading strategies or teacher support) in isolation, without integrating them into a cohesive model. Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to the literature by developing a structured, consensus-based best practices profile, combining empirical research with expert validation.

### **3. Research Design & Materials**

#### **3.1. Research Method**

This study employed a Design and Development Research (DDR) methodology, which integrates systematic design procedures with empirical validation to develop educational products or models. The DDR approach was selected to facilitate the development of a Best Practices Profile of Students’ Reading Habits based on expert input and contextual alignment within Malaysian schools. The study progressed through three structured phases: needs analysis and design, development and refinement, and evaluation and validation—each corresponding to a cycle of data collection.

In the first round, semi-structured interviews were conducted with literacy experts to explore foundational components of effective reading habit practices. Thematic analysis was applied to derive nine (9) core components and 27 subcomponents.

The second round focused on the development of detailed implementation strategies aligned with the identified components. Expert input during this phase helped refine 428 proposed strategies. In the third round, the Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM) was employed to validate and prioritise these strategies based on consensus from the same panel of experts. The use of FDM enabled the quantification of agreement levels and mitigated dominance bias in the panel process.

The DDR methodology ensured a rigorous iterative cycle of design, expert engagement, and validation, resulting in a robust, practical, and theoretically grounded best practices profile tailored to the national educational context.

### **3.2 Population**

The population of this study comprised professionals in the field of literacy education in Malaysia. These included academic staff from teacher education institutes, officers from the Ministry of Education, school leaders, and experienced educators actively involved in literacy programmes.

The selection of this population was grounded in the rationale that their expertise, professional experience, and policy-level involvement would yield meaningful insights into the development and validation of a context-specific reading habits profile.

These individuals were not only familiar with national literacy frameworks such as the National Reading Decade and Program NILAM, but were also actively engaged in shaping and evaluating reading practices at school, district, and national levels. Their collective knowledge base was deemed essential for ensuring that the components and strategies identified in the study were both pedagogically sound and practically applicable within the local educational ecosystem.

To ensure the validity and credibility of findings, only those with at least five years of experience in literacy-related roles or leadership in education were considered eligible for participation in the study.

### 3.3.Sampling

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who met specific criteria aligned with the study's objectives. A total of fifteen (15) literacy experts were chosen, each possessing extensive experience in literacy education, programme design, and reading promotion. The selection was conducted based on academic qualifications, institutional roles, and active involvement in reading initiatives at the school, district, or national levels.

The sampling process aimed to ensure a diverse and representative expert panel capable of offering multidimensional perspectives on reading habit development. The participants were drawn from various institutions and roles to promote a balance between policy, practice, and pedagogy.

The following table summarises the profile of the expert participants:

**Table 1: Summary of Expert Panel Composition**

Expert Category	Number of Participants	Selection Criteria
Teacher Educators (IPG)	6	Minimum of 5 years in literacy instruction and module development
School Leaders (Principals, GPK)	4	Proven leadership in reading-related school programmes
Ministry Officers (JPN, BTP, BPK)	3	Involvement in policy and literacy programme planning
Literacy Specialists (NGOs, Panel Trainers)	2	Recognised contributions to national or regional literacy initiatives

This sampling structure ensured triangulation of expertise, increased the reliability of consensus findings, and provided practical depth for the development of a context-sensitive profile.

### 3.4 Research Instrument

The study utilised two primary research instruments developed in accordance with the three-phase structure of the Design and Development Research (DDR) approach.

In the first phase, a semi-structured interview protocol was employed to elicit expert perspectives on the key components of effective reading habits among students. The interview items were

developed based on a comprehensive review of literature and aligned with national literacy policies. The questions focused on domains such as reading motivation, school leadership, parental involvement, and community engagement. Each session lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and was recorded with participant consent for thematic analysis.

In the second phase, the data from the interviews were synthesised into a draft framework comprising nine (9) core components and 27 subcomponents, which were then used to generate 428 implementation strategy statements. These items were structured into a closed-ended Fuzzy Delphi questionnaire.

In the third phase, the Fuzzy Delphi instrument served as the key tool for expert validation and prioritisation. Each item was presented using a seven-point fuzzy scale, allowing experts to indicate the degree of agreement. The instrument was pilot-tested with two literacy researchers not involved in the main study to ensure clarity and technical appropriateness. The results of this round were analysed to determine threshold values, consensus levels, and ranking of priorities.

All instruments underwent expert review for content validity, and revisions were made to enhance precision, coherence, and contextual relevance before implementation.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability**

Ensuring the validity and reliability of the research instruments and procedures was a key priority throughout the three phases of this study. Multiple strategies were employed to guarantee the trustworthiness of both qualitative and quantitative elements in alignment with the principles of Design and Development Research (DDR).

#### **Content Validity**

Content validity was established through expert review and iterative refinement. In the first phase, the semi-structured interview protocol was reviewed by two literacy researchers with expertise in qualitative methods and reading education. Their feedback guided revisions in phrasing, sequence, and scope to ensure alignment with research objectives and theoretical constructs.

For the second and third phases, the draft list of implementation strategies and Fuzzy Delphi questionnaire items were examined by a separate panel of reviewers. The items were assessed for clarity, coherence, and contextual relevance, resulting in refinements to language, categorisation, and scale structure. This process ensured that each item accurately represented the corresponding component or subcomponent.

### **Reliability in Qualitative Analysis**

Thematic coding from the interview data followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines. To enhance reliability, two independent coders analysed the same data set, and inter-coder agreement was calculated. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved through consensus. This triangulation process ensured consistency in interpretation and category formation.

### **Reliability in Fuzzy Delphi Analysis**

In the Fuzzy Delphi phase, reliability was ensured through rigorous statistical analysis. The following criteria were applied to determine consensus and item validity:

- i. Threshold value ( $d \leq 0.2$ ): indicating acceptable level of agreement between expert responses.
- ii. Consensus level ( $\geq 75\%$ ): defining the minimum level of expert agreement for item acceptance.
- iii. Average fuzzy number  $\geq 0.5$ : representing positive inclination towards agreement.

Only items meeting all three conditions were retained as validated strategies. The process minimised bias and enhanced the precision of the final implementation framework.

Through these mechanisms, the study achieved high validity and reliability in identifying and validating the core components and implementation strategies for the reading habits profile.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection process was conducted in three iterative rounds, each aligned with a specific phase of the Design and Development Research (DDR) model. These procedures were designed

to allow progressive development, expert validation, and refinement of the best practices profile for students' reading habits.

### **First Round: Exploratory Interviews**

In the first phase, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 selected literacy experts. The interviews were conducted online via video conferencing platforms to accommodate geographical distribution and availability. Each session was guided by an interview protocol that covered key domains such as instructional leadership, reading environment, student motivation, and community involvement. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis.

### **Second Round: Development of Strategy Framework**

Based on the findings from the first round, a draft profile comprising nine (9) core components and 27 subcomponents was developed. From this, a total of 428 implementation strategies were constructed. The strategies were distributed to the same panel of experts via email in the form of a structured document for feedback. Experts were invited to review, revise, and propose additional strategies where relevant. Responses were synthesised and integrated into a revised strategy set for validation.

### **Third Round: Validation via Fuzzy Delphi Method**

In the third round, the Fuzzy Delphi questionnaire was administered to the same group of experts. The instrument employed a seven-point linguistic scale to measure the degree of agreement on each strategy item. Respondents returned their completed questionnaires within two weeks. The collected data were then processed using fuzzy set theory to determine consensus thresholds and prioritisation rankings.

Throughout all three rounds, the confidentiality of participants was strictly maintained, and all data were handled in compliance with ethical research protocols. Communication and follow-up were carried out professionally to ensure a 100% response rate across all rounds.

## **3.7 Data Analysis Procedure**

The data analysis procedures were tailored to suit the multi-phase nature of the Design and Development Research (DDR) model employed in this study. Each phase utilised distinct analytical techniques appropriate to its methodological focus, namely thematic analysis for qualitative data and Fuzzy Delphi analysis for quantitative validation.

### Phase 1: Thematic Analysis

Data obtained from the semi-structured interviews in the first round were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework:

- i. Familiarisation with data
- ii. Generation of initial codes
- iii. Searching for themes
- iv. Reviewing themes
- v. Defining and naming themes
- vi. Producing the report

Through this process, nine (9) major themes representing the core components of effective reading habits were identified, along with 27 subcomponents. The themes were validated by two independent coders to ensure inter-coder reliability, with discrepancies resolved through discussion and consensus.

### Phase 2: Synthesis of Strategy Items

Based on the thematic results, 428 implementation strategies were developed and categorised according to their corresponding subcomponents. These items were qualitatively refined using expert feedback collected during the second round. The strategy set was then structured into a Fuzzy Delphi questionnaire.

### Phase 3: Fuzzy Delphi Analysis

In the third phase, responses to the Fuzzy Delphi questionnaire were processed using fuzzy set theory. Each item was evaluated using the following three criteria:

- i. Threshold value (d): Items with  $d \leq 0.2$  were considered to have acceptable agreement.
- ii. Expert consensus: Items achieving  $\geq 75\%$  agreement among panel members were retained.
- iii. Average fuzzy number: Only items with an average score  $\geq 0.5$  were accepted as valid.

The validated items were then ranked based on their average fuzzy values, resulting in a prioritised list of implementation strategies. This combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis ensured that the resulting profile was both empirically grounded and strategically ordered.

#### 4. Data Analysis

##### 4.1 Summary of Findings

This study successfully established a structured and consensus-driven profile consisting of nine (9) core components and twenty-seven (27) subcomponents that represent best practices in cultivating students' reading habits in Malaysian schools. These components were identified, refined, and validated across three iterative rounds involving 15 literacy experts through the Design and Development Research (DDR) approach. The findings are summarised below:

##### (a) Core Components and Subcomponents of the Profile

The first phase of data collection yielded rich qualitative insights, which were categorised through thematic analysis. These were then synthesised into a structured model comprising nine key components, each supported by three subcomponents. The profile represents a holistic framework that integrates recognition, leadership, environment, collaboration, and institutional culture to support sustainable reading practices in schools.

The following table presents a summary of the components and subcomponents:

**Table 2. Summary of Core Components and Subcomponents of the Best Practices Profile for Students' Reading Habits**

No	Component	Subcomponents
1	Recognition of Reading Achievement	Self-reflection, Achievement, Awards
2	Reading Vision and Mission	Vision Statement, Dissemination, Goal Setting
3	Reading Culture	Values, Norms, Beliefs
4	Stakeholder Collaboration	Parents, Community, Expert Networks
5	Staff Development	Training, Collaborative Inquiry

6	Shared Expectations	School Aspirations, Common Indicators
7	Allocated Reading Time	Scheduled Sessions, Library Access
8	Reading Environment	Resources, Aesthetics, Accessibility
9	School Leadership	Integrated Literacy Leadership

### (b) Development and Prioritisation of Implementation Strategies

From the validated components and subcomponents, a total of 428 implementation strategies were formulated. These strategies encompassed diverse domains such as leadership behaviour, student engagement, parental involvement, environmental enhancement, and teacher empowerment.

The Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM) was employed in the third round to determine expert consensus and prioritisation. Based on the criteria of threshold value ( $d \leq 0.2$ ), consensus level ( $\geq 75\%$ ), and average fuzzy score ( $\geq 0.5$ ), 396 strategies were validated and ranked.

High-priority strategies included:

- i. Creating structured systems for recognising students' reading progress.
- ii. Aligning school mission statements with long-term reading goals.
- iii. Establishing visually appealing and resource-rich reading corners.
- iv. Strengthening teacher professional development in literacy.
- v. Engaging parents and community experts through joint reading campaigns.

These findings culminate in a comprehensive profile that can guide the systematic implementation of reading practices in schools, rooted in empirical evidence and local expert insight.

### 4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study affirm the multidimensional nature of reading habits and the need for a systemic, school-wide approach to literacy development. The emergence of nine core components reflects a nuanced understanding of reading not merely as an individual behaviour, but as a cultural and institutional practice shaped by leadership, environment, stakeholder collaboration, and

strategic planning. This aligns with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), which highlights the interplay between personal, environmental, and behavioural factors in shaping literacy outcomes. When students observe reading being modelled, rewarded, and integrated into daily life, their motivation and identity as readers are strengthened.

Among the components, Recognition of Reading Achievement and Reading Culture emerged as top priorities. This supports findings by Merga and Moon (2022), who argued that social recognition and positive reinforcement are central to sustaining long-term reading engagement. Similarly, Wong et al. (2023) found that effective reading programmes in Southeast Asia integrate formal awards and student reflection to foster intrinsic motivation.

The emphasis on Vision and Mission and School Leadership resonates with Katz and Kahn's Open Systems Theory (1978), where schools are seen as dynamic entities influenced by internal norms and external environments. In this study, literacy was not treated as an isolated subject, but embedded into the broader organisational ethos through visionary leadership. This mirrors recent Malaysian findings by Haron and Ishak (2022), who noted that schools with clearly articulated literacy visions demonstrated higher student reading engagement and teacher consistency.

Additionally, the validation of Stakeholder Collaboration as a core component highlights the importance of shared ownership. Parental and community involvement is crucial, particularly in multilingual and multicultural settings. Studies by Balansag (2025) and Nor Shidrah & Halimah (2021) demonstrate that collaborative partnerships—especially those involving local literacy experts—enhance sustainability and contextual relevance of reading initiatives.

Furthermore, the successful application of the Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM) allowed for precise consensus building without allowing dominant voices to skew group judgement. Compared to traditional Delphi methods, the FDM ensured a systematic and objective prioritisation process. This aligns with the work of Habibi et al. (2015) and is further supported in Malaysian educational research by Mohd Zamri and Syed Mohamed (2023).

The component Staff Development was also rated highly, underlining the need for professional learning communities and literacy-focused training for educators. As suggested by Kaur and Halili (2024), equipping teachers with sustained pedagogical support in literacy has a greater impact on student reading outcomes than ad-hoc interventions.

Importantly, this study's results demonstrate coherence with the National Reading Decade (Dekad Membaca Kebangsaan) aspirations, while offering a grounded and actionable model tailored to the realities of Malaysian schools.

In summary, this discussion reinforces that the Best Practices Profile is not only empirically validated but also theoretically grounded and contextually appropriate. It presents a strategic platform that school leaders, policymakers, and educators can use to embed reading into the heart of educational practice.

#### **4.3. Implications**

The findings from this study offer significant implications at the theoretical, practical, and policy levels. The development of a comprehensive Best Practices Profile for Students' Reading Habits, grounded in expert consensus, not only advances the field of literacy education but also provides a framework that is actionable, sustainable, and adaptable across school settings.

##### **(a) Theoretical Implications**

The validated profile reinforces and operationalises key principles of Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) and Open Systems Theory (Katz & Kahn, 1978). It confirms that effective reading habits emerge from dynamic interactions between learners, environments, and institutional structures. The inclusion of components such as Reading Culture, Recognition, and Leadership contributes to a more holistic understanding of how reading behaviours are socially constructed and institutionally supported. This study contributes to existing scholarship by offering a model that translates theory into structured practices, filling a notable gap in current literacy frameworks.

##### **(b) Practical Implications**

For school leaders and practitioners, the profile provides a strategic blueprint for improving reading engagement and literacy outcomes. The prioritised strategies—ranging from embedding reading goals into school vision statements to organising stakeholder reading campaigns—are specific, feasible, and scalable. Teachers may also benefit from the Staff Development component, which highlights the need for collaborative professional learning in literacy pedagogy. As supported by Kaur and Halili (2024), targeted teacher development is essential for nurturing literacy-rich classrooms.

Furthermore, the component on Reading Environment underscores the importance of aesthetic and accessible spaces, which can be implemented with moderate resources but have high motivational impact. This empowers even under-resourced schools to initiate meaningful change with guided support.

### **(c) Policy Implications**

From a policy perspective, the study aligns with Malaysia's National Reading Decade (Dekad Membaca Kebangsaan) initiative by providing a structured model for school-wide reading practice. Education authorities may adopt the profile as a reference for assessing literacy programmes, designing national reading rubrics, or benchmarking institutional performance. It can also inform the development of monitoring instruments that assess both reading outcomes and the quality of literacy ecosystems in schools.

In addition, the validated strategies may serve as reference points for integrating literacy goals into Whole School Improvement Plans and School-Based Assessment Frameworks. Given the study's alignment with national priorities, it offers timely input for ministries seeking evidence-based strategies to drive literacy reforms.

## **5. References**

Balansag, J. B. (2025). *Empowering early literacy through school-community partnerships: Evidence from Southeast Asian classrooms*. *Journal of Literacy and Educational Reform*, 14(2), 45–61. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jler.2025.01402>

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall.

Clark, C., & Rumbold, K. (2006). *Reading for pleasure: A research overview*. National Literacy Trust.

Habibi, A., Sarafrazi, A., & Izadyar, S. (2015). Fuzzy Delphi technique: Applications in quality, safety, environment and productivity. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Engineering Science and Technology*, 2(10), 267–271.

Haron, S., & Ishak, N. M. (2022). Literacy leadership and school-wide reading achievement in Malaysian primary schools. *Malaysian Journal of Education*, 47(1), 78–92. <https://doi.org/10.17576/edu-2022-47-01-06>

Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1978). *The social psychology of organizations* (2nd ed.). Wiley.

Kaur, S., & Halili, S. H. (2024). Professional learning communities as a catalyst for literacy reform in Malaysian schools. *Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education*, 39(1), 12–27. <https://doi.org/10.21315/apjee2024.39.1.2>

Merga, M. K., & Moon, B. (2022). Creating a reading culture in secondary schools: What matters and what works. *The Reading Teacher*, 75(5), 601–613. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.2078>

Mohd Zamri, A. R., & Syed Mohamed, S. M. (2023). The effectiveness of Fuzzy Delphi method in policy evaluation for education. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 20(2), 101–117. <https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2023.20.2.5>

Nor Shidrah, S., & Halimah, A. M. (2021). Instructional leadership in promoting reading practices in Malaysian rural schools. *Journal of Educational Management*, 9(2), 88–104.

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia. (2023). *Laporan Kajian Profil Pembacaan Rakyat Malaysia 2022*. Kementerian Pelancongan, Seni dan Budaya Malaysia.

Wong, J. S., Tan, L. C., & Chai, S. Y. (2023). Enhancing reading habits in multilingual classrooms: A collaborative model from Malaysian schools. *International Journal of Educational Research in Literacy Studies*, 8(1), 33–50. <https://doi.org/10.21315/ijerl2023.8.1.3>