



# Multiple Correlation of Reading Perception and Reading Interest to Reading Habit during the Pandemic Covid-19 in the Junior High School

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## ABSTRAK

Masih banyak siswa yang memiliki pemahaman isi bacaan yang rendah. Hal ini disebabkan karena siswa kurang termotivasi dalam membaca. Selain itu, siswa juga tidak memiliki kebiasaan membaca sehingga berpengaruh pada kemampuan siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan ganda persepsi membaca, minat baca, dan kebiasaan membaca siswa pada masa pandemi Covid-19. Pembelajaran EFL dilaksanakan melalui platform online yaitu Google Classroom. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VII yang berjumlah 70 siswa. Desain yang digunakan adalah desain penelitian kuantitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan tiga instrumen, yaitu Skala Persepsi Membaca, Skala Minat Baca, dan Skala Kebiasaan Membaca. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif dan inferensial menggunakan Korelasi Ganda dari gabungan variabel prediktor dan variabel kriteria. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa persepsi membaca siswa sedang; minat baca sedang; kebiasaan membaca sedang; dan korelasi ganda persepsi membaca dan minat baca terhadap kebiasaan membaca terbukti berkorelasi positif signifikan dan tinggi ( $R = 0,851$  dengan  $\alpha = 0,01$ ). Penelitian ini menyiratkan bahwa siswa perlu meningkatkan pengalaman membaca mereka, motivasi membaca, jumlah waktu yang dihabiskan untuk membaca, dan sering terlibat dalam kegiatan membaca. Hal ini juga berimplikasi kepada guru EFL untuk memberikan materi pembelajaran dan pendekatan/metode/teknik pembelajaran yang tepat dalam keterampilan membaca.

## ABSTRACT

There are still many students who have low reading comprehension. This is because students are less interested in reading. In addition, students also do not have the habit of reading, which affects students' abilities. This study aims to analyze the dual relationship between reading perception, reading interest, and students' reading habits during the Covid-19 pandemic. EFL learning is carried out through an online platform, namely Google Classroom. The population of this study was the seventh-grade students who found 70 students. The design used is a quantitative research design. Data was collected using the Reading Perception Scale, Reading Interest Scale, and Reading Habits Scale. Data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using Multiple Correlations from a combination of predictor variables and criteria. The results showed that the students' reading perception was moderate; moderate reading interest; sensible reading habits; and four the double correlation of reading perception and reading interest on reading habits proved to have a significant and high positive correlation ( $R = 0.851$  with  $\alpha = 0.01$ ). This research implies that students need to improve their reading experience, reading motivation, time spent reading, and frequent reading activities. This also has implications for EFL teachers to provide learning materials and appropriate learning approaches/methods/techniques in reading skills.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading literacy is of paramount importance since it determines the quality of a nation (Devi et al., 2020; Valverde-Berrococo et al., 2020). The young Indonesian readers failed in the reading assessment compared to students in other countries. In 2015, the result of PISA showed that the youthful Indonesian readers were positioned in 60<sup>th</sup> out of 72 countries (Septya Nugrahanto & Zuchdi, 2019; Rubini et al., 2018). The Indonesian young readers' reading means the score was 397 compared to 493 of the participating countries (Nugrahanto & Zuchdi, 2019; Septya Nugrahanto & Zuchdi, 2019). In 2018, the young Indonesian readers were positioned in 72<sup>th</sup> out of 77 countries. The average Indonesian young readers' reading means score was 371 compared to 487 of the participating countries. Similarly, the students were observed to have low reading comprehension in *Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri 2 Sidemen*. Based on the results of observations made at the 2 Sidemen Junior High School, it was found that students lacked the intention to read. In addition, students are also lazy to read. Based on the results of interviews conducted with students, it was found that students felt lazy to read because students

felt bored. Students who do not like reading activities will have a low impact on knowledge (Liang et al., 2021; Mufit et al., 2020).

*Theoretically*, low reading comprehension may be related to reading perception (Rini, 2018; Sata & Nara, 2017). They were reading perception as an awareness of the reading's value or importance. In other words, one may perceive reading as a very positive or valuable activity to endeavor (Kholiq, 2020; Putranta & Supahar, 2019). Moreover, when perception is positive, the motivational force or interest will increase (Beck et al., 2021; Borre et al., 2019). Reading perception may bring about motivation to read. Through interviews with students in SMPN 2 Sidemen, it was found that the students did not believe that reading experience could make them aware of the reading's value or importance. More specifically, they did not conceive reading to strengthen the ability to determine texts' main ideas, specific information, textual references, and word meanings. In general, the students were not motivated in reading whatsoever (Mardiyah et al., 2020).

The second variable related to reading comprehension is reading interest. Reading interest is a dynamic, active state based on the tangible objects and the desire connected to reading (Fitriana et al., 2014; Muzijah et al., 2020). Reading interest involves extra attention, better comprehension, and also more extended recall. Operationally, reading interest refers to whether or not students like to read in their spare time or at home or whether they like to go to the library (Kemp, 2017; Rahmah & Muslim, 2019). In the interview, it was found that the students did not like reading. They bored quickly because they had to check up the dictionary for word or phrase meanings. Moreover, they did not like to read in their spare time or at home or elsewhere. They also admitted that they rarely went to the library to read.

The third variable is reading habit. Reading habits refer to the frequency of behavior, automaticity, and expression of one's identity (Kim et al., 2019; Suwana et al., 2013). Moreover, reading habit is defined as when people do something consciously and unconsciously (Tentama & Riskiyana, 2020; Zhao & Wu, 2021). Simply formulated, a reading habit means the frequency one engages in reading, the amount of time allocated for reading, the materials one reads (Yuniarti & Radia, 2020). In the interview, the students acknowledged that they rarely spent time reading. They realized that they spent time reading the students' textbook when they had English classes or during the mid-term or final-term examinations.

Schools should be able to apply learning that makes students happy in reading. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many countries have decided to close schools, colleges, and universities (Shah et al., 2021; Storch et al., 2021). It makes all learning processes use online learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, Webex, and Schoology (Dong et al., 2020; Muthuprasad et al., 2021). *SMPN 2 Sidemen* was not an exception. EFL classes have been implemented through online learning platforms, especially Google Classroom. Google Classroom provides benefits such as an easy-to-learn interface or user-friendly device, integrates with lots of applications and websites or data entering conducted once for all and having available across all platforms, seamlessly share or easily moves from one thing to another without any problems, collect and grade varieties of available ready documents, such as Gmail, Calendar, Classroom, Contacts, Drive, Docs, Forms, Groups, Sheets, Series, Slides, Talk/Hangouts, Vault, and Chrome Sync (Guswara, 2020; Setiawan & Ari Oka, 2020). Aside from the benefits, Google Classroom may present constraints such as providing information workflows in the website and measuring student progress relative to specific learning standards (Al-Marouf & Al-Emran, 2018; Ali & Maksum, 2020). Learning done online using a good platform might increase students' willingness to learn.

Empirically, the three related variables can be traced from previous research accounts. Previous research investigated the reading habits and interests of Saudi English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) students in a university-level preparatory year program (PYP). The study results are that reading in social media environments is more deeply involved (Rajab & Al-Sadi, 2015). Another research finding also states that almost 50% of students occasionally read during the holidays, 12% read once a week, 9% once a month, and 29% never read even though books are accessible (Maharsi & Maulani, 2019). The students admitted that reading was fun for fun. However, the data revealed that students' reading preferences were still weak. This is thought to be related to reading culture. In assessing students' reading interest, affordability and accessibility of reading content seem to play a role (Le et al., 2019; Nootens et al., 2019). Reading material should also vary in genre, theme, and print and screen form regarding the digital birth of students. Another study also found that 43% of students viewed their reading patterns well on the Internet. However, most of them see reading clearly as an exercise to complete their school practice. They also know the Internet as a primary intelligence source to accomplish their tasks (Bana, 2020).

This study aimed to investigate the multiple correlations of the students' reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit during the pandemic Covid-19 in SMPN 2 Sidemen. The present research was conducted on reading class through Google Classroom, focusing on multiple correlations of two predictor variables: reading perception and reading interest, and one criterion variable, reading habit. Reading was studied because it is relevant to the era of technology and information, allowing students to participate effectively in society and develop knowledge and potential (Liang et al., 2021; Loh & Kanai, 2016). Reading through Google Classroom was investigated as to whether online learning platforms benefited or hindered the students' reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit in *SMPN 2 Sidemen*.

## 2. METHOD

Correlational research was implemented as the design of the study. Data were analyzed step wisely, first descriptively using central tendency and dispersion measures to characterize the three variables descriptively. After descriptive analysis, the analysis was proceeded to inferential analysis using Multiple Correlations of the combined predictor variables and criterion variable. Data were processed using SPSS version 25. The pupils of seventh-grade students in SMPN 2 Sidemen in the academic year 2020/2021 became the population of this study. Five intact classes gathered with 162 pupils in the population. However, based on relatively poor and good English competency, two classes were intentionally sampled. Class 7A consisting of 35 students, was considered a good class. Meanwhile, 7C with 35 students became the poor class. Thus, 70 students were recruited as the total sample of this research.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Before testing the alternative hypothesis, data on the students' reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit in SMPN 2 Sidemen are described and focused on the mean score, standard deviation, and variance. These statistics were obtained using SPSS version 25. Based on the results of data analysis, there were 70 students studied in SMPN 2 Sidemen studied. They were selected from two intact classes, namely class 7A and 7C. The students in class 7A have relatively good English competency; whereas, the students in class 7C have relatively poor English competency. In general, the minimum scores of their reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit are 36.00, 39.00, and 39.00, respectively. And, the maximum scores are 65.00, 67.00, and 68.00, respectively. The ranges between the minimum and maximum scores are 29.00, 28.00, and 29.00, respectively. Differences in values of the students reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit in both classes are almost the same = 29, 28, and 29. The students' reading perception, interest, and habit were further analyzed in terms of central tendency and dispersion.

Based on the results of data analysis, the students' mean scores of reading perception, reading interest, converted to T-score or a score scale between 10 – 100, are 67.75, 69.00, and 70.75, respectively. The mean scores of reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit could be categorized using the following criteria. The students' reading perception in SMPN 2 Sidemen is **moderate** since the value lies between (mean  $\pm$  1 standard deviation) = 60.78 – 74.72; reading interest is also **moderate** since the value lies between (mean  $\pm$  1 standard deviation) = 61.61 – 76.39; and, reading habit is **moderate** since the value lies between (mean  $\pm$  1 standard deviation) = 62.65 – 78.85. Despite EFL having been conducted using Google Classroom, the students' reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit remain relatively moderate. Further analysis was performed on the variability of the students' reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit scores. The largest variability occurs in the students' reading habit (variance = 65.67) and followed in reading interest (variance = 54.66) and reading perception (variance = 48.65) consecutively.

In order to test the alternative hypothesis of positive significant multiple correlations of reading perception and reading interest to reading habit, various correlations were performed using SPSS Version 25. The multiple correlations of reading perception and reading interest to reading habit are significantly positive high correlation  $R = 0.851$  with  $\alpha = 0.01$ . In other words, the significance level is as high as 99 % containing truth. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The gross contribution of reading perception and reading interest towards reading habit is  $R$  square = 0.724 or 72.40 %. Reading habit could be accounted for by reading perception and reading interest but 28.60% by other variables aside from the predictor as mentioned above variables. The net contribution of reading perception and reading interest towards reading habit is adjusted  $R$  square = 0.716 or 71.6% or a bit lower than the gross contribution.

### Discussion

This study was a multiple correlation study that emphasized the learners' reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit in SMPN 2 Sidemen. The research results from significant positive correlations of the students' reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit in SMPN 2 Sidemen. The research finding could be elaborated with theoretical and empirical arguments as follows.

First, the theory of reading perception related to previous experience, motivation, and emotional state, time allocation for reading, and the meaning or added value of reading are closely related to reading habits. In improving reading skills, one must get used to reading (Lange et al., 2021; Sheen & Luximon, 2021). Reading is said not to take place if there is no understanding of the reader. Reading is a fairly complex activity. Reading involves physical and mental aspects, experience and knowledge, and thinking and feeling activities (Tentama & Riskiyana, 2020; Zhao & Wu, 2021). The importance of reading for human life must be realized from an early age. Through reading, they will gain new knowledge and insights that can increase their intelligence so that people

can better answer the challenges of life in the future (Le et al., 2019; Nootens et al., 2019). People will find to read if they know the benefits of the habit of reading (Korat et al., 2021; Öztürk et al., 2020). Teachers must instill reading habits in students so that students have increased abilities.

Second, the theory of reading interest relates to students' past experiences, refusal to read, interest in reading, interest in reading topics, the pressure they feel in reading, the complexity of reading, issues in reading to reading habits. The six indicators are related to daily or weekly reading frequency or repetition, intentional reading, and unruly and unconscious reading behavior. Excellent and correct reading skills are essential in helping children learn various things (Almusawi et al., 2021; Hagaman & Reid, 2018). Excellent and accurate reading activities will allow children to take the essence of their reading material (Creed et al., 2012; Suwana et al., 2013). Thus, children can get something from the reading activities they do.

Improving the ability to understand texts from an early age is a must for the learning process in the education system. Improving reading skills must also be fostered through reading habits. Reading skills are the principal capital in the learning process. Armed with the ability to read, children will learn and facilitate their mindset to think more critically (Haromi, 2014; Zarić et al., 2021). Through learning to read, students are expected to provide appropriate responses to the information read. In addition, reading can also be the key to unlocking knowledge.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research concluded that the students' mean scores of reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit were moderate in SMPN 2 Sidemen. The most considerable variability occurs in the students' reading habits. Then the multiple correlations of reading perception and reading interest to reading habit are significantly positive high correlation. To improve the students' reading perception, reading interest, and reading habit, the following program activities; the school should have a literacy program in reading. Literacy programs with rich environments are effective ways to support the development of literacy in reading.

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