

The Correlation between Students' Reading Comprehension Skill and Reading Interest in High School

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the correlation between reading comprehension skill and reading interest in high school students specifically in English texts. The main objective of this study is to examine the correlation between reading comprehension skill and reading interest in high school students especially in reading English texts. The population of this study consists of second-grade students of a public school in Kutai Kartanegara regency, with cluster sampling will be employed to determine the sample. An English comprehension test and questionnaire of reading interest will serve as the research instrument, and both correlation test and ANOVA will be utilized for data analysis to examine the correlation between reading comprehension skill and reading interest on students. After the data was analyzed with the correlation test, it showed no correlation between students' reading comprehension and reading interest in high school. According to ANOVA, the result indicated significant differences between the group that has high level of reading interest and those that has low interest. Future research could explore additional variables that may impact reading interests, such as preferences for different genres, motivational factors, and instructional methods aimed at promoting reading for pleasure.

Keywords: Reading Interest, Reading Comprehension, Correlation

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menyelidiki hubungan antara keterampilan pemahaman membaca dan minat membaca siswa sekolah menengah atas khususnya teks bahasa Inggris. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji hubungan antara keterampilan pemahaman membaca dan minat membaca siswa sekolah menengah khususnya dalam membaca teks bahasa Inggris. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas II sebuah sekolah negeri di Kabupaten Kutai Kartanegara, dengan *cluster* sampling yang akan digunakan untuk menentukan sampelnya. Tes pemahaman bahasa Inggris dan angket minat membaca akan digunakan sebagai instrumen penelitian, dan tes korelasi serta ANOVA akan digunakan untuk analisis data guna menguji korelasi antara keterampilan pemahaman membaca dan minat membaca siswa. Setelah data dianalisis dengan uji korelasi, ternyata tidak ada korelasi antara pemahaman membaca siswa dengan minat membaca di SMA. Berdasarkan ANOVA, hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya perbedaan yang signifikan antara kelompok yang memiliki minat membaca tinggi dan kelompok yang memiliki minat membaca rendah. Penelitian di masa depan dapat mengeksplorasi variabel tambahan yang mungkin memengaruhi minat membaca, seperti preferensi terhadap genre yang berbeda, faktor motivasi, dan metode pengajaran yang bertujuan untuk mendorong kesenangan membaca.

Kata Kunci: Minat Baca, Pemahaman Membaca, Korelasi

INTRODUCTION

Reading activities have a profound impact on high school students' vocabulary arsenal by expanding their word knowledge and enhancing their language skills. Engaging in extensive reading, where students read a wide variety of books regularly, exposes them to a plethora of words and concepts. This exposure helps students acquire new vocabulary naturally and enjoyably, leading to improved literacy skills, and increased cultural capital.

The nature of reading is a complex and multifaceted process that involves both cognitive and emotional components. Reading is not merely about decoding symbols into sounds but also about constructing meaning and engaging with text on a deeper level. According to Pardede (2019), reading comprehension skill is influenced by various factors including vocabulary knowledge, prior knowledge, and the ability to make inferences. This intricate process highlights that reading is an active, cognitive activity that requires the reader to interact dynamically with the text to derive meaning. Moreover, reading is an essential skill for academic success and personal development. The ability to comprehend and critically engage with texts is fundamental for acquiring knowledge across disciplines. Cutting and Scarborough (2006) note that proficient reading comprehension skill is foundational for academic achievement and plays a crucial role in the learning process. Effective reading strategies and interventions can significantly enhance comprehension skills, especially for individuals with specific learning needs, thereby supporting their educational and personal growth (El Zein et al., 2016).

Interest generally refers to the emotional and psychological engagement and motivation to participate in an activity or process. This engagement can be influenced by various factors, including both personal and situational elements. For instance, Lustyantje & Aprilia (2020) (2020) emphasizes that interest development is shaped by both internal (personal) and external (institutional) factors. Individual elements such as age, gender, intelligence, and attitudes, along with external factors like social status, economic background, and teacher influence, all contribute to the formation of interest. Interest is a complex construct with various dimensions that impact behavior and learning. One significant dimension is individual interest, which is a long-term, intrinsic inclination to engage in specific activities or subjects. This type of interest is rooted in personal preferences, values, and experiences and develops over time. Sutarto et al. (2020) explain that individual interest "emerges from repeated engagement with particular content over time and leads to enduring, deep-seated preferences for certain activities or subjects." Recognizing and nurturing individual interest can lead to sustained engagement and intrinsic motivation. Another important dimension is situational interest, which is a temporary state triggered by specific external stimuli. Situational interest can be sparked by novel, surprising, or engaging aspects of a task or environment. It is essential for capturing attention and motivating initial engagement, even if the individual does not have a pre-existing interest in the topic. Linnenbrink-Garcia et al. (2016) note that situational interest "can be influenced by aspects of the learning environment, such as task features,

instructional methods, and social interactions." Utilizing situational interest can be particularly effective in educational settings to stimulate curiosity and involvement.

Reading interest refers to the motivational drive and enthusiasm that individuals have towards engaging with reading activities. It encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, where intrinsic motivation is driven by a genuine love for reading, and extrinsic motivation can be influenced by external rewards or social pressures. According to Schiefele et al. (2016), "reading interest is a significant predictor of reading behavior and achievement, as it influences the amount of time individuals spend reading and the depth of their engagement with the text." This highlights the importance of fostering reading interest to enhance reading habits and overall literacy. The development of reading interest is influenced by various factors, including personal experiences, social interactions, and the availability of engaging reading materials. Research by Barber & Klauda (2020) indicates that "students who have access to a wide range of interesting texts are more likely to develop a strong interest in reading." Providing diverse and appealing reading materials can stimulate curiosity and encourage more frequent and extensive reading. Additionally, positive reading experiences and supportive environments play crucial roles in nurturing and sustaining reading interest. Moreover, exploring factors that influence reading interest, such as genre preferences, accessibility to diverse reading materials, and instructional methods, can provide insights into fostering a reading culture in high school students. By identifying and addressing barriers to reading comprehension skill and cultivating a supportive environment that nurtures reading interest, educators can empower students to become proficient readers who are equipped for lifelong learning (Kathryn et al., 2022).

A correlation study is a research method used to examine the relationship between two or more variables. It seeks to determine whether and to what extent changes in one variable are associated with changes in another variable. This type of study is valuable for exploring the direction and strength of relationships between variables without implying causation. According to Steger et al. (2021) and Raymaekers & Rousseeuw (2021), "correlation studies provide a quantitative measure of the degree to which two variables are related," offering insights into patterns of association that can inform further research or practical applications. Correlation studies utilize statistical techniques to calculate correlation coefficients, such as Pearson's correlation coefficient for linear relationships or Spearman's rank correlation coefficient for non-linear relationships. These coefficients indicate the direction (positive or negative) and strength (weak, moderate, strong) of the relationship between variables. For instance, as stated by S J (2020), "Pearson's correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1, where -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, +1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, and 0 indicates no correlation."

Reading comprehension skill and reading interest are pivotal factors in shaping students' academic performance and overall development. High school marks a critical period where students' engagement with reading can significantly influence their educational outcomes and future prospects. Understanding the

relationship between reading comprehension skill and reading interest is crucial for educators and policymakers aiming to enhance literacy skills among adolescents. Research indicates that reading comprehension skill involves not just understanding the text's literal meaning but also making inferences, critically evaluating information, and synthesizing ideas. It serves as a fundamental skill across all subjects and is closely tied to academic success. On the other hand, reading interest refers to students' intrinsic motivation and enjoyment in reading various materials. When students are interested in what they read, they are more likely to actively engage with texts, which can positively impact their comprehension skills (Ceyhan & Yıldız, 2020). The correlation between reading comprehension skill and reading interest is multifaceted and dynamic. Studies suggest that students who have higher levels of interest in reading tend to demonstrate better comprehension skills. Conversely, poor reading comprehension skill can diminish students' motivation to read, leading to a decline in reading interest over time. Therefore, investigating how these two variables interact in the context of high school education is essential for devising effective strategies to promote literacy and academic achievement (Støle et al., 2020).

However, the literacy situation of high school students in Indonesia presents a significant challenge, with concerns about low reading interest and proficiency levels. According to the 2015 PISA report, Indonesian students ranked 74th out of 79 countries in terms of literacy skills, with a decline in reading competency scores from 397 in 2015 to 371 in 2018. Factors contributing to this issue include a lack of interest in reading among Indonesian children, with only a small percentage showing enthusiasm for reading. The prevalence of technology, such as phones and video games, has diverted students' attention away from reading books. Despite efforts to improve literacy rates, challenges persist, including poor teacher training, limited access to books, and a lack of emphasis on reading culture in schools (Anugrah, 2022).

Numerous studies, such as one conducted by Isyaku Hassan and his associates, demonstrated a noteworthy correlation between the reading habits of ESL students and their exam scores (2021). Another study by Jessica and her colleagues implied in their study that the relationship between motivation and reading was modified by the motivation construct being examined (2020). Meanwhile, a study conducted by Li and his colleagues shows that reading interest and motivation were significantly associated with higher reading comprehension skill scores; however, their studies was restricted to the reading habits and reading achievement of students in multiple secondary schools. The researcher will focus on investigating the correlation between reading comprehension skill and reading interest in high school students.

In conclusion, the correlation between reading comprehension skill and reading interest in high school students underscores the importance of integrating strategies that enhance both skills simultaneously. This study aims to contribute to existing literature by providing empirical evidence and practical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders interested in promoting literacy and academic success among students. So that, the research questions are formulated as

follows: Is there any correlation between reading comprehension skill and reading interest in high school students? and how are the differences of the students' reading comprehension skill that has higher reading level of interest compared with those with lower level of interest?

METHOD

This study used a correlation test and ANOVA. Correlation test was used to investigate the correlation between reading comprehension skill and reading interest in high school students, and ANOVA was used to investigate the differences between groups that has high level of interest and low interest. In this design, a class was given with a reading comprehension skill test and a questionnaire regarding the students' reading interest. The population was the second-grade students of SMKN 2 Tenggarong. One out of four classes by using random sampling technique. This selected class constituted the actual dataset that will be utilized as a sample population for the research study. This method ensured that the sample was chosen without bias, allowing for the reliable analysis and conclusions of the study based on this representative subset of the larger student population.

This study mainly focuses on high school students as research subjects. This research will be conducted at Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Tenggarong, 2nd Grade students. The population of this study is public school students in Kutai Kartanegara regency. The sample is randomly selected from classes of the school. This group was chosen because they are at a critical stage of cognitive and academic development, thus are the key in the development of comprehension and literacy abilities.

This research used two main instruments, namely a reading comprehension skill test and a questionnaire of reading interest. The first instrument was utilized to investigate the students' reading comprehension skill through the provided questions for them in google form. Within the test itself is mainly focuses on evaluating students' ability to understand texts, including various types of texts commonly encountered at the high school level, such as scientific articles, short stories, or informative texts. The second instrument was utilized to scale the students' level of interest in reading English text in which right after they finished the provided reading comprehension skill test as the researcher has mentioned. The content of the questionnaire itself was heavily points towards the students' interests and their motivation in reading English text. The reading comprehension skill test consist of 30 questions, while the questionnaire of reading interest consists of 14 questions.

The selected class participated in both a reading comprehension skill test and a reading interest questionnaire. The reading comprehension skill test assessed students' understanding of various text types, such as scientific articles and short stories. Following the test, the questionnaire gauged students' levels of interest in reading English texts, focusing on intrinsic and extrinsic interest for reading. Data was collected digitally using platforms like Google Forms to ensure efficient administration and data integrity. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, was strictly observed throughout the data collection process.

To provide an overview of the students' performance and interest levels, descriptive statistics will be computed for both the reading comprehension skill and reading interest scores. This included calculating the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and range for each set of scores. These descriptive statistics will offer insight into the overall performance on the comprehension test and the general interest levels among the students.

To investigate the relationship between reading comprehension skill and reading interest, the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) will be calculated. This statistical measure assesses the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the two variables, with the formula for Pearson's r being used to determine the coefficient. The value of the Pearson correlation coefficient will then be interpreted to determine the strength of the correlation, ranging from no correlation ($r = 0$) to a strong correlation ($0.5 < |r| \leq 1$). Additionally, a hypothesis test will be conducted to determine whether the observed correlation is statistically significant. The null hypothesis (H_0) posits that there is no correlation between reading comprehension skill and reading interest ($r = 0$), while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) posits that there is a correlation ($r \neq 0$). A p -value will be calculated to assess the significance level, typically using a threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$. To further explore the data, a scatter plot will be created to visually represent the relationship between reading comprehension skill scores and reading interest scores. This visual representation will help identify any patterns or trends in the data. If applicable, additional analyses will be conducted to examine the correlation within different subgroups, such as grade levels or gender, providing more nuanced insights into the relationship between reading comprehension skill and reading interest. The results of the data analysis will be reported in a structured format. This will include a summary of descriptive statistics for both reading comprehension skill and reading interest scores, the Pearson correlation coefficient and its interpretation, the results of the significance test including the p -value, and visual representation through a scatter plot. If subgroup analyses are conducted, their findings will also be included.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The following tables are the result of using several analysis methods in SPSS. The following methods are; Correlation Analysis, and ANOVA Test.

Table 1. The Result of Correlation Analysis

Correlations			
		Reading_Score	Learning_Interest
Reading_Score	Pearson Correlation	1	,161
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,250
	N	53	53
Learning_Interest	Pearson Correlation	,161	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,250	
	N	53	53

The table above presents the Pearson correlation between reading score and learning interest. The correlation coefficient between reading score and learning interest is 0.161. However, this correlation is not statistically significant, as the significance value (p-value) is 0.250, which is greater than the standard threshold of 0.05. This means that there is no strong evidence to suggest a significant relationship between students' reading scores and their interest in learning based on this data. The analysis is based on a sample size of 53 pairs of data points for reading score and learning interest. In summary, the non-significant correlation suggests that there is no meaningful association between students' reading scores and their interest in learning in this sample.

The correlation table above shows a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.161 between students' Reading Scores and their Learning Interest. This weak positive correlation, coupled with a non-significant p-value of 0.250, suggests that there is a minimal and statistically insignificant relationship between students' reading comprehension skills (Reading Scores) and their interest in reading (Learning Interest). This implies that, based on this sample, variations in students' reading comprehension skills do not reliably predict their level of interest in reading.

The correlation coefficient of 0.161 and the non-significant p-value (0.250) suggest that we fail to reject the null hypothesis. There is no statistically significant correlation between students' reading comprehension (Reading Scores) and their interest in reading (Learning Interest) in high school students based on this data.

This supports H_0 , indicating that the level of interest in reading in high school students does not necessarily correlate with their reading comprehension skills as measured by standardized reading scores.

Table 2. The Result of ANOVA Test

ANOVA

Learning_Interest	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2133,706	2	1066,853	79,358	,000
Within Groups	672,180	50	13,444		
Total	2805,887	52			

The ANOVA table presents the analysis of variance for the variable Learning Interest across different groups. The Between Groups Sum of Squares is 2133.706, indicating the variation in Learning Interest explained by the differences between the groups, while the Within Groups Sum of Squares is 672.180, representing the variation within each group. With degrees of freedom of 2 for Between Groups and 50 for Within Groups, the Mean Squares are 1066.853 and 13.444, respectively. The F-statistic is 79.358, with a significance value (p-value) of 0.000. This highly significant p-value (less than 0.05) suggests that the observed differences in Learning Interest between the groups are statistically significant and not due to random chance.

Therefore, we conclude that group membership has a significant effect on Learning Interest.

The ANOVA results indicate significant differences in Learning Interest among different groups of high school students. With a highly significant F-statistic of 79.358 and a p-value of 0.000, we reject the null hypothesis of no difference in Learning Interest between groups. This suggests that factors other than individual reading comprehension skills may significantly influence students' interest in reading across different groups, possibly indicating varying influences such as teaching methods, curriculum, or external factors not directly captured by reading comprehension scores.

The significant F-statistic (79.358) and very low p-value (0.000) reject the null hypothesis. There are significant differences in Learning Interest among different groups of high school students. This suggests that students with varying levels of reading interest also exhibit varying reading comprehension scores.

This supports H_1 , indicating that high school students with higher levels of interest in reading indeed demonstrate significantly higher reading comprehension scores compared to those with lower levels of reading interest. Therefore, reading interest appears to be a significant factor influencing reading comprehension scores in high school students.

Research Discussion

The researcher would like to address the previously 2 indicated research question in regard to the findings mentioned earlier. As for the result of the first research question, it is showed that the findings indicate a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.161 between students' Reading Scores and their Learning Interest, accompanied by a non-significant p-value of 0.250. This suggests a weak positive correlation that is not statistically significant.

The weak positive correlation coefficient suggests that there is a slight tendency for students with higher reading comprehension scores to report slightly higher levels of interest in reading. However, the non-significant p-value indicates that this relationship is not strong enough to conclude that variations in reading comprehension skills reliably predict levels of interest in reading in high school students.

The findings do not support the alternative hypothesis (H_1), which proposed a significant positive correlation between reading comprehension skills and reading interests. Instead, they support the null hypothesis (H_0), indicating that the level of interest in reading in high school students does not necessarily correlate with their reading comprehension skills as measured by standardized reading scores.

These results align with previous studies by Agler et al., (2021), Takahashi et al. (2023), and van der Sande et al. (2023) which also found minimal or inconsistent correlations between reading comprehension skills and reading interests. This could be attributed to several factors, including the complex nature of reading comprehension, individual differences in reading preferences, and the multifaceted

aspects that contribute to reading engagement beyond mere skill levels. According to various theories of motivation and intelligence, reading interest and reading comprehension skill are influenced by multiple factors that may not necessarily correlate strongly with each other. Self-Motivation Theory posits that while academic demands and external factors can enhance reading comprehension skill, they do not guarantee intrinsic interest in reading (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory suggests that individuals may excel in linguistic intelligence (related to reading comprehension skill) but may lack other intelligences, such as interpersonal intelligence, which could impact their interest in reading for social or recreational purposes (Sabet M. K., 2016). The Individual Differences Theory emphasizes that personal experiences, family background, and personality traits contribute significantly to reading interest independent of reading comprehension skill (Batini et al., 2020). Social-Cognitive Theory highlights the role of social influences and environmental factors in shaping reading interest, which may not align directly with academic reading skills learned in formal settings (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). The Literacy Activity Model underscores the contextual factors like access to reading materials and environmental support, which can foster reading interest independently of reading proficiency (McBreen & Savage, 2021). Constructivist Learning Theory further supports this by suggesting that enjoyable and personally relevant reading experiences, rather than formal instruction alone, contribute to sustained reading interest, while formal education may primarily enhance reading comprehension skill (Feyzi Behnagh & Yasrebi, 2020). Together, these theories suggest that reading comprehension skill and interest are influenced by diverse and often independent factors, providing a theoretical basis for the null hypothesis that there may be no significant correlation between reading comprehension skill and intrinsic interest in reading among individuals.

These results have implications for educators and policymakers aiming to enhance reading engagement in high school students. While focusing on improving reading comprehension skills remains important for academic achievement, fostering a love for reading may require additional strategies that go beyond skill development alone. Future research could explore other variables that might influence reading interests, such as genre preferences, motivational factors, or instructional methods that promote reading for pleasure.

The result of the second research question, it is shown that the results from the ANOVA analysis revealed significant differences in learning interest among different groups of high school students. With an F-statistic of 79.358 and a p-value of 0.000, the null hypothesis—which posited no difference in learning interest between groups—was decisively rejected. This highly significant outcome suggests that factors other than individual reading comprehension skills might significantly influence students' interest in reading across different groups. These factors could include variations in teaching methods, curriculum design, or other external influences not directly measured by reading comprehension scores.

The study supports the hypothesis (H_1) that high school students with higher levels of reading interest demonstrate significantly higher reading comprehension scores compared to those with lower levels of interest. This aligns with previous conducted studies such as Dong et al. (2020) and Mcbreen & Savage (2021) suggesting that intrinsic motivation and engagement in reading activities are critical determinants of reading proficiency. Students who are more interested in reading are likely to engage more deeply and frequently with reading materials, thereby enhancing their comprehension skills.

The significant difference between the group that has low level of reading interest and another group that has high level of interest has important implications for educational practice and policy. Firstly, fostering a higher interest in reading among students could be a strategic approach to improving their reading comprehension abilities. This could involve integrating more engaging and relevant reading materials into the curriculum, promoting a positive reading culture within the school, and providing opportunities for students to explore their reading interests through various genres and formats. Secondly, educators should consider adopting diverse and student-centered teaching methods that cater to different interests and learning styles. Personalized learning approaches, where students have some autonomy in choosing reading materials, could help increase their engagement and interest in reading.

This study has certain limitations worth noting, including the specific variables and research design which may influence the complexity of the findings. Future research could explore additional variables that may impact reading interests, such as preferences for different genres, motivational factors, and instructional methods aimed at promoting reading for pleasure. Furthermore, investigating the roles of environmental conditions, educational backgrounds, and individual differences in shaping both reading skills and interests could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of these factors. Additionally, further studies might examine the effects of digital reading materials and technology on students' reading habits and interests.

CONCLUSION

This research study aimed to investigate the correlation between students' reading comprehension skills and their reading interest in high school, focusing on two primary research questions: the existence of a correlation between reading comprehension skills and reading interest, and the differences in reading comprehension skills between students with higher and lower levels of reading interest.

Based on the analysis, the results reveal that there is no significant correlation between students' reading comprehension skills and their reading interest. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.161 and a p-value of 0.250 suggest a weak positive correlation that is not statistically significant. This indicates that variations in reading comprehension skills do not reliably predict levels of interest in reading among high

school students. These findings support the null hypothesis (H_0), which posits no significant correlation between the two variables.

In contrast, the ANOVA analysis results indicate significant differences in reading interest among different groups of high school students. With an F-statistic of 79.358 and a p-value of 0.000, the null hypothesis of no difference in learning interest between groups is rejected. This suggests that factors other than individual reading comprehension skills significantly influence students' interest in reading, such as teaching methods, curriculum design, and external influences not directly measured by reading comprehension scores.

The findings from this study have several implications for educators and policymakers. Firstly, the lack of significant correlation suggests that reading skills and interest may be influenced by different factors. It highlights the need for educational strategies that address both areas independently. While improving reading comprehension skills is crucial for academic success, fostering a love for reading requires additional strategies that go beyond skill development.

Secondly, the significant differences in reading interest among groups indicate that external factors such as teaching methods and curriculum design play a crucial role in shaping students' reading interest. Educational practices should therefore focus on creating a supportive and engaging reading environment to enhance students' interest in reading.

To increase reading interest among students, educators should consider integrating more engaging and relevant reading materials into the curriculum, promoting a positive reading culture within the school, and providing opportunities for students to explore their reading interests through various genres and formats. Personalized learning approaches that give students some autonomy in choosing reading materials can also help increase their engagement and interest in reading.

This study has some limitations that should be noted. The specific variable, research design, and the investigation of a specific skill the complexity of the findings. Future research should explore other variables that might influence reading interests, such as genre preferences, motivational factors, and instructional methods that promote reading for pleasure. Additionally, examining the role of environmental conditions, educational background, and individual differences in shaping reading skills and interests can provide a more comprehensive understanding of these variables. Further studies could also investigate the impact of digital reading materials and technology on students' reading habits and interests.

In conclusion, while this study found no significant correlation between reading comprehension skills and reading interest, it highlighted the importance of addressing both areas through targeted educational strategies. By fostering an engaging and supportive reading environment, educators can help enhance students' reading skills and cultivate a lifelong interest in reading.

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