

## **Reading Interest and Motivation in English Education at Junior High School**

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**Abstract.** *This study aims to explore students' interest and motivation in reading in English language learning at Junior High School. A qualitative approach was used to gain an in-depth understanding of this interest and motivation in reading. Data was collected through classroom observations, interviews with English teachers, and interviews with students. The results showed that reading interest and motivation have a significant impact on students' English learning achievement. The findings provide an in-depth understanding of how a learning approach that focuses on increasing interest and motivation to read can improve English learning outcomes in junior secondary schools. The implication of this finding is the need to develop learning strategies that can encourage students' interest and motivation in reading, as well as increased cooperation between teachers, students, and educational stakeholders to create a supportive learning environment.*

**Keywords:** *English Learning, Interest in Reading, Education*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Language skills are described as having four components in the English Language Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP) of 2006. These components are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Currently, the Indonesian government is aggressively mapping literacy, especially in elementary and junior high school students. Various literacy programs are created so that student literacy increases. Strengthening student literacy through storytelling activities in three languages (Indonesian, English, and Arabic) is one of the literacy improvement programs to support the government program [1]. Students' low interest and motivation in learning English affects their understanding and mastery of the material, especially descriptive text lessons. Speaking English fluently is one of the important things that must be mastered by those who want to communicate with others. English speaking skills must be mastered by those who want to communicate with people from different language backgrounds. However, the mastery of English can be constrained by the development of technology, it will change all sectors of life, one of which changes the world of education to develop the ability to use the discovery learning model which is one of the effective learning in organizing learning activities by fostering critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration [2]. The purpose of learning English in junior high school is targeted so that students are able to use English functionally, performatively, and epistemically. To realize this, support from every element engaged in the educational process in the classroom is required. Reading has a crucial part in the advancement of science [3]. A lot of readers struggle to comprehend the material or meaning that they read. Junior high school students also struggle with this issue, one of which is in English classes. Actually, a large number of students still find it difficult to understand an English reading even though they have repeatedly received reading comprehension lessons at school. On the other hand, as an educated person, Proficiency in both oral and written communication in English, a foreign language, is mandatory. The current world demands more and more quickly from humans in every field. One way that humans must keep up with this rapid development is by improving their language skills, particularly in the English language, and by becoming technologically literate.

Students frequently struggle with the grammatical differences between English as a foreign language and Indonesian as their first language. Indonesian as the main language is a problem that often arises when learning to write. In addition, one of the CP (Competency Outcomes) that must be mastered by students in Grade VII of Junior High School (SMP) is the ability to write. Junior High School (SMP) is the ability to convey their thoughts and experiences in short, well-structured paragraphs, demonstrating their growth as English language users and technological experts [11]. One language that has become widely used worldwide is English. In order for us to effortlessly communicate with people worldwide by speaking English with others worldwide. English proficiency is now required for graduation in Indonesia, from elementary school through college [4]. Reading is a process that involves writers and readers interacting through written text, which can broaden the reader's knowledge and help them understand the work. One way to conceptualize reading is as a participatory process of meaning construction [5]. Moreover, Pang et al. (2003) state that "reading is about understanding written text." Reading entails comprehending written material. Perception and thought are also involved in the process of creating meaning when reading.

## **II. METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach as its research method or strategy. Data gathered by observation, interview, photography, document analysis, field notes, and other methods other than pouring it into a spreadsheet is referred to be a qualitative approach. This study is included in the Classroom Action Research because of the definition given above. Classroom Action Research: Through a sequence of actions in the teaching and learning process, the researcher aims to enhance his performance as a teacher in order to improve students' capacities. [6]. When analyzing data, researchers look for connections, make comparisons, and identify fundamental patterns in the original data (which hasn't been converted into numerical form). The data analysis results are given narratively as an explanation of the situation being studied. This approach can be used to address research questions that call for a thorough grasp of the subject being studied in order to draw findings that are relevant to the particular period and circumstance. The present study employed three distinct strategies for gathering data: 1) observation, 2) interviewing, and 3) documenting. When a researcher wants to perform an initial analysis to identify issues that require further investigation, they might employ interviews as a method of gathering data. In order to get clarification and the outcomes of the observations obtained, interviews were done to supplement the data that was required. Research participants are requested to submit information during interviews based on their viewpoint, feelings, and opinions. The interviews conducted by researchers were direct interviews with English teachers and students of class VIII.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Results of research findings



**Figure 1.** Reading Interest, Motivation, and English Learning Achievement in Junior High School

Observations and interviews show that students' interest in reading in English is at varying levels. Some students showed high interest, as evidenced by their active search for additional reading materials and their interest in class discussions on English texts. Language skills cover 4 aspects, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. A person is said to be perfect in language if all four aspects run in balance [7]. However, in reality not many people are skilled in all four aspects of language. They also have a good knowledge of the types and types of assessments they need in learning all four language skills. However, the limited availability of types and types of assessments that are ready-to-use and quality assessments are not available, which making teachers have to look for appropriate assessments and even most of them end up not implement the use of these assessments because of difficulty in finding examples of examples of appropriate or good assessments. In general, only two aspects are mastered . Of the four aspects of language ability, there is one aspect that is quite influential in the development of other aspects, namely the reading aspect. However, most students have low interest, characterized by a lack of enthusiasm in participating in reading activities provided by the teacher. Not only that, students' motivation in reading English was also found to vary. Students with high intrinsic motivation usually show greater interest in reading English texts without external encouragement. They are motivated by a personal desire to improve their English skills. In contrast, students with extrinsic motivation focus more on achieving good grades or recognition from teachers and peers. Data analysis showed a positive correlation between reading interest and motivation with English learning achievement. Students who show high interest and motivation in reading tend to score better in reading comprehension tests and are more active in class discussions. In contrast, students who have low interest and motivation often have difficulties in understanding texts and show less satisfactory learning outcomes.

#### 1. Why is reading interest low?

- Internal Factors: Students' inability to understand English texts well can reduce their interest. When students feel difficulty and frustration while reading, they tend to lose interest.

- External Factors: Uninteresting teaching methods and reading materials that do not match students' interests also contribute to low interest in reading. Observations show that the use of texts that are monotonous and lack relevance to students' daily lives makes them uninterested.

## 2. Why is Motivation Different?

- Intrinsically motivated students are usually curious and enjoy the learning process itself. They see English learning as an opportunity for personal development. In contrast, extrinsic motivation is often triggered by factors such as pressure from parents or the desire for praise.
- Students will be more motivated by teachers who can foster a positive learning environment and offer incentives. On the other hand, pupils may get demotivated in a less encouraging or frightening learning atmosphere.

## 3. Trend of Interest and Motivation Variables:

- Improvement Through Innovative Approaches: Findings show that innovative learning approaches, such as the use of technology in reading and the provision of diverse and interesting reading materials, can increase students' interest and motivation. For example, the integration of e-books and online reading platforms has proven effective in attracting students' interest.
- Cooperation between Stakeholders: The results emphasize the importance of cooperation between teachers, students and education stakeholders. With support from all parties, such as the provision of better reading resources and training for teachers in effective teaching methods, reading interest and motivation can be increased [8].

## **B. Discussion**

Reading interest and motivation have a significant impact on students' English learning achievement in junior secondary schools. These findings underscore the importance of innovative and relevant learning approaches and the support of a conducive learning environment. The development of learning strategies that encourage students' interest and motivation in reading, as well as increased cooperation between teachers, students and education stakeholders are essential to improve English learning outcomes [9].

Reading has not become a hobby for students because most students do not like reading activities which are characterized by rarely targeting the amount of reading, rarely reading one book every day, and when they do not read a book on one day they do not feel something is missing. However, they feel happy when they read a book that they have never read before. To support the excellence of reading learning in improving students' knowledge, it must be supported by the ability of the instructor to implement instructional strategies that align with the features of reading learning. As a result, all English teachers need to be capable of reviewing and evaluating learning models in addition to learning strategies and strategies that align with the features of reading learning materials. For the learning to occur process to be easy and efficient, educators must choose media that are relevant to the learning objectives to be achieved. Media is a tool or device that serves to convey information. One method that can be used to improve students' English skills is to use YouTube media [10]. YouTube has become one of the popular learning media to find information on lessons that are less interesting or less understandable, especially in English lessons. Because much of the material presented in textbooks and worksheets is too difficult, students become less understanding or less

understanding of the meaning given in the book. Therefore, using Youtube media can give the impression of learning that is more interesting and not as boring as just reading the LKS book, especially in learning English which contains a lot of conversation. Because in reality, a fun learning approach is preferred by students and has a positive response. Schools must be serious and consistent when putting into practice school literacy initiatives like the 15-minute reading before learning program, it is important to make sure that the program lasts for the whole 15 minutes and doesn't end there. The goal of this 15-minute reading exercise is to reach the program's habituation level in compliance with Ministry of Education and Culture Number 23 of 2015. In this stage, kids engage in regular activities such as reading for fifteen minutes each day with the assistance of books they are interested in reading [12].

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The study's findings support the notion that reading motivation and interest have a big influence on junior high school students' proficiency in learning English. This finding suggests that learning strategies that focus on increasing reading interest and motivation can effectively improve English learning outcomes. Thus, it is important for educators and educational stakeholders to develop and implement strategies that can encourage students' interest and motivation to read.

Going forward, this study suggests several steps that can be taken to strengthen these findings, namely developing more interactive and interesting learning programs to increase students' interest in reading. Then organizing training for teachers to understand and apply techniques that can increase students' reading motivation, the most important thing is to encourage collaboration between schools and parents to create a supportive reading environment at home, and utilize technology to make reading materials more interesting and in accordance with student interests with these steps, it is hoped that a more supportive learning environment can be created and improve students' overall English learning achievement.

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