

EXPLORING READING HABIT OF HIGH ACHIEVER STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL AT UNIVERSITY OF ISLAM MALANG

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Abstract: Reading is fundamental skill for knowledge, character development, learning and academic achievements. In EFL context, reading in English language is beneficial for developing language proficiency. Reading is considered as habitual activity that involves the way in how much people read, how often people read and what do people read. However, many studies show that reading habit in Indonesia is still low. In this case, the current study aims to cover how is the students' reading habit and what makes high achiever students different in terms of reading habit to the rest of the students. This study carried out using descriptive qualitative research method through semi structured interview. The data collected from 9 students of English department from University of Islam Malang through online with the use of WhatsApp voice note. The data analysed descriptively by analysing theme from interview excerpts to answer the research problems. The result indicates that high achiever students read more consistently and tend to gain information from various sources compared to low and mid achiever students. They also preferred to find their own material instead of being provided and did not affected by difficult reading content unlike low and mid achiever students. Moreover, high achiever students focus on self-development as their reason to read in developing skills and knowledge while low and mid achievers' motivation mostly driven by assignment. In terms of receiving reading recommendation, low and mid achiever students mostly rely on friends and lecturers unlike high achievers who find additional recommendation in the internet.

Key Words: *Reading habit, high achievers.*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is essential to human life especially in gathering information, the reader can access many knowledges preserved in textual form and to develop positive character and habit of the reader. According to Susser (1999), practicing reading frequently and intensively have potential to enhance students' analytical competence. Moreover, Ozbay (2006) stated that successful reading practices benefits the reader in developing their innovation and creativity to the mental

process. In EFL context, the practice of reading in English language might be beneficial for both widens the knowledge and language proficiency. According to Garbe, Holle and Weinhold (2010) reading activity helps them to improve their knowledge of English and decent habit and frequency of reading is mandatory for students in learning English. Reading skills is a combination of multiple processes in interpreting textual messages such as. According to Harmer (2008), the focus on reading activity is on the ability to comprehend the written language material. Aside from its importance to gain information, reading is also beneficial activity to practice English language. According to Patel and Jain (2008), reading is the common activity inseparable in the process of language learning.

Reading is considered as habitual activity that involves the way in how much people read, how often people read and what do people read. As stated by Palani (2012) that reading is unlike speaking and listening, reading is considered as habitual activities that differs for each individual. Reading habit is the personal value of reading that involves preferences, frequency, consistency and volume of reading (Bas, 2012). According to Bashir and Matto (2017) it is vital to develop reading habit from beginning of young age, suggesting that the circumstance that reading habit should remain as the emphasis of learning starting from early childhood to effectively develop literacy in the society. Reading habit is a pattern of behavior which acquires constant, regular, often unconscious inclination to perform an act through frequent repetition which is applied to any activity established during a course of time as a part of personality of an individual (Good, Woodford and Walter, 2008). Thus, a habit of reading is established by having frequent repetition of reading practices in a course of time so that it becomes the second nature of the EFL students' daily activities. Reading and literacy is fundamental consideration in determining individuals' capability in receiving textual information and overall intellect and reading literacy of the society (Balan et al, 2019). However, In Indonesia, reading habit and literacy is considered as very low. According to Program for International Student Assessment known as PISA, more recent data about reading literacy Indonesia have 371 points

compared to OECD countries such as USA, UK and Korea with average 487 points in reading literacy.

There are several studies discussing reading habit, for instance, Balan, Katenga and Simon (2019) found that most high achiever students have good reading habit and confirms that reading habit is beneficial in improving academic achievements. In terms of English skills Maximillian (2020) found that reading habit determines overall reading skills and translation ability. There are many studies that aims to cover reading habit, for instance, Janah (2021) found that EFL students have developed good English reading habits, but they still need improvement in the frequency of reading practice and the number of books read. Moreover, Erlina (2019) found that there was a correlation between reading habit and academic achievement and reading habit influenced academic achievement. Furthermore, Balan (2019) found that reading habit are correlated with academic achievements as some students with high reading habit achieve higher score compared to the majority with low reading habit.

The researcher found the gap that most study analyze reading habits based on numerical or quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire on the whole population to find whether reading habit affect academic achievements or specific learning aspects. The difference of method in quantitative and qualitative study is important to differentiate previous studies with the current study because the data explored, in quantitative is based on general setting, while in qualitative study covers more detailed information that might not be explored by using preconstructed questionnaire. In this case the researcher aims to get information on what makes high achiever students different in terms of reading habit to the rest of the students.

METHOD

This study was conducted using descriptive qualitative research design that focused on detailed factual information on the field about reading habit of high achiever students. The data is taken from the interview on 9 of the seventh

semester students that includes three of each high, mid and low achiever students. In this study, data collection was carried out by using online interview using WhatsApp Voicenote. The interview guideline was first distributed through Microsoft word and submitted via email or WhatsApp to gain detailed and saturated information about students' habit in reading and how they conduct reading activity.

The researcher chooses 3 high, moderate and low achiever and reading and contacted them to make sure they are willing to take part in online interview. The researcher then distributed the interview through online media of WhatsApp and email due to social distancing policy to ensure health and safety from the pandemic for the researcher and the participants. The researcher will attempt to ask the participants via email or WhatsApp chat whenever the response is not satisfactory. The technique of data analysis in this study is qualitative data analysis based on Donald (2020) that consist of organizing, interpretation, deliberation and drawing conclusion. There are many step used to analyze the data of this study involving grouping, analysis of reading habit, interpretation and compare and contrast. Grouping is used to divide the students based on their reading achievements. Analysis is done by getting information how the students' read and reading habit in each group. Interpretation is given to explain and summarize the students' reading habit in each group, and compare and contrast is to find the similarities and differences between reading habit of each group of participants. The result of data analysis then presented in the findings as excerpt followed by description of each phenomenon as the characteristic of descriptive qualitative. The finding is then deliberated in discussion section with previous studies and related studies to gain conclusion that answer the research problems.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The result shows that reading habit of high achiever students, their reading frequency ranges from one hour to three hours but they read consistently. They also read depending on how much article they are assigned to read. This result

shows similarity with Janah (2019) that students with good reading habit and consistency are better in academic achievements than the other students. High achiever students usually choose their reading source from google and get additional information from reading recommendation and review of an article in the comment that allows them to get more information related to what they are reading. They also verify the information they got from reading by reading different related articles. As stated by Balan (2019) that successful students rely on various sources for the information they get. Moreover, they tend to look for learning material on their own instead of being provided and preferred to a text with visual support. A study by Karomah (2017) also found that high achiever students not only demand the teacher to give them material but can find their own material by themselves. Each high achiever students also have different interest in reading topics.

In terms of students' reason of reading, high achiever students have several different reasons to read for academic purposes, such as to gain knowledge, improving English skills and stay up to date with information as well as doing best during the study to acquiring necessary skills and knowledge for their career. This result show that high achiever students have more reading purpose compared to low and mid achiever students and their reading purpose tend to be self-oriented and focused on their own development. For what motivates them to read, their motivation is driven by self-determination, curiosity, interest and motivation to be better in English that come from their own will. This is in line with Balan (2019) that reading purpose is an important factor that determines students' reading habit which also motivate the students to perform better in learning and attain good academic achievements. Moreover, Janah (2019) also found that motivation to read determines attitude towards reading and reading habit which contributes to academic achievement. determines Each high achiever student has different suitable situation to read either in calm situation or with friends as long as there is interest. Other than that, High achiever students mostly receive recommendation from the internet or from the article they read.

They seem okay with anyone who give recommendation, either from friends or lecturer. This finding shows that high achiever students tries to find additional information to what they read that enables them to receive more understanding. This is in line with Janah (2019) who stated that good reading habits in English refer to behaviors of reading various kinds of English materials which are regularly, permanently, and intentionally conducted as reading practice, to develop good English reading habits

In terms of the difference between high, mid and low achiever students, what differs high achiever students to low and mid achiever students is their reading consistency. High achiever students mostly read in a shorter but more consistent compared to low and mid achiever students who can read about four to five hours with no consistency. This is in line with Janah (2019) who found that students with consistency in reading are better in academic achievements than the other students. Moreover, High achiever students reading frequencies are not determined by how much and how difficult the reading material is, while mid and low achiever students affected by it. In the contrary, Karomah (2017) found that high achiever students also affected by difficult words and material. This difference might be due to the participants this study are university students who enrolled in English major, while in Karomah's study are high school students who have different level of English proficiency. For choosing reading source what makes high achiever students different with mid to low achiever students is the use of reading recommendation in the internet as well as the comment section to gain more information. This is in line with the study of Balan (2019) who found that students who read from various information sources have better comprehension in reading. Moreover, Kumara and Kumar (2019) stated that students with good reading habit tend to read from many sources to extend their knowledge about their topic of interest.

As for reading content what differs high achiever have no complain about difficult and uninteresting material but tend to find their own sources while low and mid achiever students are shown to be troubled with difficult material and

dislike material for academic purposes. A study by Karomah (2017) indicated that high achiever students like to find their own reading material instead of just relying on teacher. Moreover, this is also in line with Janah (2019) that most students did not enjoy academic related reading materials but enjoy reading material of their interest. However, the result shows no notable difference between high, mid and low achiever students regarding the topic of interest. They also have no difference in terms of suitable situation to read. This result happens because every student has different interest and preferred situation to read that cannot be distinguished between high, mid and low achiever students.

Regarding the differences in motivation to read, high achiever tends to read for their own development instead of just academic such as to develop their English reading skill and knowledge, while most of the mid achievers and low achievers tend to focus on what is assigned them as their responsibilities. This is in line with Kumara and Kumar (2019) who found that most of the students read because of teacher's instruction or assignment. Janah (2019) also found similar result that the majority of students read more because of academic demands. However, in terms of high achiever students, Karomah (2017) found that high achiever students tend to read more independently in addition to teacher's instruction. Moreover, high achiever's motivation comes from their own will, thus they read independently, while mid to low achiever students are highly influenced with academic demands, thus they are driven by assignments. This is in line with the study of Karomah (2017) that high achiever students read to broaden their knowledge as well as developing their English skills such as vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension. In terms of receiving reading recommendation, low and mid achievers only use recommendation from the lecturers or friends, while high achiever also search for recommendation in the internet, and open for anyone who gives recommendation. Balan (2019) also found that students who read from various sources have better reading comprehension. Moreover, Janah (2019) stated that students with good reading habit inclined to read from various sources to intensify their understanding about the topic they read.

From the findings and discussion above, it is shown that achiever students read more consistently while low and mid achiever students are not. Moreover, high achievers tend to gain information from various sources while low achiever students depend on one source of information. High achiever students also preferred to find their own material instead of being provided and did not affected by difficult reading content unlike low and mid achiever students who are more likely to be affected by difficult content. Other than that, high achiever students focus on self-development while low and mid achievers mostly driven by assignment. In terms of receiving reading recommendation, high achievers tend to find additional recommendation in the internet while low and mid achiever students mostly rely on friends and lecturers.

CONCLUSIONS

The result shows that high achiever students read consistently and read accordingly based on what assigned to them. They tend read more to gain information from various sources and recommendation to verify and validate information they get from an article. They also preferred to find their own material instead of being provided and did not affected by difficult reading content. Moreover, high achiever students focus on self-development as their reason to read, as what motivates them also comes from their own will for developing skills and knowledge. They also seem to be more open in reading recommendation from anyone as well as looking for more recommendation from the internet. In terms of what differs high achievers and those of mid to low achievers are their reading frequency, source of reading, preference about reading content, reason and motivation to read and the way they receive reading recommendation. In terms of frequency low and mid achievers tend to read longer but less consistent than high achievers. They also did not verify the information like high achievers did and did not find additional information from recommendation and comments. Moreover, low and mid achiever students are more likely to be affected by difficult reading content compared to high achievers. Low and mid achievers' motivation also driven by assignment, unlike high

achiever that are driven by self-development. The study suggest the students, it is to observe, ask, and investigate how high achievers read to gain information about how they develop reading skills. It is suggested for the teacher and lecturers to use information on how high achievers read to teach the other students how to read and gain information more effectively. Moreover, it is suggested for the next researcher to study more on the difficulties encountered by low and mid achiever students in reading that high achievers did not have.

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