

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' READING INTEREST AND THEIR READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract: Reading comprehension is crucial for understanding language and is influenced by reading interest. Improving reading interest can create a positive atmosphere and motivate people to read, thus supporting reading comprehension. Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying the correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension. This will help individuals better understand and engage with literature. The study was conducted using quantitative correlational research design eighth graders at SMPN 28 Malang as the subjects, which employs a correlational design. Three variables—literal and inferential reading comprehension, as well as reading interest are obtained from the reading comprehension test and questionnaire used in the research. The Pearson's product moment in SPSS 24.0 was used to examine the data and determine the connection between the variables. According to the study's findings, most students had average reading interest levels, with literal reading comprehension scores higher than inferential reading comprehension scores. While there is a positive and substantial link between reading interest and inferential reading comprehension, the correlation between reading interest and literal reading comprehension is not significant, according to the results of the correlational study.

INTRODUCTION

Language is crucial for global unity, and English is an international language used for learning, accessing information, education, culture exchange, and economic activities. To fluently use English, one must master four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading is essential for quick understanding and comprehension of the language, as it allows readers to access the intended information through written language. Reading is an action or process that requires employing a variety of reading text processing abilities to comprehend the contents of the text. Reading may be defined as an activity that involves obtaining information or messages delivered by the writer in textual form. Someone can read not by coincidence, but due to their are proficient at reading texts consisting of significant letters. In general, the goal of reading is classified into three categories: study, effort, and enjoyment. In the issue, the

objective of reading must be established prior to reading activities to facilitate comprehension and information intake (Dalman, 2014). The capacity to read the text and comprehend its entire content is what matters most while engaging in reading activities. Reading comprehension ability is what we call this. According to Pardo (2004), reading comprehension is the process by which readers engage with the text and create meaning by fusing their past experiences and knowledge with what they already know. There is an interaction between the information in the text and the reader's attitude toward it that determines the effectiveness of the reading outcomes. Reading interest based on Alexander (1988) is a crucial factor in engaging in reading activities, as it drives individuals to seek out new activities in specific domains. Interest in reading is driven by an engaged mind's preference to comprehend linguistic structures, resulting in knowledge that is closely connected to the will, activity, and satisfaction, allowing individuals to choose, pay attention, and take something from others.

According to Tarigan (2008), reading is a process used by readers to obtain the information the author wants to convey through text or written language. Students' reading abilities can be determined by a variety of internal and external aspects. For instance, motivation is a considerably significant component impacting reading abilities, if someone lacks motivation, they will be hesitant to read, but those who are highly motivated would have a robust desire to read. Reading content might impact the reader's desire to read as well. Reading things that is hard to comprehend will make someone hesitant to read. As stated by Ni'mah and Sholihah (2022) that encouraging interest to read may generate a nice atmosphere in a reading session and inspire students to read more, supports reading comprehension. Reading is the capacity to acquire knowledge by paying attention to a sequence of written texts, from which we subsequently derive new meaning. Kennedy (2010) defined reading as the ability to recognize a visual shape, associate the form with a sound or meaning that has been previously learnt, and comprehend and interpret the meaning of the form based on prior experiences. However, reading in a foreign language involves comprehending the meaning of that language through its written form, as noted by Lado (2009). Other than that, Yunus and Ubaidillah (2021) state that comprehension exercises usually require students to read textbooks, answer questions, identify important concepts, combine ideas, and summarize what they have read in order to demonstrate understanding of the material.

There are two kinds of reading comprehension, which is literal and inferential comprehension. According to Mistar, Zuhairi and Yanti (2016), literal reading comprehension is the fundamental level of text comprehension, focusing on explicit information and facts, while inferential comprehension skill refers to the ability to go beyond what is stated directly, to

understand what the writer means by probing for deeper meanings. Moreover, Johnson and Andrew (2008) also identified that there are two types of factors affecting reading comprehension: internal (linguistic abilities, interests, motivations, and ability sets) and external (elements of reading and reading environment). Internal factors include linguistic abilities, interests, and motivations, while external factors include elements of reading and reading environment. Interest plays a crucial role in influencing comprehension or ability to read.

According to Brown and Lent (2003), individual's interest can be identified as individuals' liking, hating, or indifference towards anything such as a thing, an profession, a individual, a job, or activities. Interest is one aspect of what is commonly referred to as an individual's motivation. As a result, interests are a component of a person's character structure or society. We refer to an individual's vocational interest when it is mentioned in reference to professions or the working environment. Haidi and Berndoff (2006) highlight the significant impact of interest on learning, indicating that individuals with interest demonstrate greater tenacity, engagement, and emotion. Interest influences learning techniques, direction, and attention length. Motivation is crucial for learners to enjoy reading, whether it's on a board or in a narrow sense. Moreover, Norman L. Munn (1966) identify five elements: environmental and social factors, genetic factors, personality factors, motivations, and self-expression. These elements can be active or passive, with dynamic perspectives highlighting social learning and static ones predicting interest. Higher-level reading comprehension performance is influenced by interest.

Reading interest is a powerful reason to engage in an activity. Students will or will not take part in reading activities, depending on their level of interest. In general, interest may be defined as something that drives someone to look out or attempt new activities in specific domains. Interest in reading is the preference of an engaged mind to comprehend linguistic structures to get knowledge that has a close connection to the will, activity, and sensations of satisfaction, possibly enabling individuals to choose, pay attention, and take something that comes from other people itself. (Shaleh, 1999). Furthermore, Rahmawati (2018) asserts that the degree of depends on the reading objectives, which can vary from extremely informal to extremely formal, such as reading for commercial or academic purposes. As a result, encouraging reading comprehension is greatly aided by enthusiasm in reading. Furthermore, according to Junaidi, Mustofa, Ubaidillah, and Lee (2023), the most important thing a reading instructor can do is to get students excited about reading, and the teacher's main goal should be to help students comprehend more.

There are several studies regarding reading interest and reading comprehension, for example, the study by Oktorina, Habibi, and Risnawati (2023) examined the impact of reading interest on the academic performance of fifth-grade students at Teratak Elementary School. The

research involved 33 students and used ex-post facto design and a quantitative technique. The results showed that reading interest positively impacted students' performance, with a contribution value of 21,2%. The study supports the idea that enthusiasm in reading affects academic performance. Increasing enthusiasm in reading is a long-term investment that can benefit children's learning and proficiency over time. Another study by Pratiwi, Tahrin, and Firdaus (2023) found a weak association between students' reading interest and their reading achievement. With 130 eighth-grade students, the relationship was found to be negligible, with reading interest contributing only 7.8% of students' reading achievement, with the remaining 92.2% coming from other variables. And the study of Azizah and Hasanah (2021) examined the relationship between students' reading interests and their Indonesian language learning outcomes. Using quantitative techniques and a correlation study design, the study found a significant correlation between students' reading interest and their academic achievements, with 26% of students meeting their learning objectives due to their interest in reading.

The subjects of the aforementioned studies are comparable to the researcher's title. The research topic is the contrast between this study and a number of earlier investigations. Elementary school pupils served as the subjects of several of the previously listed investigations. However, in order to gather data for this study, the researcher administered reading comprehension tests to junior high school pupils. This study's parallels are also carried out in offline environments.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researcher conducted quantitative research. The study was designed as a correlational study. Quantitative research deals with the collecting and analysis of quantitative data. The goal of correlational research is to determine whether there is and the strength of a relationship between two or more quantitative variables. If two variables are closely connected, scores on one can be used to predict scores on the other. The subject is student second year students at 28th junior high school Malang consisted of are 95 students in three classes as the population sample of the research. The sample of the research was taken from 64 students from two classes.

In conducting the research, instrument is important thing in the research. To measure the students reading interest, there were 40 items in the reading questionnaire which taken was from Fauzi (2017). The last instrument was reading comprehension test where the students have to choose one correct answer from four provided options based on the test question. The instrument of reading comprehension test taken from Tapuih (2016) and Robani (2018) . There are forty multiple-choice questions on the test. To analyze correlational research, the researcher

used a Product moment correlation (Pearson correlation) is extensively used to quantify the correlation of data using an interval or ratio scale to analyze correlation the relationship reading interest and reading comprehension with SPSS Pearson Product Moment. In this study, data were collected in the form of scores. All the data obtained through questionnaire and tests. The first is a reading interest questionnaire and the last one is a reading comprehension test.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the study that focused on the correlation between students' interest in reading and their reading comprehension, complete with hypothesis testing and discussion. To better understand the data, the researcher presents the descriptive statistics about the results of reading interest questionnaire and students score in reading comprehension. The result of the research indicated that there are 58 students participated out of 64 students from two classes. Here is the result of descriptive statistics analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Literal Comprehension	58	25	100	66.26	21.352
Inferential Comprehension	58	10	85	49.40	19.401
Reading Interest	58	78	158	129.53	13.668
Valid N (listwise)	58				

The study reveals that students' literal reading comprehension scores range from 25 to 100, with a mean of 66.26, while their inferential reading comprehension scores range from 10 to 85, with a mean score of 49.40. This difference is attributed to literal reading comprehension providing direct textual information, while inferential reading comprehension requires explicit information. Inferential comprehension according to Mistar, Zuhairi and Yanti (2016) is a cognitive process that involves higher order thinking and cognitive processes compared to literal comprehension. It involves readers combining information from the text with their own experiences and past knowledge to form hypotheses. This skill, as defined by Duke, Ward, and Pearson (2021), is crucial for understanding the author's intended message and identifying underlying meanings in written material.

The study confirms that students' reading interest ranges from 78 to 158, with a mean score of 129.53. The majority of students have moderate interest, with 86.2%, followed by high interest (10.3%), and low interest (3.4%). This aligns with Azizah and Hasanah's (2021) and

Tahrún and Firdaus (2023) studies, which found that most students have a moderate level of reading interest.

The researcher utilized Pearson's product moment analysis in SPSS to explore the correlation between literal and inferential reading interests and reading comprehension.

Correlations

		Literal Comprehension	Inferential Comprehension	Reading Interest
Literal Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	1	.683**	.234
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.077
	N	58	58	58
Inferential Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	.683**	1	.293*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.026
	N	58	58	58
Reading Interest	Pearson Correlation	.234	.293*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.077	.026	
	N	58	58	58

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson's product moment analysis revealed no significant correlation between students' literal reading comprehension and their reading interest, with a Sig. (2 tailed) value of 0.077 and a Pearson correlation value of 0.243, indicating no significant relationship between the two. This outcome is consistent with the research conducted in 2022 by Forsia, Sari, and Purnawati, which discovered that there is no significant link (significant difference of 0.112) between reading interest and reading comprehension. The results of the current study, however, are at odds with those of Oktorina, Habibi, and Risnawati (2023), who examined how reading interest affected students' learning outcomes at the elementary school level and discovered a strong correlation between reading interest and academic success.

It is connected because the study by Oktorina et al. (2023) is at the primary level and concentrates on literal reading, but the study by Forsia et al. (2022) focused on senior high school students where reading comprehension material incorporates more inferential reading information. The current study is consistent with the findings of Forsia et al. (2022) and differs from Oktorina's (2022) investigation of primary school kids, as it concentrated on eighth grade pupils whose reading comprehension level included several inferential reading materials. Likewise, Azizah and Hasanah (2021) who also studied elementary level students also confirmed significant correlation between reading interest and language learning achievements.

Furthermore, it is stated by Locher and Pfof (2020) that literal reading contains information directly implied in the text, it is easier for the students to comprehend accurately without needing to have decent amount of reading practice and interest.

On the other hand, the result of the analysis towards the correlation between inferential reading comprehension and students' reading interest reveals positive and significant correlation with the value of Sig. (2 tailed) at 0.026 with the Pearson correlation value at 0.293* indicating that there is significant and positive correlation between students' inferential reading comprehension and their reading interest.

This result is in line with the study by Pratiwi, Tahrin, and Firdaus (2023) who studied the same level of education on 6th grade students and found that reading interest have significant influence on reading achievements. Moreover, a study by Hall, Vaughn and Barnes (2022) who studied the effects of inference instruction on the reading comprehension from university students who are struggling in EFL reading comprehension found that the use of inference instruction significantly promotes reading comprehension. This further explains why inferential reading comprehension is significantly correlated with reading interest while literal reading comprehension does not. It is because the material taught in junior high school level contains inferential comprehension material while at the elementary level contains more literal comprehension material.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the overall students literal reading comprehension skill is higher than inferential reading comprehension skill, this happens because inferential reading comprehension requires more thinking process and higher order of thinking. In terms of the correlation of literal reading comprehension and students' reading interest showed no significant correlation while inferential reading is correlated with positive and significant correlation. This phenomenon is caused by the material of reading comprehension in junior high school that started to include inference in reading comprehension materials, resulting in lower correlation for literal reading comprehension and more to inferential reading comprehension. Moreover, as literal reading contains information directly implied in the text, it is easier for the students to comprehend accurately without needing to have decent amount of reading practice and interest. The study suggests that developing reading interest in English language students can enhance their achievements and improve reading comprehension. Instructors should create materials for inferential reading, while literal reading is easier. Further research is needed to understand this relationship.

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