



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING INTEREST AND READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY OF GRADE XII OF AL-AZHAR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL MEDAN IN THE 2024/2025 ACADEMIC YEAR

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Abstract

The problem that will be studied in this journal is the relationship between reading interest and reading comprehension ability of class XII students at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School. The method used is a qualitative research approach by interviewing class XII students. This research was conducted in class 12 of Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School. The population in this journal is 20 students. The purpose of this study was to determine how much influence reading interest has on reading comprehension ability. As well as completing assignments from the Pancasila Student Profile activity in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. The results of the study indicate that there is a positive relationship between reading interest and the abilities of students in class XII of Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School. This shows that the rise and fall of students' reading interest affects their ability to understand reading.

Keywords : *Students' Reading Interest, Reading Comprehension Ability*

INTRODUCTION

The teaching process in Indonesian improves students' communication skills through the use of proper Indonesian. There are four types of competencies in Indonesian, namely listening or observing, communicating, reading or understanding reading, and writing. These four competencies must be mastered by students to be able to speak Indonesian well. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), reading means understanding the contents of a writing (oral or just thoughts). According to Tarigan (1985: 32), reading is a process carried out and used by readers to obtain messages that can receive messages through words from written materials or quotes that the author wants to convey, and to understand the meaning contained in the written material. The process of understanding reading by reading is actually a unity. However, many people only read without understanding what they read.

This time we will discuss reading skills because the illiteracy rate in Indonesia, from the age of 15 to 59 years is only 1.50% or around 2,666,859 people. When compared to the illiteracy rate data in 2021, this figure has decreased, namely 1.56% or around 2,761,189 people. However, the interest in reading in Indonesia is very different from the reality. According to UNESCO, Indonesia is ranked second lowest when it comes to world literacy, meaning that the interest in reading in Indonesia is very low. Therefore, the reading interest of the Indonesian population is very dire, because out of 1000 people, only 1 person is an avid reader.

In order to read comfortably without coercion, it requires a high interest in reading. Interest in reading and reading ability are interrelated. According to Hurlock's definition, interest is a motivation that drives individuals to do a desired activity. A person's interest in reading can be influenced by internal and external factors, including: internal factors, namely physical condition, intelligence, motivation, interest, emotional maturity, age, gender, attitude, and psychological needs. As well as external factors, namely family and school environment, technological developments, inadequate

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facilities and infrastructure, socio-economic status, peer influence, parents, teachers, television, and films.

Factor

According to Surya (2003:37) in his book, there are several factors that influence a person's interest in reading, namely:

1. Internal factors consist of:
 - a) Physical factors or congenital factors.
 - b) Psychological factors, which consist of intellectual factors (intelligence and achievement), non-intellectual factors (personality and emotional), and maturity factors (physical and psychological).
2. External factors consist of:
 - a) Social (environmental) factors
 - b) Cultural factors (science and customs)
 - c) Physical environmental factors (home facilities, learning facilities, etc.).
 - d) Spiritual factors
 - e) Religious factors

According to Lamb and Arnold (Rahim, 2018:16), factors that influence reading comprehension include internal and external factors:

1. Internal factors, namely physical condition, intelligence, motivation, interests, and emotional maturity.
2. External factors, namely the family environment and school environment.

At SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan itself, there is a program to improve reading skills and interests by adding literacy subjects to daily subjects. Therefore, students of SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan are expected to be able to improve their reading skills, foster an interest in reading, and understand what is read. Due to the many factors that influence reading interest and ability, this journal was created to conduct research with the aim of finding out what, why and how reading interest can influence the reading ability of class XII students of SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan.

Benefit

Reading has many benefits, including:

1. Train your brain to keep thinking positively
2. Improve concentration and increase focus
3. Improve critical thinking in analyzing problems
4. Increase knowledge about many things such as science, economics, society, culture and politics
5. Reduce stress
6. Improving empathy social skills
7. Increase self-confidence

To find out whether the reading interest in SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan is high or not, we conducted interviews with several students. We also conducted interviews to find out why there is high and low reading interest. Then why is the understanding lacking and the relationship between the two. We also want to know what most influences reading comprehension. That is why we made a journal entitled "The Relationship between Reading Interest and Reading Comprehension Ability in Grade XII Students of SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan".

Research methods

To work on the journal on the relationship between reading interest and reading comprehension ability at SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan, we used a qualitative method because each person's reading interest and comprehension ability are different. The qualitative method is a



research method that focuses on in-depth observation of a phenomenon, especially in a social context. This method aims to understand and know the phenomena experienced by the research subjects, namely behavior, thinking, motivation, and treatment. In addition, the definition of qualitative research is research that uses open interviews to explore and understand the perceptions, feelings, and behaviors of individuals and groups of people. Based on this explanation, researchers have the idea that there is only one way to get results, namely through open interviews. In this journal research, we used 20 samples taken from each class with samples taken randomly.

The questions we gave to the resource persons were:

1. Does the subject like to read? Why?
2. How often does the subject read?
3. Is the subject interested in knowledge books? Why?
4. Can the subject understand a foreign word just from a sample sentence?
5. Does the subject immediately understand the reading when reading it for the first time?
6. Can the subject focus while reading? Why? Why not?

We use explanatory case studies to obtain more focused data. Explanatory case studies are case studies that lead to the use of “how” and “why” questions. These questions are not only related to the frequency of occurrence but also to operational situations that require separate time records (Yin, 2002).

Based on previous research, it was found that people who really like reading fill their free time with reading activities. Some set aside some of their time to read, but some are less interested in reading, often do not want to read. Therefore, students who really like reading will gain a lot of knowledge. Conversely, students who have low reading interest will be less proficient in reading. The research framework can be summarized as follows:



X: Independent Variable (Reading Interest)

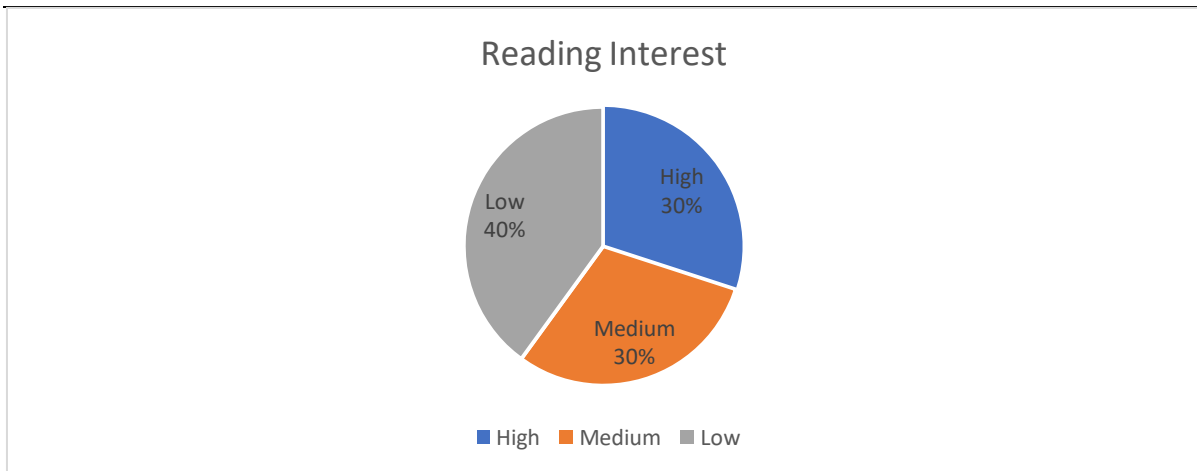
Y: Dependent variable (Reading Comprehension Ability)

RESEARCH RESULT

The data results obtained from research on 20 samples of Al-Azhar students regarding students' reading interest in a reading are attached in the following diagram:

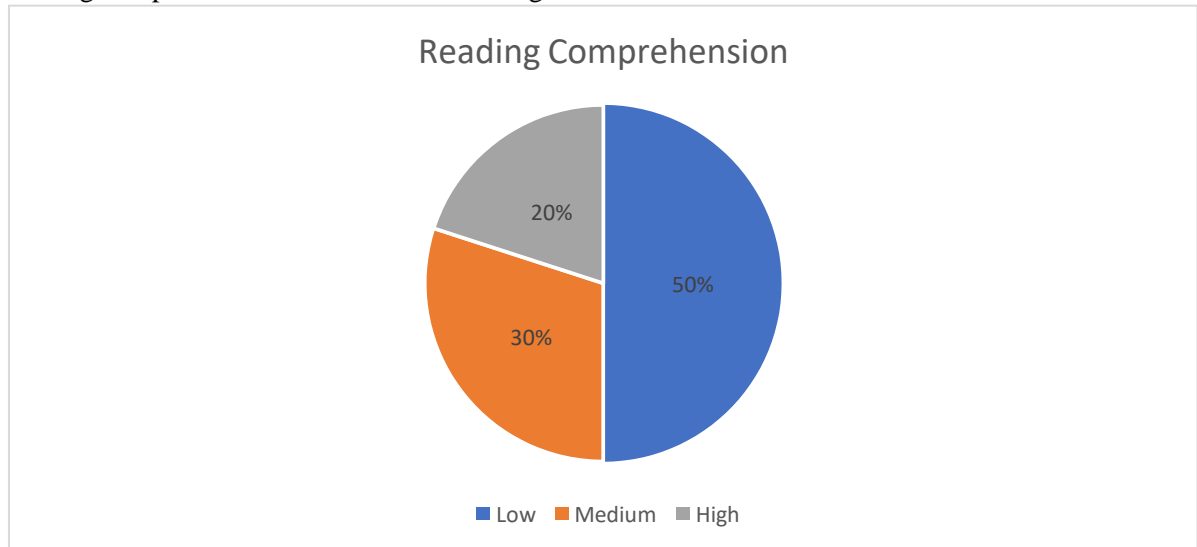
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If seen from the results of the study above, students with medium and high reading interest are in the same number. But not higher than students with low reading interest. Students with high reading interest with a total of 6 students have a percentage of 30%, students with medium reading interest with a total of 6 people have a percentage of 30%, and students with low reading interest have a percentage of 40%. This shows that there are still many students with low reading interest at Al-Azhar Medan.

On the other hand, data that has been taken from 20 student samples regarding students' reading comprehension is attached in the diagram below:



It can be seen from the diagram above that the reading comprehension of students at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading Senior High School is still low, with 50% or the equivalent of 5 out of 20 students having difficulty understanding a reading.

DISCUSSION

This research on the relationship between reading interest and students' understanding at Al-Azhar Medan's leading high school in class XII discusses the description of students' reading interest, description of students' understanding, and the relationship between the two variables.

Overview of reading interests of class XII students at Al-Azhar Medan's leading high school

Reading interest is very important for a student. With a high reading interest, students are increasingly passionate about finding information and knowledge. Basically, all humans are interested



in reading because they have a comprehensive instinct to want to know something. This curiosity drives someone to find answers by reading. To find out the reading interest in class XII SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan, we conducted interviews with 20 existing samples. We gave several questions to find out their reading interest. The statements we asked the informants were about how much they like to read, how often they read, and the reading topics that each informant is interested in. Their answers varied depending on their respective preferences.

Based on the results of interviews with sample students that we took from class XII of SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan, the reading interests of class XII students are quite diverse. As many as 6 out of 20 informants are interested in reading and have read at least 1 book in a period of 2-3 weeks, with a frequency of reading several pages of books almost every day. Not infrequently, they have reading as a hobby and daily habit. One of the factors of high interest in reading is the high awareness of the importance of reading, the habit of reading since childhood which causes the formation of self-character, and the many books with various themes so that students have many choices to read. This is in accordance with the opinion of Dwi Sunar Prasetyono (2008: 28), he explained that the factors that influence children's interest in reading are internal factors such as intelligence, age, gender, reading comprehension, attitude, and psychological needs. In addition, the reasons why students are interested in reading are having friends who also like to read, interesting reading topics, and a family environment that has a habit of reading. These are external factors that influence reading interest. After our observation, most of those with high reading interest have a family and friendship environment with high reading interest as well. In this case, it can be concluded that environmental factors, both friendship and family environment, are the ones that most influence a person's reading interest.

Then as many as 6 out of 20 students have moderate reading interest. This number is the same as the number of students with high reading interest. They do not have reading interest as a habit or hobby, but it does not mean they rarely or are lazy to read. This is due to the lack of factors from the environment or social circle that likes to read. But they have an internal factor, namely motivation to read. On the other hand, 8 out of 20 grade XII students do not like to read. These students read books only when needed or ordered. Some of the reasons students are not interested in reading are no free time, lack of motivation, and prefer to use gadgets and lack of facilities for reading. Based on the results of the interview processing, several specifications that influence reading interest in students of class XII of Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School are:

1. Awareness of the importance of reading
2. A reading-loving environment
3. Reading habits and reading quantity
4. Motivation to read

Description of reading comprehension skills of class XII of Al-Azhar Medan Senior High School

The key to reading comprehension lies in two interrelated abilities or competencies, namely: reading words (being able to decipher symbols in writing containing reading) and understanding language (being able to understand the meaning of words and sentences of a language). Reading comprehension skills in class XII of SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan were obtained through interviews by asking 2 questions. First, whether students can understand the reading just by reading it once. Then the second, whether students can understand difficult words just by using example sentences. From several levels of reading comprehension, it can be seen that students' abilities in finding the whole meaning of the reading and observing and then understanding the reading material. Students' abilities have been sufficiently demonstrated and known if students have been able to do both of these things. After conducting interviews, the data results stated that 4 out of 20 or 1 out of 5 students had a high level of reading comprehension. Then, 6 out of 20 or 3 out of 10 students had a moderate level of comprehension. While 5 out of 20 or 1 out of 4 students had a low level of comprehension.

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Students with a high level of understanding tend to have a high interest in reading as well. In addition, the reason students have a high level of understanding is also influenced by those who are used to reading so that their vocabulary increases. The environmental conditions of students when reading are quiet and not noisy also affect. Students with moderate understanding levels come from students with various reading interests, but half of them come from students with moderate reading interests as well. Students with moderate reading interests are able to understand the reading if they read it twice or more. This is influenced by the focus of students who are easily distracted and have difficulty understanding words that they have never known. But students with moderate understanding are used to reading so they can immediately understand if the topic is interesting and the environment is conducive. Lastly, students with low levels of understanding mostly come from students with low reading interest as well. This low level of understanding is influenced because students are not interested in the topic being discussed or because they are not used to reading so that focus can be easily diverted. However, if given an interesting topic, students are still less interested in reading and prefer to read only the beginning.

The relationship between reading interest and reading comprehension ability in class XII of Al-Azhar Medan's leading high school

Based on the results of processing interviews of class XII students of SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan with a sample size of 20 students, it can be seen that students with high reading interest have high reading comprehension skills as well. With 4 out of 6 students who have high reading interest also have high reading ability. The results of the study showed that there is a relationship between the two variables which shows that the increasing interest in reading of students, the ability to understand reading increases. Which means that the relationship between reading interest and reading ability is positively related.

In this case, the contribution of reading interest to reading comprehension ability is in line with what was stated by Nurhadi (2010:22-21) and Zuchdi (Amzan. 2017). Reading is an important factor that influences reading comprehension. To support this research statement, this statement is also in accordance with the matter studied by Setyowati et al (2017) who in their research results indicated a strong relationship between a person's reading interest and a person's ability to understand reading. To see the close relationship between reading interest and reading comprehension, we can see from children with low comprehension ability. All children with low reading interest are at the level of students with low comprehension too. We can also see samples with high reading interest. Sample students with high reading interest, 4 out of 6 students are at the level of students with high reading comprehension too. This means that reading interest and comprehension ability are closely related.

So, based on the discussion of the statement attached above, it can be seen that there is a positive relationship between reading interest and reading comprehension ability in grade XII students of SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan. The higher a student's reading interest, the higher the level of the student's reading comprehension ability. And vice versa. Students with low reading interest tend to be at a low level of reading comprehension ability as well. Regarding the results of this journal study, students with moderate reading interest are also at a moderate level of reading comprehension ability. Therefore, teachers and parents should make efforts to increase students' interest in reading through various methods since childhood to improve their reading comprehension. Because parents and teachers have the most important role in increasing interest in reading. Parents can provide reading materials at home by presenting books with interesting topics. Then, teachers can give assignments that can encourage students to read books.



CONCLUSION

Based on the attached research results, it can be concluded that:

1. Reading interest in grade XII students of Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School is still quite low, but the difference with students who have high reading interest is not too significant.
2. Based on the research results, variable X (Reading interest) influences variable Y (Reading comprehension). This means that variable X is one of the biggest factors that influences variable Y.
3. To improve reading comprehension at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School, reading interest must also be increased.

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