The Correlation Between Students' Reading Attitude and Their Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

The act of comprehending a text is known as reading comprehension. The aim is to comprehend what is being described. L2 reading may be influenced by a variety of factors, one of them is reading attitude. The level of engagement a learner has with their reading, which reflects whether they enjoy it or detest it, may have an effect on how well they read. The aim of this present research is to see if reading comprehension and reading attitudes are correlated. This study involved the participation of 48 eighth-grade junior high school students. A questionnaire of attitudes toward reading and a test of TOEFL Junior were distributed. The result found that the students' reading attitude was fairly good (M = 3.40) and their reading comprehension was mostly at B1 level (M = 288.35). The Pearson Correlation analysis revealed a weak correlation among attitudes and comprehension in reading of the students ($r = .279$, $p = 0.055$). The students believe that reading can give them a positive impact, yet they do not really like the activity of reading.

Keywords: *reading attitude; reading comprehension; junior high school students.*

1.Introduction

The objective of teaching English is to foster students in having communicative competence, which means students can communicate both written and oral form. To improve communicative competence, reading is a good activity to do. Reading, as defined by Cline et al. (2006), is the process of decoding and comprehending written text. Reading comes with a complex reader-text interaction (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). Reading can give someone a lot of information, viewpoints, and knowledge. The effectiveness of communication across ideas and readers is a fundamental objective of reading, thus students must be able to read fluently.

Reading comprehension is crucial to the reading process. Reading comprehension, in fact, is still a challenge for a lot of students. According to Brown (2007), a number of variables, including first language reading habits, reading ability, reading techniques, and reading attitude, may affect L2 reading. Reading attitude can be influenced by many factors, so with habituation, good attitudes can be formed. Accordingly, when they read, they will not experience difficulties while doing it. If students do not have a positive view toward reading, there may be a problem while reading. According to Parker (2004) there are a few factors, including age, gender, family background, educational methods and material, habits of reading, and reading level, having an influence on perceptions of reading. Thus, the impact in students' reading attitude could be from their environment and the exposure that they receive.

Over time, numerous studies are investigating reading attitude. Not only exploring reading attitude in reading class (Gumartifa & Adawiyah, 2022), reading attitudes in COVID period (Mizrachi & Salaz, 2022); there are also several variables related to reading attitude that has been investigated by many researchers, such as reading habit, reading anxiety, learning motivation and strategies (Chen, Du et al., 2022), Digital reading (Divya & Haneefa, 2020) and reading comprehension (Jang & Ryoo, 2019; Rafi et al., 2021).

Those previous studies on reading attitude found a correlation with many variables. In addition, the link among reading attitudes and reading comprehension has also been shown in numerous studies. Yet, in this present study, the researcher used different instruments. This thought led the researcher to be encouraged to do research on the subject matter. Therefore, regarding to this issue, the researcher wanted to examine whether or not the student' attitudes in reading correlated with their reading comprehension.

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The primary objective of the present study is to discover the correlation in between students' attitudes and comprehension in reading. This study will be useful in theoretical and practical aspect. In terms of theoretical aspect, this research can add to the knowledge and theories of the subject, particularly in the field of reading. In terms of practical aspect, English teachers and students, will get new perspective or point of view and broaden their knowledge in learning reading, particularly about reading attitude.

Reading Comprehension

The process of simultaneously drawing meaning from written language while also generating it is known as reading comprehension (Snow et al., 2002). According to Mikulecky (2008) Reading involves both conscious and unconscious thought. The use of any approaches by the students in this situation means that they will be able to reconstruct the author's meaning. Students must contrast the text's information with their past knowledge and experiences.

Reading comprehension is the way of determining the essence of a text. Rather than seeking out single phrases and words, the idea is to thoroughly comprehend what is provided in the text (Woolley, 2011). Every text must serve a purpose. More than understanding every word in English, the students are encouraged to absorb the text's main idea. Accordingly, students read in order to comprehend the content, remember what they have learned, and finally put what they have learned into practice.

Reading Attitude

In psychology, attitude is a concept. It is an intrinsic or distinctive mental and emotional component of the individual (Perloff, 2002). Mc. Kenna, Kear, & Elisworth (1995) divided attitude into three categories: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors. The cognitive component is constructed from thoughts and beliefs about the attitude's goals, the emotional component is the emotional response to the attitude and the behavioral component is how one acts in response to the attitude. Reading attitude is a complicated theoretical concept. Yamashita believed that the mental state of reading attitude is associated with feelings and emotions that increase or decrease the likelihood of reading (Yamashita, 2004). As stated in Yamashita (2004), Reeves (2002) conducted an extensive and comprehensive analysis of the research and concluded that there has been a broad consensus among modern scholars that to characterize reading attitude, the following components have been used: cognitive, conative, and affective.

The components of reading attitudes are divided into 3 major parts: evaluative ideas (cognitive), action readiness (conative), and feelings (affective).

1. The cognitive component of reading refers to a person's thoughts, viewpoints, or perceptions about reading and focuses on the value that reading is believed to have as an instrument, it incorporates reading's linguistic, intellectual, or practical advantages. (for example, "Reading English is useful to get a good job in the future").

2. The affcetive component is connected to the feelings or emotions that a person has while reading (McKenna et al., 1995). "I feel anxious if I do not know all the words in reading passages," is one of the examples about statement that reflects the affective component.

3. According to Gerdes & Stromwall (2008),the conative component is the process a person takes to accomplish the targets that they have set. It is described as the reasons which encourage a person to respond in a certain motive (in this instance, to read). For instance, while having a generally favorable outlook on learning a second language, a person may never take any steps toward making such learning possible due to a lack of attentiveness. Conative, thus, is the process of expressing one's feelings about reading by one's actions (such as, "I go to a library to borrow or read English books").

2.Method

Research design is the context of research methods and techniques selected by the researcher. This present study was using quantitative research design to find the results. A correlational study was chosen in this research to determine the correlation between one variable and the other. The two variables in this current research were reading attitudes and reading comprehension.

The study's population consisted of students from a private institution junior high school located in Surabaya. There are 6 classes with a total population of 129 students. Based on teacher considerations, in this study researchers used convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling by choosing individuals who are frequently and easily accessible. There were 2 classes that participated in this present study. Each class contains 24 students; thus, the total sample is 48 students.

In this study, there were two instruments used: reading attitudes questionnaire from Lee and Schallert in 2014 and reading comprehension TOEFL Junior.

1. Reading Attitudes Questionnaire

A questionnaire was implemented for finding out the learners' views on reading. In this study, the researcher adopted the questionnaire from Lee and Schallert (2014). This questionnaire contained 30 items that covered 3 components, those were cognitive, conative, and affective. Participants must respond to those statement using 1 – 5 Likert scale options (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The lecturer validated this questionnaire and it was considered reliable since Cronbach's Alpha was 0.83, it was greater than 0.7 (Taber, 2018).

2.   Reading Comprehension TOEFL Junior Test

To know the students' performance on reading, this research adapted TOEFL Junior test to find out students' reading comprehension. The researcher took Part 3 only which is reading comprehension section. This test consists of 6 reading passages with total questions 42 items (multiple choice). This test was considered valid and reliable. The reliability score of reading section in TOEFL Junior Test was 0.89.

There are some steps in analyzing the data:

1.   Normality Test

To examine if the data in the research were normally distributed, normality test was used. The significance (sig) value larger than 0.05 indicated that the data were distributed normally, and vice versa. The result of normality test for the questionnaire was 0.053 and for reading comprehension test was 0.079. Both of the scores were greater than 0.05, so the distribution of the data was considered normal.

2.   Descriptive Quantitative Reading Attitude

The data of the results in reading attitude questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS. Averages were calculated on an index of 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The mean scores were used by the researcher with the goal to convey students' attitude. Students' attitude in reading is categorized as follows:

Table 1. Level of Reading Attitude

Score	Meaning	Level
4.5 – 5.0	Strongly agree	**Very good**
3.5 – 4.4	Agree	**Good**
2.5 – 3.4	Neutral	**Fair**
1.5 – 2.4	Disagree	**Poor**
1.0 – 1.4	Strongly disagree	

(Pramita, 2019)

3.   Descriptive Quantitative Reading Comprehension

After analyzing the result of the questionnaire, the researcher analyzed the reading comprehension test scores. The test that was used is TOEFL Junior Test so the results of the students were converted to the TOEFL score. Besides, the test scores were also classified according to the handbook of the TOEFL Junior Test (2018) in the form of CEFR levels as follows:

Table 2. Level of Reading Comprehension

CEFR Level	Below A2	A2	B1	B2
Score	Under 210	210 – 240	245 – 275	280 – 300

4.   Pearson Product Moment

The SPSS program was utilized in this study to calculate the correlation coefficient. The p value was calculated using SPSS 21 Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis to determine the relationship across both of the variables, reading attitude and reading comprehension. When the p-value is below 0.05, the correlation is believed to be statistically significant. Additionally, since there are negative statements in the questionnaire, a reverse code was used to analyze the results. After the correlation is considered significant, the effect size is determined from the r value as the correlation coefficient. The table below is the criteria for the effect size.

3. Findings and Discussion

The 30 items of Reading Attitudes Questionnaire were answered by 48 private junior high school students, especially in the eighth grade. There are 3 major components of reading attitudes in this questionnaire. This questionnaire was using 1 to 5 Likert Scale. As stated before, there were 4 levels of attitude towards reading that was used in this research, those were, poor, fair, good, and very good.

Table 3. Classification of Students' Reading Attitude

Level	Percentage	Number of Students
Poor	4%	2
Fair	6%	3
Good	44%	21
Very good	46%	22

The table above showed classification of students' reading attitude. Most of the students were categorized as having a fair reading attitude with a total figure of 46%, consisting of 22 students. After that there were 21 students or 44% of the total students classified as having a good reading attitude. Furthermore, there were 3 students or 6% of the total students classified having poor reading attitude. Thus, only 4% or 2 students of the 48 students, qualified into having a very good level of reading attitude.

In this questionnaire there were 3 major components. The first component was cognitive or evaluative beliefs, then conative or behavioral intentions, and the last component was affective, or feelings and emotions, which was divided into 3 sub-components: negative affectivity, anxiety, and self assessment. Here is the descriptive statistics regarding reading attitudes:

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Reading Attitudes

	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cognitive	48	1.00	5.00	188.44	3.93	.784
Conative	48	1.00	5.00	147.86	3.08	.879
Affective	48	1.29	4.71	154.80	3.22	.672
All component	48	1.40	4.70	163.28	3.40	.582

According to the questionnaire results presented in table 4, the students' cognitive aspect in reading attitudes has resulted in the highest mean score, which is 3.93. This is followed by the affective aspect, which has a score of 3.22, and the conative aspect, which has a score of 3.08. Based on these mean scores, it can be seen that students have a low attitude in conative component or action readiness compared to the other two components. Thus, the mean score of all components is 3.40.

Table 5. Results of Reading Attitude Questionnaire

	Statements	M
1	I can develop my English reading ability if I read English.	4.00
2	I can develop my English writing ability if I read English.	3.73
3	I can improve my sensitivity to the English language if I read English.	3.65
4	I can acquire broad knowledge if I read English.	4.13
5	Reading English is useful to get a good grade in class.	3.92
6	I can become more knowledgeable if I read English.	4.13
7	I can acquire English vocabulary if I read English.	4.08
8	Reading English is useful to get a good job in the future.	3.90
9	I get to know different values if I read English.	3.81
10	I go to a library to borrow or read English books.	2.92
11	I like to read English books in my spare time.	2.79
12	I sometimes visit English websites and read them on the internet.	3.88
13	I try to find time for reading in English.	3.00
14	During my vacation I want to read at least one English book.	2.85
15	If someone tells me that he or she likes an English book very much, I am going to read it too.	2.92
16	I want to read many English books in the future.	3.21
17	I want to avoid reading in English as much as possible.	2.21
18	Reading English is dull	2.54
19	If I do not understand content in reading, I skip the part.	2.71
20	I feel tired if I read English.	2.77
21	When I read in English, I find it difficult to concentrate.	2.67
22	I do not want to read in English even if the content is interesting.	2.17
23	Reading English is troublesome.	2.08
24	I don't mind even if I cannot understand the book's content entirely.	2.92
25	I feel anxious if I don't know all the words in reading passages.	3.27
26	I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand what I read.	3.29
27	I feel overwhelmed whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.	3.08
28	My grades for English reading tests at school are very good.	3.10
29	I feel confident when I am reading in English.	2.92
30	I am good at reading English.	2.83

According to the research findings, students believe that reading can help them learn vocabulary. Furthermore, the research team from the UCL Institute of Education, Sullivan et al. (2017), stated that Teenagers are more likely to have stronger vocabulary growth than their peers if they read frequently along with having the opportunity to read a wide range of books.

Students also agree with the idea that a good mark in class can be achieved via reading. Jerrim, et al. (2020) found that Children's reading frequency and academic achievement are positively and consistently related.

The average value of statement number 12, in which students occasionally explore English websites and read them online, is higher than that of statement number 10, in which students visit libraries to borrow or read English books. In several other studies it was also found that students prefer the internet over the library. Kumah (2015) found that students

did not avoid the library in order to fulfill their informational demands. They utilize both the library and the Internet, yet more people use the Internet than the libraries, making it the most popular information source.

Based on the results in table 8, all of the three statements have an average above 3. It means that most of the students have a fairly high level of anxiety. Concerns about comprehension, unfamiliar issues, ambiguous pronunciations of words, and discomfort with reading aloud were discovered to be the primary reasons of reading anxiety (Zhao et al., 2013).

Students' Reading Comprehension

The researcher adjusted the TOEFL Junior Test's reading comprehension component for students to complete in order to calculate their reading comprehension score. The scores were converted into TOEFL score and the results were classified on the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In the TOEFL Junior Test handbook, there are 4 levels of reading comprehension: below A2, A2, B1 and B2.

Table 6. Classification of Students' Reading Comprehension

Level	Percentage	Number of Students
A2	6%	3
B1	27%	13
B2	67%	32

The table above showed classification of students' reading comprehension. The total students were 48 and they are categorized into 3 categories based on their reading comprehension test score based on CEFR. From each level, it shows how far the students can comprehend the text. In the TOEFL Junior Test handbook (2018), the detailed description of each level is clearly stated. Most of the students, with a total number 32 students, are categorized as having B1 level. Students in this level typically can understand main ideas that are stated clearly, identify important details, make inferences accurately, identify events and plotlines, and determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary in simple sentence structure.

There were 13 students in B2 level or the highest level of. This level is higher than B1 level, thus the students have better understanding in reading. Students in this level are able to understand main ideas even if they are not stated clearly, identify important details with high levels of linguistic complexity, make inferences accurately, identify point of view of fictional script, and determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary with high level of grammatical complexity.

There were only 3 students that are in A2 level. Students in this level can occasionally understand main ideas that are stated obviously, identify important details, make simple inferences, and determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary in simple context.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Reading Comprehension

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
TOEFL Junior Test	48	230	327	288.35	25.437

The findings of the reading comprehension analysis are presented in the table above. According to the table, the students' reading test scores ranged from 230 to 327. Accordingly, the mean score reading comprehension results was 288.35 that could be classified in B2 according to the CEFR.

Correlation between Students' Reading Attitude and Their Reading Comprehension

After finding the results of students' reading attitude and comprehension, the researcher analyzed the correlation between those two variables. The results were determined using the Pearson Correlation because the data was normally distributed.

Table 8. Correlation between Variables

Correlations					
		Cognitive	Conative	Affective	Reading Attitude
Reading Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	.156	.056	.363[*]	.279
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.291	.703	.011	.055
	N	48	48	48	48

According to the above table, reading attitudes and reading comprehension had a weak positive correlation, with $r = 0.279$ and $p = 0.055$. Moreover, two components of reading attitude (cognitive and conative) were also found that they were not significantly correlated with reading comprehension. However, only the affective component that was correlated with reading comprehension (p value $0.011 < 0.05$). The correlation coefficient was moderate positive ($r = 0.363$).

Other researchers also found the similar results with this research. According to Pramita (2019), there is no statistically major connection in reading attitudes and comprehension of it based on Pearson Correlation analysis. Agustiani (2017) discovered that students' reading attitudes only made a very minor influence on how well they understood what they were reading.

According to Pramita, the responses provided by the students in response to the questionnaire can explain this phenomena. The fact that the students admit to reading infrequently and prefer to obtain knowledge from others over

reading it themselves suggests that they are not genuinely engaged in classroom reading. Other examples of leisure reading revealed that despite their acknowledgment of the many advantages books provide, students hardly ever read any literature in their free time.

The lack of significance in the correlation was thought to be due to an internal reason that caused a disparity between the students' responses to the questionnaire item that was distributed and their level of comprehension, or it might have been due to the students' dishonesty when responding to the questionnaire. Additionally, an external variables influencing the weak relationship finding could be the level of difficulty in reading item, which might only have narrow relevance.

In contrast, several other studies actually showed results that were different from this study, which is the major connection exists between reading comprehension and reading attitude. The study from Jang & Ryoo (2019), discover that attitudes toward reading and reading comprehension showed a strong connection. The other study is from Rafi et al. (2021), claims that attitudes toward reading of the students and their reading comprehension were positively correlated.

However, looking back to the results of Pearson's calculations, there was a finding indicating that the affective component had a moderate relationship with reading comprehension. In other studies, Wolf argued that "reading involves not only the learners' cognitive processes but also their emotional states" (Yamashita, 2015). The students' emotional intelligence will have an effect on how they react to the material. According to Ni (2012), emotional aspects could make a serious effect over students' language acquisition processes. One of the emotional factors that has an impact on how students learn languages is anxiety. Thus, not only in this research, in other research, there were findings that shows affective part of students can have an impact on how they respond to a text.

4. Conclusion

The study indicated that the students' attitude toward reading was fairly good. The cognitive component in reading attitude got the highest mean score. The students believe that reading can give them positive impact, yet they do not really like the activity of reading. It can be proven by the mean score in their conative component that is low. The students often feel anxious and not confident enough in reading.

After that, the students' reading comprehension were mostly in B1 level. Students in this level typically can understand main ideas that are stated clearly, identify important details, make inferences accurately, identify events and plotlines, and identify unfamiliar vocabulary's meaning using straightforward sentence construction. Therefore, the students' reading comprehension mean score was classified as B2 level or higher than B1 level. Moreover, there are only 6% of the students that were categorized in having low level of reading comprehension.

Last but not least, there has been shown to be a weak positive relationship across students' reading attitudes and their comprehension of the text. According to the findings, affective side of students in reading attitude was found to be significantly connected with their comprehension in reading. Thus, that shows how in an activity of reading, the affective component or the emotional side of the learners can give a certain impact on what they are learning.

By this finding, educators are expected to make an effort to consider any factors which might have had an effect on the learning process. In order to make students feel comfortable, educators are also expected to generate an enjoyable environment and energy in the classroom. In addition, educators are expected to increase students' motivation and willingness to read more actively. For further studies, it is suggested to conduct the study with larger sample size. The implementation of different instrument is also expected to be used to see the different result from the existing studies.

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