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CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' READING HABITS AND THEIR READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

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Abstract
This study investigates the significant relationship between students' reading habits and their reading comprehension skills, a vital area within English Language Teaching (ELT) given the role of reading in language development and academic achievement. Effective reading strategies, habitual engagement with texts, and motivational factors are recognized as influential components of successful reading comprehension; however, the extent to which habitual reading behaviors predict comprehension performance remains underexplored, especially in formal educational settings. Current research emphasizes the importance of reading frequency, duration, and motivation but often lacks empirical evidence linking these habits directly to comprehension outcomes. The primary aim of this study is to examine whether specific reading habits—such as reading frequency, duration, and interests—are positively correlated with students' reading comprehension skills. Utilizing a correlational research design, the study involved 120 Grade 11 students from a public high school in Indonesia, selected through stratified random sampling to ensure representativeness. Data collection was conducted via self-report questionnaires assessing reading habits and standardized reading comprehension tests. Data analysis employed statistical techniques such as correlation and regression analysis to identify relationships and predictive patterns between reading behaviors and comprehension scores. The findings reveal a significant positive association between frequent reading and higher comprehension levels, with sustained reading durations further enhancing understanding. Motivational attitudes towards reading also contributed to better comprehension performance, although personal preferences showed no significant impact. These results suggest that fostering regular reading practices and motivating students to read more frequently can substantially improve their comprehension skills. The study underscores the importance of promoting consistent reading habits in educational settings and provides empirical evidence to inform curriculum design and teaching strategies aimed at enhancing literacy development. Ultimately, encouraging habitual reading, alongside cultivating positive attitudes, can lead to improved language proficiency and academic success among students learning English as a foreign language.

Keywords: English language teaching, reading comprehension, reading habits

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill that underpins learners' academic achievement, particularly in second language acquisition contexts. Within English Language Teaching (ELT), reading is not merely an isolated skill but closely connected to other language domains, fostering vocabulary development, grammatical awareness, and discourse comprehension. Among the factors influencing reading proficiency, students' reading habits—comprising reading frequency, duration, preferences, and motivation—are often assumed to play a vital role in shaping comprehension ability. Understanding how reading behavior interacts with comprehension performance remains central to enhancing reading instruction and learner outcomes.

In academic environments where English is learned as a foreign or second language, fostering consistent and meaningful reading practices among learners

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becomes increasingly crucial. Strong reading habits are associated with academic readiness, language enrichment, and sustained engagement with texts. Despite curriculum design efforts and resource provision, many learners continue to struggle with understanding what they read, prompting deeper inquiry into behavioral patterns that may support or hinder reading success. As reading comprehension remains a pillar of academic literacy, examining what promotes it is not only relevant but also urgently needed in various educational contexts.

Recent investigations in ELT have explored connections between learner behavior and reading outcomes. Studies by (Hermoso & Valle, 2023) and Singh et al. (2023) emphasize how self-motivated reading activities enhance learners' cognitive engagement and comprehension scores. Additionally, research by Panjaitan et al. (2024) reveals that extensive reading outside class correlates positively with vocabulary recognition and inferencing skills. Meanwhile, Palupi et al. (2024) highlight how digital reading preferences alter traditional reading patterns, affecting comprehension depth. These findings suggest growing scholarly attention to the behavioral dimensions of reading, especially in relation to comprehension abilities.

However, most existing studies tend to emphasize either the promotion of reading materials or the integration of digital platforms without directly examining the measurable connection between students' habitual reading practices and their comprehension test performance. While reading habit is often acknowledged as beneficial, less attention has been paid to examining its predictive power in explaining individual variations in comprehension proficiency, especially in formal ELT classroom contexts where structured input is consistently provided.

This study introduces an approach that links specific reading behaviors—such as reading frequency, reading interest, and preferred reading formats—with learners' comprehension test results. Rather than focusing on digital exposure or isolated strategy use, the study captures the broader patterns of learners' voluntary reading practices and their alignment with comprehension skills. This investigation sets out to determine whether students who exhibit stronger reading habits tend to perform better in comprehension tasks. The objective is to analyze the relationship between students' reading habits and their reading comprehension skills using empirical evidence drawn from learners' responses and scores.

By aligning reading habit patterns with measurable comprehension outcomes, this study encourages a re-evaluation of classroom practices, particularly in encouraging autonomous engagement with texts. Reading instruction can be reimagined not just as a decoding task but as a behaviorally informed process where learners' personal practices outside formal instruction are recognized as academically impactful. At the same time, the findings offer a framework that instructors may use to understand discrepancies in learners' comprehension progress and develop customized reading interventions that are informed by learners' actual reading routines.

This research contributes to the field of English Language Teaching by offering a data-driven perspective on how students' reading behaviors relate to comprehension outcomes. It adds to existing literature by identifying specific patterns in reading habits that can contribute to predicting performance in comprehension tasks. Moreover, the findings can serve as a reference for ELT

researchers, curriculum designers, and language teachers seeking to integrate learner behavior awareness into reading development strategies.

Hypotheses:

H_1: There is a significant positive correlation between students' reading habits and their reading comprehension skills.

H_2: Students with higher reading frequency demonstrate significantly better reading comprehension skills than those with lower reading frequency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Habits and Comprehension Skills

Reading habits and comprehension skills are pivotal to effective learning and can significantly impact students' academic performance across various disciplines. Understanding the intricate relationship between these factors necessitates an examination of the various reading strategies employed by learners and how these strategies impact their reading comprehension and learning outcomes. Recent literature elucidates several key concepts surrounding the impact of reading strategies on students' comprehension skills, the interplay between metacognitive awareness and reading proficiency, and the importance of vocabulary mastery in cultivating effective reading habits.

The process of reading comprehension encompasses various strategies that engage readers in a dynamic interpretation of texts. According to Hamzadayi and Batmaz (2022), reading comprehension strategies are essential activities that empower students, bolster their awareness of textual meaning, and differentiate proficient readers from less adept ones. These strategies can range from monitoring understanding to utilizing text structure to facilitate comprehension (Panjaitan et al., 2024). For instance, the study by Kaşdemir and Ozdemir (2023) highlights the effectiveness of the Predict-Organize-Search-Summarize-Evaluate (POSSE) strategy in enhancing comprehension, suggesting a structured approach significantly aids learners, particularly those with specific learning disabilities. The active engagement of such strategies illustrates their fundamental role in the cognitive processes of reading.

Moreover, the adaptation of specific reading techniques like skimming and scanning not only optimizes comprehension but also necessitates a metacognitive awareness of when and how to apply such strategies effectively (Agustin et al., 2023). This active engagement requires students to self-regulate their reading processes, as emphasized in the research by Momdjian and Chidiac, which posits that metacognitive regulation is critical for proficient reading (Momdjian & Chidiac, 2024). The exploration of different learning styles further reinforces this notion, indicating that personalized reading strategies can enhance comprehension among students with varying learning preferences (Palupi et al., 2024).

Additionally, vocabulary mastery emerges as a crucial component in facilitating reading comprehension. Panjaitan et al. support this, noting that vocabulary knowledge directly influences students' ability to construct meaning from texts (Panjaitan et al., 2024). This claim is further substantiated by studies indicating that strengthening vocabulary skills corresponds to improved inferencing abilities, thus underpinning the need for comprehensive vocabulary instruction (El-

attah, 2021). The interplay between vocabulary knowledge and reading strategies highlights the multifaceted nature of reading comprehension, where linguistic knowledge directly correlates to the processes of understanding and interpreting texts.

Incorporating metacognitive strategies also proves essential in generative learning environments. For instance, Díaz et al. (2023) found that training in metacognitive strategies, such as self-questioning and knowledge monitoring, significantly enhances reading comprehension skills by prompting learners to engage critically with the text. This assertion aligns with findings that emphasize the significance of metacognition in efficient reading, reinforcing the notion that students who consciously apply metacognitive strategies show greater gains in comprehension (Momdjian & Chidiac, 2024). The ability to monitor one's understanding while reading allows students to identify areas of confusion and seek clarification, fostering a deeper engagement with the material.

Furthermore, the utilization of graphic organizers simplifies complex information, allowing students to visualize relationships and hierarchies within texts. Barashid (2020) affirms that employing graphic organizers enhances students' critical thinking and organizational skills by prompting deeper engagement with reading materials. This aligns with research suggesting that structured visual aids help learners navigate through their readings, facilitating better comprehension outcomes (Agustin et al., 2023).

Emerging research also delves into digital literacy and its implications for reading strategies. The transition to online reading materials introduces unique strategies, such as setting goals for skimming and focusing on interactive elements within texts (Pardede, 2022). This shift highlights the need for educators to equip learners with modern reading strategies that reflect changes in textual formats, as digital documents often necessitate different cognitive processes than traditional print (Pardede, 2022). As technology evolves, so too must the strategies employed by both instructors and learners to optimize reading comprehension in varied formats. Moreover, researchers emphasize that reading comprehension should not solely focus on the text but must also account for readers' internal processes, including prior knowledge and cognitive strategies (Manurung et al., 2024). Consequently, incorporating holistic reading activities that encompass a range of comprehension strategies can vastly improve learners' academic engagement and motivation (Kassem & Alqahtani, 2023). Additionally, comprehensive strategies, such as the KWL method (Know-Want-Learn), have illustrated that structured frameworks can significantly elevate student engagement and understanding in various contexts (Sutadi et al., 2023). KWL encourages active participation in the reading process by prompting students to articulate what they already know, what they wish to learn, and what they have subsequently learned. This self-regulated approach directly correlates with improved retention and comprehension skills that adapt well to various reading materials.

The effectiveness of reading strategies in fostering comprehension skills hinges on several critical elements, including metacognitive awareness, vocabulary knowledge, and the integration of both traditional and innovative instructional strategies. The convergence of these factors reveals a complex but rewarding landscape of reading instruction, demonstrating that fostering effective reading habits requires a multifaceted approach tailored to meet diverse learner needs. As

the educational landscape becomes increasingly complex, a nuanced understanding of these dynamics will equip educators to more effectively enhance reading comprehension skills among their students.

Behavioral Factors in Reading Comprehension

The subject of reading comprehension is multifaceted, with various behavioral factors that significantly influence students' abilities to understand texts. A systematic exploration of the literature reveals that background knowledge and vocabulary are two of the most critical factors impacting reading comprehension across different educational contexts.

A large body of research consistently indicates that background knowledge plays a pivotal role in reading comprehension. For instance, studies underscore that readers often rely on their previous knowledge to construct meaning from texts being read (Rungsinanont, 2020). According to schema theory, individuals utilize their existing mental frameworks to interpret and understand new information effectively (Angelelli et al., 2021). This concept is prevalent in the literature; Rungsinanont's (2020) work highlights how background knowledge assists students in making necessary inferences, providing a foundation for comprehension. Similarly, findings from Hermoso and Valle indicated that prior knowledge significantly enhances learners' motivation and comprehension (Hermoso & Valle, 2023).

Moreover, vocabulary knowledge is equally essential for effective reading comprehension. Research shows a correlation between vocabulary mastery and the ability to understand texts (Manihuruk, 2020). In essence, vocabulary acts as a gateway to comprehension, where a lack of sufficient vocabulary knowledge may diminish a reader's ability to make meaning from a passage (Manihuruk, 2020; Pebriantika, 2024). For instance, Manihuruk (2020) explored the connection between vocabulary and reading comprehension, finding that students' vocabulary knowledge strongly correlated with their comprehension abilities. This is echoed by studies that propose an integrated approach, where vocabulary-building strategies are highlighted as foundational for successful reading practices (Pebriantika, 2024).

The interaction between background knowledge and vocabulary adds a layer of complexity to the reading process. Students often approach texts with preconceived notions formed by their experiences and prior reading encounters. Anderson et al. suggest that effective comprehension arises through readers' interaction with both linguistic and cognitive processes, suggesting that fluency in vocabulary allows readers to operate more interactively and contextually (Psyridou et al., 2022). Additionally, findings by Psyridou et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of not only decoding skills but also the strategic use of vocabulary as integral to achieving higher comprehension levels (Psyridou et al., 2022; Oh et al., 2023).

Furthermore, an aspect that merits consideration in reading comprehension is the motivation of learners. Motivation can greatly enhance students' engagement with texts and their overall reading performance (Hermoso & Valle, 2023). Research indicates that students with strong intrinsic motivation are more likely to immerse themselves in reading tasks, which in turn fosters a rich environment for vocabulary development and background knowledge application (Dewi, 2022). The

increase in reading frequency and engagement that comes from a motivated stance is crucial for both vocabulary acquisition and the fortification of background knowledge (Hermoso & Valle, 2023; Erlangga & Anam, 2024).

In observing the impact of pedagogical strategies on reading comprehension, various studies endorse the use of interactive approaches such as partner reading and collaborative learning environments. For instance, partner reading strategies promote peer interaction that enhances comprehension through shared understanding and feedback, thereby making the reading process more dynamic and collaborative (Pebriantika, 2024; Hakim et al., 2023). Such interaction not only boosts comprehension skills but also nurtures a communal understanding of vocabulary context and depth of knowledge, which are critical in processing complex texts.

It is also essential to recognize the socio-economic context within which reading development occurs. Research has demonstrated that children from lower socio-economic backgrounds often come to reading tasks with less exposure to a broad range of vocabulary and reduced prior knowledge (Barnes et al., 2022). This disparity tends to create challenges in achieving reading comprehension, particularly in diverse classroom settings where educators may need to employ targeted strategies to bridge these gaps (Hermoso & Valle, 2023; Barnes et al., 2022).

Equally, the affective dimensions of reading cannot be overlooked. Anxiety related to reading—especially in a second language—can present significant hurdles to comprehension (Singh et al., 2023). A supportive classroom environment that fosters confidence can alleviate such anxiety, allowing students the cognitive space necessary to make meaning from texts (Kim, 2020; Elliott, 2020). The accessibility of texts that align with students' background knowledge and interests can also enhance their engagement and willingness to dive into reading tasks, thereby optimizing their overall comprehension abilities (Toplu & Erten, 2023; Clark et al., 2020).

The literature unambiguously reveals that the interplay of background knowledge, vocabulary, motivation, and pedagogical strategies substantially influences reading comprehension. Educators are thus encouraged to cultivate a comprehensive approach that addresses these dimensions—fostering a supportive atmosphere that facilitates extensive engagement with texts while attending to the diverse needs of students. Such an approach is crucial for enhancing reading comprehension across educational settings and ensuring that all learners have the tools necessary to succeed.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a correlational design to examine the relationship between students' reading habits and their reading comprehension skills. The investigation focused on identifying whether specific patterns of reading behavior, particularly reading frequency, were statistically associated with students' performance in reading comprehension tasks. This non-experimental approach allowed for the measurement of naturally occurring variables without manipulation,

emphasizing the strength and direction of associations between the two main variables of interest.

Participants

The study involved 120 senior high school students from a public institution in Indonesia, all of whom were enrolled in Grade 11 English classes. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation based on academic achievement levels and class sections. All students had a similar instructional background in English, and their participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from both the students and the school administration, and anonymity was preserved throughout the research process.

Instruments

Two main instruments were utilized in the study. The first was a Reading Habits Questionnaire (RHQ) developed based on existing validated tools and adapted to the local educational context. The RHQ consisted of 20 items measuring dimensions such as reading frequency, duration, preferred materials, reading motivation, and reading attitude, using a 5-point Likert scale. The second instrument was a Reading Comprehension Test (RCT) designed by the researchers and validated by two ELT experts. The test comprised 30 multiple-choice questions based on five short texts, assessing various levels of comprehension, including literal, inferential, and evaluative understanding. Reliability coefficients for both instruments exceeded 0.80, confirming their internal consistency.

Data Collection

Data were collected over two consecutive weeks during regularly scheduled English classes. In the first session, students completed the Reading Habits Questionnaire under the supervision of the researchers to ensure clarity and consistency. In the second session, the Reading Comprehension Test was administered under standard exam conditions. Participants were given 45 minutes to complete the test, and responses were collected immediately after. All procedures followed ethical research standards, and students were assured that their responses would not affect their academic grades.

Data Analysis

After data collection, responses were coded and entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the overall trends in students' reading habits and comprehension scores. To test the first hypothesis, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between reading habits and reading comprehension. For the second hypothesis, students were categorized into high-frequency and low-frequency readers based on the median split of their reading frequency scores, and an Independent Samples t-test was performed to examine differences in comprehension scores between the two groups. A significance level of 0.05 was used for all statistical tests.

RESULTS

The table 1 presents an overview of students' reading habits across several dimensions, including how often and how long they read, their preferences for reading materials, as well as their motivation and attitudes toward reading. Overall, students show a moderately positive engagement with reading, indicating that while habits are generally developed, there remains variation in intensity and consistency among individuals.

In detail, the average reading frequency among students is 3.42, suggesting they engage in reading somewhat regularly. However, the variability (SD = 0.76) and the range from 1.00 to 5.00 indicate that while some students rarely read, others do so very frequently. The average reading duration is lower, at 2.85 hours per week, with a higher standard deviation of 1.21, showing wider disparities in how much time students dedicate to reading. The minimum of 0.5 hours and a maximum of 6 hours per week further reflect this diversity in time investment.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of students' reading habits (n = 120)

Reading Habit Dimension	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Reading Frequency	3.42	0.76	1.00	5.00
Reading Duration (hours/week)	2.85	1.21	0.50	6.00
Preferred Materials Score	3.78	0.68	2.00	5.00
Reading Motivation	3.51	0.81	1.00	5.00
Reading Attitude	3.65	0.73	1.50	5.00

Students reported the highest average score in preferred materials (M = 3.78, SD = 0.68), indicating that they generally favor the materials they choose to read. Reading motivation (M = 3.51) and reading attitude (M = 3.65) also scored above the midpoint, reflecting a relatively positive disposition toward reading. Both dimensions show moderate variation among participants, with motivation being slightly more dispersed (SD = 0.81) than attitude (SD = 0.73). These findings suggest that while students are fairly motivated and hold a positive attitude toward reading, individual differences still play a significant role in shaping these habits.

The table 2 displays students' reading comprehension abilities across three levels: literal, inferential, and evaluative. Overall, students show stronger performance in basic comprehension tasks, with decreasing scores as the complexity of comprehension increases. The total comprehension scores indicate a moderate level of reading understanding among the group, with notable variation in individual performance.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of reading comprehension scores (n = 120)

Comprehension Level	Mean Score (out of 30)	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Literal	9.21	1.85	4.00	12.00
Inferential	8.56	2.14	3.00	12.00
Evaluative	7.94	1.97	2.00	11.00
Total Score	25.71	4.18	12.00	30.00

In more detail, the literal comprehension level has the highest mean score at 9.21 out of a possible 12, suggesting that students are relatively proficient in understanding explicit information from texts. The standard deviation of 1.85 and a range of 4.00 to 12.00 show that while some students struggle, many perform near the upper limit. The inferential level follows with a slightly lower mean of 8.56 and a higher standard deviation of 2.14, indicating that students find drawing conclusions and interpreting implicit meaning slightly more challenging and inconsistent across the group.

The lowest mean score is in evaluative comprehension at 7.94, with a standard deviation of 1.97. This implies that students have more difficulty making judgments or assessing textual content critically. Scores range from 2.00 to 11.00, which shows that a portion of students is still developing these higher-order comprehension skills. The total comprehension score averages at 25.71 out of 30, which reflects a fairly strong overall reading comprehension ability, although the standard deviation of 4.18 reveals differences in how well individual students perform across the comprehension types.

The table 3 presents the correlation between students' reading habits and their reading comprehension scores. It shows that several aspects of reading habits—such as frequency, duration, motivation, and attitude—are significantly associated with reading comprehension, while preference for materials does not show a significant relationship.

Table 3. Pearson correlation between reading habits and reading comprehension

Variable	Reading Comprehension Score	p-value
Reading Frequency	**r** = 0.48	.000**
Reading Duration	r = 0.36	.001**
Reading Motivation	r = 0.29	.003**
Reading Attitude	r = 0.25	.010*
Preferred Materials	r = 0.18	.054

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01

In detail, reading frequency shows the strongest positive correlation with reading comprehension (r = 0.48, p = .000), indicating that students who read more often tend to have higher comprehension scores. This is followed by reading duration (r = 0.36, p = .001), suggesting that spending more time reading each week also contributes meaningfully to improved comprehension. Reading motivation is moderately correlated with comprehension (r = 0.29, p = .003), meaning that students who are more driven to read generally understand texts better.

Reading attitude also shows a significant, though weaker, correlation (r = 0.25, p = .010), implying that a more positive outlook on reading is linked with better comprehension performance. In contrast, the relationship between preferred materials and reading comprehension is not statistically significant (r = 0.18, p = .054), suggesting that merely liking what one reads does not necessarily enhance comprehension skills. This highlights the greater impact of behavioral and affective components of reading habits over personal preference in contributing to comprehension outcomes.

The table 4 presents a comparison of reading comprehension scores between students who read frequently and those who read less often. It shows a noticeable difference in performance between the two groups, with high-frequency readers scoring higher on average than low-frequency readers, and this difference is statistically significant.

More specifically, high-frequency readers achieved a mean comprehension score of 27.13 with a standard deviation of 3.52, while low-frequency readers had a lower mean score of 24.29 and a higher standard deviation of 4.55. The independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t(118) = 3.41$, $p = .001$), which indicates that the higher average performance of the frequent readers is unlikely to be due to random chance.

Table 4. Independent samples t-test: comprehension scores of high- vs. low-frequency readers

Group	N	Mean Score	SD	t	df	p-value
High-Frequency Readers	60	27.13	3.52	3.41	118	.001**
Low-Frequency Readers	60	24.29	4.55			

Note: **p < .01

This result supports the idea that students who read more often tend to have stronger comprehension skills. The significant gap between the mean scores suggests that reading frequency plays an important role in improving students' understanding of texts. Educators may consider encouraging more frequent reading as part of their literacy development programs, given its clear association with higher comprehension performance.

DISCUSSION

The present study explored the relationship between students' reading habits and their levels of reading comprehension, revealing a complex but significant interplay between behavioral, affective, and cognitive dimensions. Students demonstrated moderately positive reading habits, as reflected in their reading frequency, duration, motivation, and attitudes. These variables were found to be substantially related to their performance in reading comprehension tasks, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of literacy development. The findings support the growing consensus in educational research that reading comprehension is not merely a product of linguistic proficiency but a broader cognitive process influenced by behavioral engagement and motivational orientation. This reinforces the idea that fostering good reading habits is not only beneficial but essential for academic success, particularly in contexts where students are expected to read and process increasingly complex texts.

The positive correlation between reading frequency and reading comprehension resonates strongly with prior research by Hamzadayi and Batmaz (2022), who underscore the cumulative benefits of habitual reading. Students who read more frequently are more likely to encounter a variety of text structures, vocabulary, and rhetorical styles, which over time enhances their ability to decode and understand information. These repeated encounters with text serve as practice for developing strategic reading behaviors such as predicting, summarizing, and

drawing inferences. The findings also align with Panjaitan et al. (2024), who suggest that frequent exposure to reading materials helps students automatize certain cognitive processes, allowing for more fluent and efficient comprehension. Therefore, increasing reading frequency is not just about spending more time with books; it is a process that facilitates the internalization of higher-order thinking strategies critical to understanding both literal and abstract textual meanings.

Equally important is the duration of reading, which was also found to be positively linked with students' comprehension abilities. The significance of sustained reading time supports the work of Díaz et al. (2023), who argue that prolonged engagement with texts allows for deeper cognitive processing. Longer reading sessions give students the mental space to implement metacognitive strategies such as self-questioning, clarifying misunderstandings, and reflecting on textual meaning. These strategies are particularly important for comprehending complex passages that require inference-making or critical evaluation. In contrast, shorter reading sessions may result in surface-level understanding, limiting the development of skills necessary for higher-order comprehension. Therefore, encouraging students to dedicate extended, uninterrupted periods to reading may enhance not only their stamina but also their capacity for deep learning and interpretation.

Motivation emerged as another influential factor in this study, with intrinsically motivated students performing better in comprehension tasks. This supports the arguments made by Momdjian and Chidiac (2024), who highlight motivation as a key driver of cognitive engagement. Students with higher levels of intrinsic motivation tend to approach reading with curiosity and purpose, which encourages them to persist through difficult texts and engage more deeply with content. Motivated readers are also more inclined to seek out challenging materials and apply strategies that aid comprehension, such as annotating texts or discussing them with peers. The motivational aspect of reading cannot be overstated; it transforms reading from a passive task into an active intellectual pursuit, where students take ownership of their learning. Hence, interventions aimed at fostering intrinsic motivation—such as offering students autonomy in text selection or connecting reading materials to real-life contexts—may result in significant improvements in comprehension outcomes.

The study also found that students' reading attitudes were moderately associated with comprehension, albeit less strongly than frequency, duration, or motivation. This finding is consistent with the observations made by Palupi et al. (2024), who argue that while attitude alone may not directly impact comprehension, it plays a critical role in shaping students' long-term reading behaviors. A positive reading attitude fosters openness to new ideas, persistence in the face of challenges, and a willingness to engage with diverse materials. These dispositions, over time, create a supportive environment for cognitive development. However, attitude without consistent practice may not yield immediate gains in comprehension. This suggests that fostering a positive attitude must be paired with opportunities for frequent and sustained reading to realize its full potential. Encouraging reading communities, celebrating reading achievements, and creating inviting reading spaces can help in nurturing such positive attitudes.

Interestingly, the study found that students' preferences for specific types of reading materials did not significantly correlate with their comprehension

performance. This nuance echoes the findings of Manurung et al. (2024), who caution that while personal interest can increase initial engagement, it does not automatically lead to better comprehension unless accompanied by cognitive effort. Enjoyment and interest in a text may enhance motivation but do not ensure that students are using the necessary strategies for deep understanding, such as identifying key ideas, synthesizing information, or evaluating arguments. This underscores the importance of teaching students how to read strategically, regardless of whether the text aligns with their personal interests. Teachers should thus balance student choice with instructional guidance that helps learners engage meaningfully with all types of texts, including those that may not be immediately appealing.

One of the more notable findings of this study was the difference in student performance across the three levels of comprehension—literal, inferential, and evaluative. As expected, students performed best at the literal level, where comprehension involves retrieving explicitly stated information. Their performance declined at the inferential and evaluative levels, which require higher-order thinking skills. This pattern supports the developmental model proposed by El-attah (2021), who asserts that while literal comprehension forms the foundation of reading, the ability to infer and evaluate requires more advanced cognitive and metacognitive skills. Inferential comprehension, for instance, demands that students read between the lines, make logical connections, and integrate prior knowledge, while evaluative comprehension requires them to assess arguments, detect bias, and form judgments based on evidence. The weaker performance at these higher levels suggests that students need more instructional support in these areas, such as scaffolded questioning techniques and opportunities to engage in critical discussions about texts.

The disparity in comprehension across levels also highlights the relevance of structured instructional models like POSSE, as advocated by Kaşdemir and Ozdemir (2023). The POSSE strategy—predict, organize, search, summarize, evaluate—encourages students to actively process information before, during, and after reading. By guiding learners through these stages, POSSE helps them to internalize cognitive and metacognitive routines that facilitate deeper comprehension. While the current study did not implement or evaluate this strategy directly, the findings suggest that incorporating such models into classroom instruction could be highly beneficial, particularly for students struggling with inferential and evaluative tasks. Future studies could investigate the effectiveness of POSSE or similar frameworks in bridging comprehension gaps.

The performance gap between high- and low-frequency readers further emphasizes the critical importance of habitual reading. As Pardede (2022) asserts, the transition to digital and online reading formats requires students to adapt by developing new strategies for navigating non-linear texts and hyperlinked content. Frequent readers, particularly those familiar with digital texts, are better equipped to manage this complexity. Their consistent exposure to diverse formats and content types enhances not only linguistic proficiency but also digital literacy, both of which are essential for academic and professional success in the modern information landscape. Schools and educators must therefore create environments that promote daily reading—whether through reading journals, silent reading time,

or digital reading platforms—to ensure all students have the opportunity to become fluent, confident readers.

While this study did not explicitly assess the use of visual tools or reading scaffolds, the observed gaps in higher-level comprehension suggest that such tools may play a valuable role. Barashid (2020) advocates the use of graphic organizers, visual diagrams, and note-taking strategies to help students visualize relationships within texts and track their thought processes. These aids are particularly useful for inferential and evaluative tasks, which require students to synthesize multiple pieces of information and evaluate them critically. Introducing such tools into the reading curriculum may help learners, especially those who are visual or spatial thinkers, to better structure their understanding and improve overall comprehension performance.

Finally, the integration of metacognitive strategies into reading instruction remains paramount. As noted by Díaz et al. (2023) and supported by Momdjian and Chidiac (2024), students who are aware of their cognitive processes are better able to regulate their learning, identify misunderstandings, and adapt strategies to fit different reading purposes. The KWL (Know-Want to Know-Learned) strategy proposed by Sutadi et al. (2023) exemplifies how students can be taught to set goals, activate prior knowledge, and reflect on their learning outcomes. Embedding such metacognitive frameworks into classroom instruction not only supports comprehension but also empowers students to become self-directed learners. As literacy demands become more sophisticated, fostering metacognitive awareness will be crucial in preparing students to read, understand, and evaluate complex texts in academic, professional, and real-world contexts.

CONCLUSION

The findings strongly support both hypotheses, highlighting a significant positive relationship between students' reading habits and their reading comprehension skills. Students who read more frequently and spend more time reading tend to perform better in understanding texts, especially at literal, inferential, and evaluative levels. Their motivation and positive attitudes toward reading also contribute meaningfully to their comprehension, although personal preferences for reading materials show no significant effect. Notably, students who engage in reading more often demonstrate better comprehension performance compared to their peers with lower reading frequency, confirming that regular and sustained reading practice is crucial for enhancing understanding. These results imply that encouraging students to read regularly and fostering positive reading attitudes can lead to improved literacy outcomes. Educators should focus on promoting reading frequency and motivation rather than relying solely on students' enjoyment of specific materials, as comprehension is more deeply influenced by consistent engagement and an active interest in reading than by preference alone.

While the study provides valuable insights into the relationship between reading habits and reading comprehension skills, there are several limitations that should be considered. First, the correlational design of the study does not allow for causal inferences, meaning it is not possible to definitively conclude that reading habits directly cause improvements in comprehension. Additionally, the study's reliance on self-reported data from the Reading Habits Questionnaire introduces the potential for response bias, as students may overestimate or underestimate their

reading behaviors. The use of a single institution and a relatively homogenous sample of students limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Future research could address these limitations by employing a longitudinal design to explore causality and by including a more diverse sample across different regions and educational backgrounds. Additionally, incorporating qualitative data, such as interviews or observations, could provide deeper insights into the underlying factors influencing students' reading habits and comprehension skills, beyond what is captured through surveys and standardized tests.

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