
A Study of Undergraduate Students' Reading Habits and Attitudes

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Abstrak:

Reading habit and attitude should be built and developed due to improve students' cognitive and emotional aspects in learning process. This study aimed to describe the reading habits and attitudes of the students in higher education. Using a survey design and purposive sampling, data was collected from 120 respondents through questionnaire consisting of 29 items using a 1-5 Likert scale. The main data retrieval tool in this study was the Adult Survey of Reading Attitude (ASRA) questionnaire. Related to reading habit, it was found that mostly the respondents spend their leisure time surfing the internet and that the amount of time spent on reading is usually 1 to 2 hours. Majority of them preferred to read comics over e-books, novels, textbooks, newspaper, and magazines. Besides, they preferred to read in Indonesia language. Then, 87% of participants had a frequency of reading books/novels while 33% reported not reading in a year. Related to reading attitude, the highest number of respondents had a good attitude towards reading. The findings of this study can give insight to the lecturers to develop their teaching strategies and activities that can trigger the students' motivation to read.

Kata kunci: ASRA, Frequency, Reading Attitude, Reading Habit, Students' Motivation

Introduction

Reading undoubtedly contributes to people's overall development of their cognitive and personality. Here, reading is an important means of acquiring knowledge and developing meaning by decoding symbols in text and context (Aslam, Qutab and Ali, 2022). It promotes the growth of personality and cognitive abilities (Tynjälä et al., 2016) and reflects the reading preferences and tastes of the individual (Baba and Rostam Affendi, 2020; Asif and Yang, 2021). Good reading habits, including reading for pleasure, information seeking and information seeking, can be developed at an early age (Nkomo, 2022).

There are, nonetheless, additional advantages. Specktor (2018) argues that reading can foster empathy and emotional intelligence that make the reader a better person as it enables the reader to view the world from a variety of perspectives and encourages greater interpersonal connection, both of which can help reduce stress. In addition, according to Erasmus (2018), reading can assist a person in disconnecting from technology, since the constant use of technology by Generation Z has been connected to depression, stress, and exhaustion.

Though reading offers a wide range of benefits, several studies found that the number of students who spend more than an hour reading books after school has decreased. Therefore, attitude plays an important role in determining reading and can be defined as a positive feeling towards books (Hsiao and Chen, 2017). Anugrah's research in 2019 revealed that the undergraduate students in Yogyakarta preferred to spend a major of their time surfing the internet 56% and other technology-related activities such as

playing games rather than to read 14%. Most of the students read- only for 1-2 hours daily and some even read less than an hour in a day. The students read various types of reading material such as novel, comic, and textbook which indicated for extensive reading. However, the major of the students preferred reading online material such as journal and e-book 35%. Moreover, almost all of the students preferred to read books Indonesia language than English. In terms of students' reading attitudes, the results showed that the average of activity of reading (Mean = 3.05), enjoyment of reading by the results of average (Mean = 3.55) and the average anxiety and difficulty toward reading (Mean = 2,85). Nevertheless, the obstacles or difficulties faced by the students when reading such as encountering unfamiliar word, which means there are no obstacles that are too meaningful in doing reading activities. Thus, they have a good attitude toward reading but their reading habits needs to be developed.

This present study aims to describe the undergraduate students' reading habits and attitudes in one of private universities in Indonesia. Therefore, we seek the answer to the following question: "What are the undergraduate student's reading habits and attitudes toward reading?"

Literature Review

Reading habits determine the frequency, amount and type of material read (Yuliani and Barokah, 2017). It is a pattern of behavior that involves consistent and continuous reading. Veissière et al. (2019) found that reading habits are influenced by several factors such as gender, age, educational background, academic performance and professional growth. Fromm (2020) argued that with the help of reading, individuals can critically evaluate and confirm their own thoughts and beliefs about right and wrong in society.

Reading attitude is a concept that describes the attitudes of individuals towards reading influenced by their personal beliefs and feelings (Kim, 2016). The perspective of the reading and the associated feelings and beliefs (Petit, Li and Ali, 2021) are part of these attitudes. Factors such as belief in the importance of reading, enjoyment of reading, high self-esteem as a reader and a verbally stimulating home environment contribute to a positive reading attitude (Boerma, Mol and Jolles, 2016). A positive reading attitude can lead to increased reading, diverse reading options and improved academic performance (Bastug, 2014). Reading attitudes can be positive or negative and are shaped by previous reading experiences (Bohn-Gettler and McCrudden, 2022).

Research Method

A survey was conducted to gather data using a questionnaire. The main data retrieval tool in this study was the Adult Survey of Reading Attitude (ASRA) questionnaire as adapted by Ahmed (2016). The questionnaires were distributed to assess reading habits and attitudes of undergraduate students. It comprised three sections: the first section asked for background information, the second section had 6 close-ended questions about the participants' reading habits and preferences, and the third section consisted of 29 items using a 1-5 Likert scale, with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 5 being "Strongly Agree", to measure the users' attitudes and preferences towards reading (11 items on the activity of reading, 9 items on the enjoyment of reading, and 9 items on anxiety and difficulty in reading).

The questionnaire was distributed to 120 undergraduate students in one of private universities in Indonesia. The gender distribution showed that a majority of the participants were male (61 percent). The age group of the respondents was between 17-21 years old. Besides, they were from Visual Communication Design and Film and Television Programs in first year.

Findings

Reading Habit

According to the results of the questionnaire answered by the respondents, the results of leisure time activity is shown in the figure below:

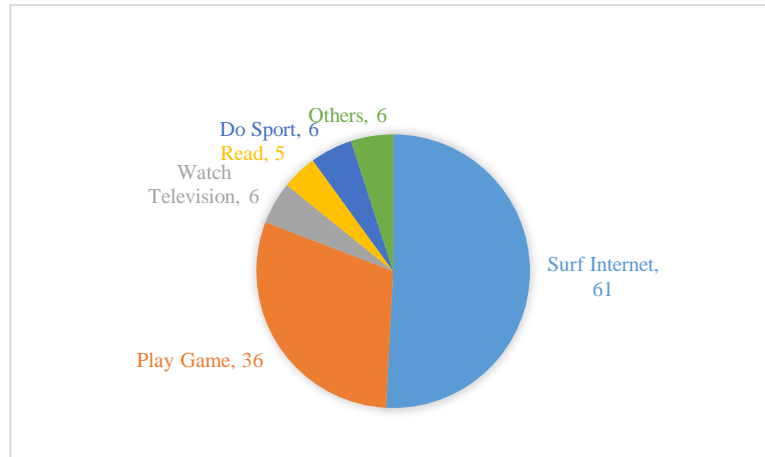


Figure 1. Activities in Leisure Time

From the figure above, the highest score among the students was for surfing the internet, with 61% indicating that they spent more time doing so. Conversely, the lowest score was for reading with 5% of the participants. The results suggest that these students mostly spend time surfing the internet more than reading.

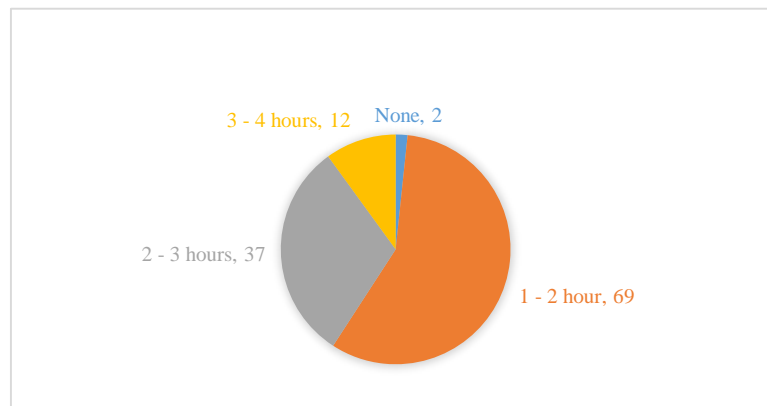


Figure 2. Amount of Time Spent on Reading

As indicated by the above figure, the majority of the respondents (69%) reported spending 1 to 2 hours per day on reading while only few students (12%) reported reading for 3 to 4 hours per day. However, 2 students did not answer the question. This implies that undergraduate students' interest and engagement towards reading is still relatively low.

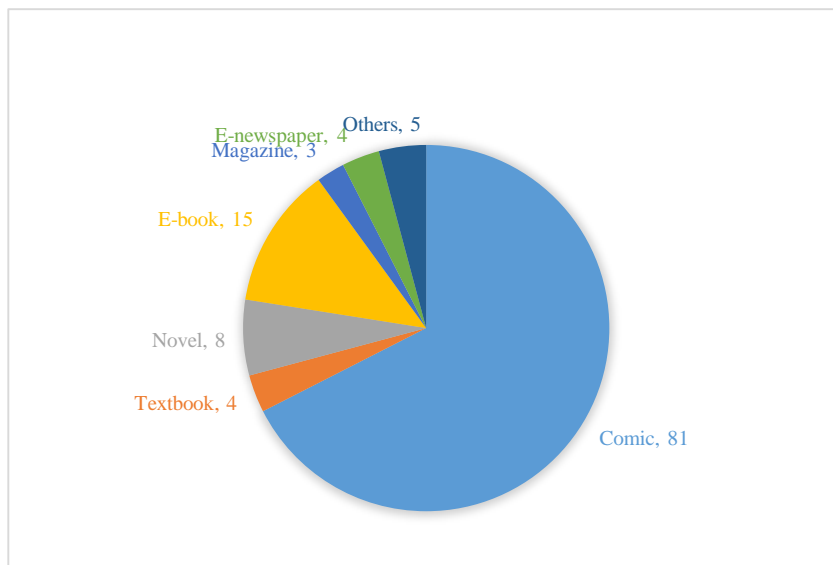


Figure 3. Types of Reading Preferences

As depicted in the figure above, the researcher found that the participants used various reading preferences per day. A total of 81% respondents read comics and 15% e-books. Therefore, the lowest number rate of 3% of the respondents read magazine, then followed by textbook 4% and enewspaper 4%. Meanwhile, some respondents also read the novels and other reading preferences include in others.

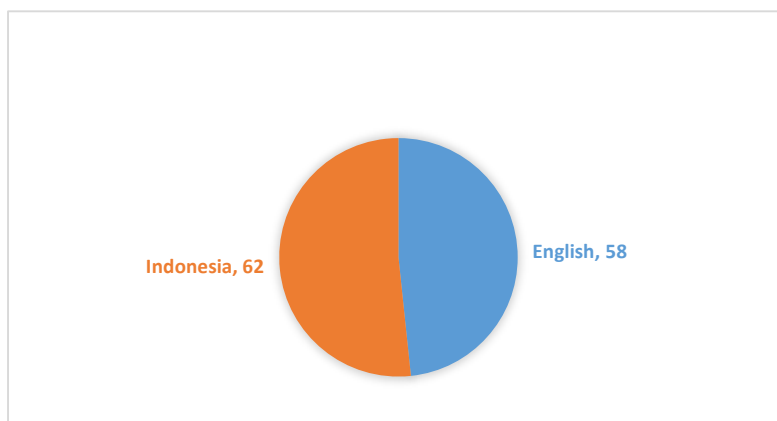


Figure 4. Preferred Language for Reading

The figure above indicates the language preference of the respondents when it comes to reading. The data revealed that majority of the students, 62%, favored reading in Indonesia language while 58% preferred reading in English. This fact is quite understandable since the large proportion of the respondents were Indonesian speakers

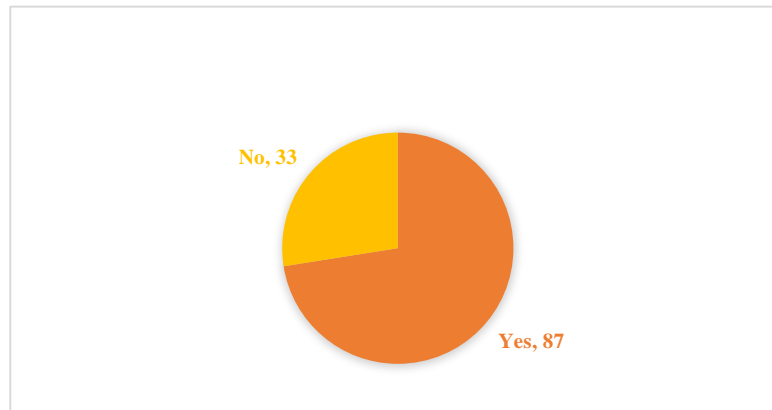


Figure 5. Frequency of Reading Books/Novels in Year

The figure above provides valuable insights into the reading habits of the participants in the study. Based on the data, a substantial proportion of the participants, 87%, reported reading books or novels on a regular basis.

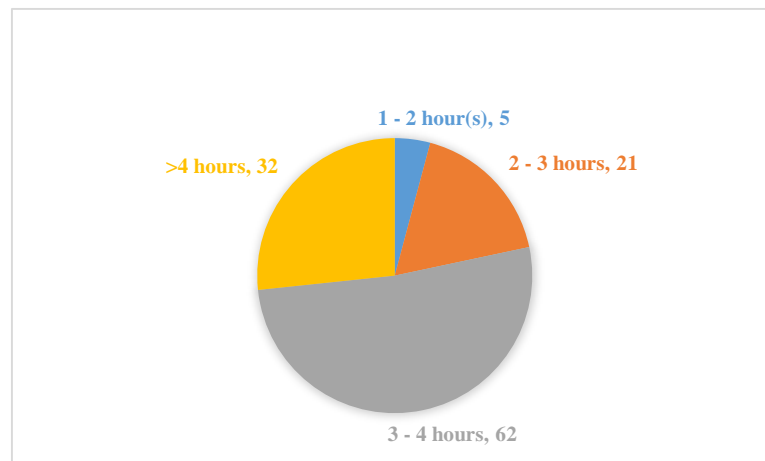


Figure 6. Amount of Time Spent on Surfing Internet

From the figure above, the majority of the respondents (62%) reported spending 3 to 4 hours per day on surfing the internet, while only a small percentage (5%) reported reading for 1 to 2 hours per day. This suggests that the interest and engagement of the respondents spending time to surf the internet is still quite high.

Reading Attitude

This part comprised of 25 items designed to assess the users' attitudes and preferences towards reading. The items were presented using a 5-point Likert scale, with 11 items focused on the frequency and involvement in reading activities, 8 items measuring the enjoyment of reading, and 8 items assessing anxiety and difficulty in reading. By utilizing this comprehensive measurement tool, the researcher aimed to gather in-depth information about the users' experiences and perspectives towards reading, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the topic under investigation.

Table 1. Activity of Reading

Item	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I can read but I don't understand what I've read.	2.28	1.96	26	50	28	16	0
2. There are better ways to learn new things than to read a book.	4.26	3.81	1	2	13	53	51
3. I am a good reader.	3.28	2.86	3	15	53	43	6
4. When I am at home, I read a lot.	2.76	2.44	13	37	43	20	7
5. I want to have more books of my own.	3.05	2.77	13	28	33	32	14
6. I try very hard, but I just can't read very well.	2.43	2.15	26	43	28	20	3
7. My friends and I often discuss the books we have read.	2.44	2.21	29	41	24	20	6
8. It is easier for me to understand what I am reading if pictures, charts, and diagrams are included	4.23	3.79	1	5	13	48	53
9. When I read, I usually get tired and sleepy.	3.22	2.92	8	29	34	27	22
10. I have a lot in common with people who are poor readers.	2.54	2.18	18	36	49	17	0
11. I spend a lot of my spare time reading.	2.48	2.18	21	47	30	18	4

The table above shows the data related to the 11 statements related to the activity of reading. In the table, the mean and standard deviation are presented. Here, the mean provides an average of each statement whereas the standard deviation provides information about the degree of variation from the mean. The results showed that the statement with the highest mean was statement number 2, with a mean value of 4.26% and a standard deviation of 3.81%. On the other hand, the statement with the lowest mean was statement number 1, with a mean value of 2.28% and a standard deviation of 1.96%. These results provide insights into the participants' engagement in reading activities, with statement number 2 indicating the highest level of involvement and statement number 1 indicating the lowest level of involvement.

Table 2. Enjoyment of Reading

Item	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Reading is the best way for me to learn new things.	2.98	2.65	9	30	44	28	9
2. Reading is one of my favorite activities.	2.73	2.43	18	33	38	26	5
3. I read when I have time to enjoy it.	3.84	3.43	3	9	18	64	26
4. I get a lot of enjoyment from reading.	3.28	2.88	3	19	50	38	10
5. I like going to the library from borrowing books.	1.98	1.69	43	49	18	8	2
6. When I read an interesting book, story, or article, I'll tell my friends about it.	3.61	3.27	8	14	20	53	25
7. Reading is the one of the interesting things that I do.	2.80	2.45	10	38	43	24	5
8. I'm the kind of person who enjoys a good book.	3.49	3.13	4	20	26	53	17
9. I enjoy reading books as gifts.	3.18	2.89	13	22	32	37	16

The data above provides 9 statements regarding the participants' enjoyment of reading. The results show that the highest mean value for enjoyment of reading was recorded for statement number 3, with a mean value of 3.84% and a standard deviation of 3.43%. On the other hand, the lowest mean value for enjoyment of reading was recorded for statement number 5, with a mean value of 1.98% and a standard deviation of 1.69%. These findings give an insight into the participants' level of enjoyment towards reading and how much they enjoy reading activities.

Table 3. Anxiety and Difficulty

Item	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I need a lot of help in reading.	2.06	1.77	37	54	17	9	3
2. I get upset when I read.	2.08	1.75	38	42	33	7	0
3. I feel anxious when I have a lot of reading to do.	2.29	2.04	33	41	28	14	4
4. I get nervous if I have to read a lot of information about job or some social activities.	2.88	2.53	11	31	45	28	5
5. Encountering unfamiliar words is the hardest part while reading.	3.59	3.24	8	10	28	51	23
6. I worry a lot about my reading.	2.56	2.22	17	42	40	19	2
7. I try to avoid reading because it makes me feel anxious.	1.88	1.53	44	52	20	3	1
8. I have trouble to understand what I read.	2.24	1.88	26	47	40	6	1
9. I am afraid that people may find out what a poor reader I am.	2.06	1.86	50	33	20	14	3

Related to the anxiety and difficulty in reading is presented in the table above. From the results, the highest mean value for the participants' anxiety and difficulty towards reading can be seen in the statement number 5 with a mean value of 3.59% and a standard deviation of 3.24%. On the other hand, the lowest mean value for the participants' anxiety and difficulty towards reading can be found in the statement number 7 with a mean value of 1.88% and a standard deviation of 1.53%.

Discussion

This present study discussed the undergraduate students' reading habits through various activities, such as leisure time, amount of time spent on reading, types of reading preferences, preferred language for reading, frequency of reading books/novels in a year, and amount of time spent on surfing the internet for 3 to 4 hours per day. The results of the study are consistent with the findings from previous research (Samsuddin & Mohd Khalid, 2021). They found that the majority of participants spend their leisure time surfing the internet and that the amount of time spent on reading is usually 1 to 2 hours. Furthermore, the study results found that the majority of participants preferred to read comics over e-books, novels, textbooks, newspaper, and magazines. Since majority of the respondents were Indonesians, they preferred to read in Indonesia language. Then, 87% of participants had a frequency of reading books/novels while 33% reported not reading in a year. Though reading gives a lot of benefits, it is actually the hardest habit to develop. As mentioned by Samsudin et al. (2019), the difficulty of forming a reading habit emphasizes the importance of ongoing support and encouragement, particularly in helping people of all ages develop a passion for reading. Reading may be turned from a duty into a lifetime joy that continues to foster intellectual progress and personal development with the appropriate resources and guidance.

The results of the activity of reading subject showed that the highest score was received by statement number 2, "There are better ways to learn new things than to read a book." Meanwhile, the lowest score was attributed to statement number 1, "I can read but I don't understand what I've read." The results of a study on the enjoyment of reading indicate that statement number 3, "I read when I have time to enjoy it," received the highest value. On the other hand, statement number 5, "I like going to the library for books," received the lowest value. Related to anxiety and difficulty, the biggest challenge encountered by the students in reading is finding unfamiliar words, as indicated by statement number 5. On the other hand,

statement number 7, " I try to avoid reading because it makes me feel anxious," received the lowest value, indicating that respondents disagree with this statement.

Conclusion

This study revealed that the number of students who spent 1 to 2 hours reading books. They spent more time surfing the internet than reading books. After that, though the students had a positive attitude towards reading, the students faced some difficulties, such as encountering unfamiliar words that often were not considered important. The researcher believes that their reading habits should be developed by the lecturers by continuously encouraging them to read by promoting various activities.

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