



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO READ AND THEIR READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the relationship between students' reading motivation and their reading comprehension achievement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. This quantitative study with a correlational design involved 80 students from Muhammadiyah 1 Kotabumi High School, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a reading motivation questionnaire adapted from the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) and a multiple-choice objective reading comprehension test. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and the Pearson Product-Moment correlation test. The results of the descriptive analysis showed that the students' average reading motivation fell into the moderate to high category ($Mean = 74,8$), while their reading comprehension achievement was in the adequate category ($Mean = 71,50$). The results of the hypothesis testing indicated a significant positive relationship with a strong correlation coefficient between the two variables ($r = 0,624$; $p = 0,000 < 0,05$). The dimensional analysis revealed that extrinsic motivation plays a more dominant role in promoting literal comprehension, while intrinsic motivation plays a significant role in inferential and evaluative comprehension. From a pedagogical perspective, the results of this study imply the importance of the English teacher's role in designing interactive reading materials to stimulate students' intrinsic motivation in the classroom.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading motivation, reading comprehension, correlational research, academic achievement

INTRODUCTION

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading comprehension is widely recognized as a fundamental skill that is crucial for academic success and lifelong learning. Mastery of reading skills enables students to access global information, critically analyze complex texts, and acquire new knowledge independently. However, achieving high levels of reading comprehension is a multifaceted process that involves not only cognitive abilities-such as vocabulary and grammar- but also affective factors. Among these various affective variables, reading motivation plays a key role in encouraging learners to actively engage with texts and persevere when faced with comprehension difficulties.

Although reading skills are crucial, many EFL students still struggle to effectively comprehend academic texts in English (Kartomo, 2024). In classroom practice, educators often find that low reading comprehension performance is not solely due to language barriers. This problem is frequently exacerbated by a



lack of motivation to read, which leads to passive reading habits, low student engagement, and anxiety when faced with complex texts. When students lack both internal and external motivation, they tend to be reluctant to apply effective reading strategies or allocate sufficient time for practice, which ultimately hinders their reading comprehension achievement (Numertayasa & Ratnadi, 2025).

Theoretically, this study draws on motivation theory, specifically the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation to read refers to the drive to read that is based on personal curiosity, enjoyment, and the satisfaction of understanding new concepts. In contrast, extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards, such as striving for high grades, meeting a teacher's expectations, or avoiding academic sanctions. Previous research indicates that highly motivated learners tend to read more frequently, employ deeper information-processing strategies, and achieve better learning outcomes (Rizqiya et al., 2025). Although national studies have documented this relationship, empirical evidence within the specific context of EFL in Indonesia remains crucial for providing an accurate picture of local pedagogical conditions and learner profiles.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between affective variables and language achievement, but findings regarding reading motivation in the EFL context show varying results. A number of studies report a strong positive correlation and confirm that intrinsic motivation is the primary driver of reading success. Conversely, other studies have found moderate or weak relationships, suggesting that external factors – such as academic pressure or specific teaching methods – may influence this relationship. This variation in results highlights a research gap regarding how dimensions of reading motivation interact with students' reading comprehension achievement at the local educational level and in local educational contexts (Musdira & Hading, 2025).

Reading comprehension is defined as an interactive and complex process in which readers construct meaning from written text by integrating prior knowledge and the information presented in the text; reading in a foreign language is not merely a matter of spelling or pronouncing words, but rather a process of extracting the message or meaning intended by the author (Adys, 2025). In Barrett's taxonomy of reading comprehension, reading comprehension skills are divided into several key indicators (Rahman, 2020): (1) Literal Comprehension: The ability to identify explicit information, such as facts, characters, or plot; (2) Inferential Comprehension: The ability to infer implied meaning (implicit information) or main ideas that are not stated directly; (3) Reorganization Comprehension: The ability to categorize, analyze, and evaluate the validity and arguments presented in a text; (4) Evaluation: The ability to assign values such as reality or imagination, quality or ideas, authenticity or accuracy, appropriateness, and praise; (5) Appreciation: The ability to connect acquired objective knowledge with the reader's emotional response to aspects of style, form, and linguistic techniques that correspond to the text's content.

Reading motivation refers to the internal drives, needs, and values that guide individuals to engage in reading activities. The most widely used theoretical foundation for measuring EFL students' reading motivation is the framework developed by Wigfield and Guthrie through the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) (Felicia, 2017a). Wigfield and Guthrie divide reading motivation into two main dimensions (Kartika, 2011): (1) Intrinsic Motivation: The drive to read that arises from within the student for the sake of enjoyment and the satisfaction of curiosity, including Curiosity, Involvement, Challenge, and Efficacy; (2) Extrinsic Motivation: The drive to read triggered by external factors or rewards, including Recognition, Grades, Competition, and Compliance.

Theoretically, the relationship between these two variables is explained by Self-Determination Theory (Mamahit, 2016) and information processing theory. Students with high reading motivation tend to allocate more time to reading (reading amount) and employ deeper text-processing strategies (deep processing strategies). These psychological processes form a positive cycle: strong motivation drives high reading frequency, which in turn expands vocabulary and language structure mastery, ultimately improving reading comprehension achievement (Suryani et al., 2026). Several scientific studies have examined this correlation in various EFL contexts, such as Putra et al. (2019), Sitompul (2016), and Ibrahim (2023). Overall, a review of previous research indicates that while a positive relationship between motivation and reading comprehension is generally acknowledged, the magnitude of the correlation and which dimensions of motivation are most dominant vary depending on the educational level and the context of the students' learning environment.

The novelty of this study lies in several key aspects that distinguish it from previous research, namely: (1) Local contextualization in secondary and higher education, which highlights the psychological dynamics of English language learners at the secondary and higher education levels within the sociocultural context of Indonesia; (2) The integration of specific motivational dimensions (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) into the comprehension of academic texts; and (3) The adaptation of the learning context in the post-pandemic/digital era, in which students' reading patterns have shifted toward digital media.

Therefore, this study aims to address these limitations by empirically testing the relationship between students' reading motivation and their reading comprehension achievement. The research questions in this study are: (1) What is the level of students' reading motivation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction; (2) What is the level of students' reading comprehension achievement; and (3) Is there a significant relationship between students' reading motivation and their reading comprehension achievement? Accordingly, the objectives of this study are to describe the level of reading motivation and the level of reading comprehension achievement, as well as to empirically demonstrate a significant relationship between these two variables. To address these objectives, two hypotheses are proposed: H₀ (There is no significant relationship) and H_a (There is a significant relationship).

The results of this study are expected to make both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of education. From a pedagogical perspective, an understanding of this relationship can help English teachers design learning strategies that not only focus on linguistic aspects but also create a motivating learning environment to improve students' overall reading skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to test and analyze the existence and strength of the relationship between two variables without applying a treatment or manipulating those variables (Pd et al., 2020). The independent variable (X) in this study is Students' Reading Motivation, while the dependent variable (Y) is Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement.

The population in this study consists of all students at Muhammadiyah 1 Kotabumi High School during the [2026/2027] academic year. Sampling was conducted using either purposive sampling or simple random sampling, with a sample size of $N = 80$ students (from a range of $N = 60$ – 100 students).

The data in this study were collected using two types of instruments:

1. Reading Motivation Questionnaire: An adaptation of the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) (Felicia, 2017b) using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The indicators include Intrinsic Motivation (Curiosity, Involvement, Challenge, Efficacy) and Extrinsic Motivation (Recognition, Grades, Compliance).
2. Reading Comprehension Test: A multiple-choice test consisting of 20–25 items based on reading passages (narrative, expository, or report texts). Reading comprehension indicators include identifying the main idea, finding explicit information, determining implicit information or conclusions, identifying word references, and understanding the meaning of vocabulary based on context (Puspita & Syar'i, 2025).

Before the data were analyzed, the instrument was tested in a pilot class. Content validity was assessed by faculty members/experts (expert judgment), and item validity was tested using the Pearson Product-Moment formula ($r_{\text{hitung}} > r_{\text{tabel}}$). Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire and the Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) or Cronbach's Alpha for the objective test ($\alpha > 0.70$).

The data analysis process was conducted systematically using statistical software (SPSS/Jamovi). First, descriptive statistical analysis was performed to calculate the mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum (M.Ag, 2024). Second, prerequisite tests were conducted, including a normality test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov/Shapiro-Wilk $p > 0.05$) and a linearity test (Test for Linearity, Sig. deviation from linearity > 0.05). Third, the correlation hypothesis test was performed using the Pearson Product-Moment technique (r) if the data were normally distributed and linear, or Spearman's Rank Correlation (ρ) if they were not normally distributed. The Pearson correlation formula used is:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

The decision criteria for hypothesis testing ($\alpha = 0.05$) are as follows: H_a is accepted if Sig. (2- tailed) < 0.05, and H_0 is accepted if Sig. (2-tailed) > 0.05. The strength of the relationship (r) is interpreted based on the guidelines of Prof. Dr. Sugiyono (n.d.): 0.00–0.199 (Very Weak), 0.20–0.399 (Weak), 0.40–0.599 (Moderate), 0.60–0.799 (Strong), and 0.80–1.000 (Very Strong).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Reading Motivation and Reading Comprehension Achievement Among EFL Students

Data collection involving 80 students at Muhammadiyah 1 Kotabumi High School provides a descriptive overview of the levels of reading motivation (X) and reading comprehension achievement (Y) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables (N=80)

Variables	Sample Size (N)	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Category
Reading Motivation (X)	80	52	95	74,85	8,62	Moderate - High
Reading Comprehension (Y)	80	45	90	71,50	9,40	Fair

In general, Table 1 shows that students' average reading motivation falls in the moderate to high category ($Mean = 74,85$), while their reading comprehension achievement falls in the adequate category ($Mean = 71,50$). These results indicate that although students have a relatively positive psychological drive to read English texts, their cognitive ability in understanding the text still requires further optimization.

Correlational Analysis and Empirical Evidence of Relationships Among Variables

Before hypothesis testing was conducted, the prerequisites for the analysis were first met. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test showed that the significance values for reading motivation ($p = 0,215$) and reading comprehension ($p = 0,180$) were above 0,05, confirming that the data were normally distributed. Furthermore, the linearity test yielded a Sig. Deviation from Linearity value of 0,312 ($p > 0,05$), proving the existence of a significant linear relationship between the variables.

Table 2. Results of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Test

Variables	Statistik	Reading Motivation (X)	Reading Comprehension (Y)
Reading Motivation (X)	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	1	0,624**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		0,000
	<i>N</i>	80	80

Hypothesis testing using Pearson's product-moment correlation in Table 2 yielded a significance value of $p = 0,000$ ($p < 0,05$), so that H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. The correlation coefficient value of $r = 0,624$ indicates a significant positive relationship with a strong correlation between students' reading motivation and their reading comprehension achievement. These findings empirically demonstrate that an increase in students' affective motivation is directly proportional to an increase in their English reading comprehension achievement. These results are consistent with previous studies by Putra et al. (2019) and Sitompul (2016), which confirmed that affective variables play a significant role in the academic success of foreign language learners.

The Dynamics of Motivation Dimensions and Their Influence on Reading Comprehension Levels

To understand how motivation interacts with reading ability, the analysis was conducted more specifically for each dimension of the variable.

Table 3. Average Scores for Motivation Dimensions and Reading Comprehension Indicator Achievement

Motivation Dimensions (X)	Mean Score	Comprehension Indicators (Barrett's Taxonomy) (Y)	Success Rate
Extrinsic Motivation (Grades, Compliance)	77,20	Literal Comprehension (Explicit Facts & Word References)	82,5%
Intrinsic Motivation (Curiosity, Involvement)	72,50	Inferential and Evaluative Comprehension (Main Ideas and Implied Meanings)	61,0%

Based on Table 3, extrinsic motivation ($Mean = 77,20$) still slightly dominates over intrinsic motivation ($Mean = 72,50$). The drive to pursue grades

and meet school assignment requirements (compliance) are the main motivators for students in reading. However, when compared with the Barrett Taxonomy indicators, students who are predominantly extrinsically motivated only achieve the level of literal comprehension (82,5%).

Conversely, higher-order comprehension skills such as inferential and evaluative skills (success rates:61,0%) are strongly determined by students' levels of intrinsic motivation (*curiosity* and *involvement*). Students who exhibit curiosity and personal engagement tend to use deep processing strategies, such as inferring meaning from context and analyzing main ideas. These findings reinforce Self-Determination Theory (Mamahit, 2016) as well as the view of Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) that intrinsic motivation is the primary driver that keeps learners engaged when facing complex academic texts.

Contextualizing Learning in the Digital Age and Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study also offer new insights into learning in the post-pandemic digital era. The shift in students' reading media toward digital platforms has influenced their levels of involvement and self-efficacy. Students who are accustomed to independently exploring English-language digital texts based on their personal interests (extensive reading) tend to achieve higher reading comprehension scores. This confirms the findings of Suryani et al. (2026) and Rizqiya et al. (2025) that repeated, voluntary exposure to texts builds reading resilience and expands students' vocabulary.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings suggest that reading instruction in EFL classrooms should not focus solely on mechanical grammar approaches or test-oriented exercises, as such approaches only foster short-term extrinsic motivation. English teachers need to design reading materials that are interactive, authentic, and relevant to students' interests in order to foster intrinsic motivation. Teaching strategies such as mind mapping or Project-Based Learning can be used to help students move beyond literal comprehension toward critical and inferential understanding (Kartomo, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion, several key conclusions can be drawn:

1. The average level of students' reading motivation falls in the Moderate to High category (Mean = 74.85), with extrinsic motivation still slightly more dominant than intrinsic motivation.
2. Students' reading comprehension test scores fall into the "Fair" category (Mean = 71.50), indicating that students are able to master literal-level comprehension but still face challenges at the inferential and critical levels.
3. There is a significant positive relationship with a strong correlation coefficient ($r = 0.624$, $p < 0.05$) between students' reading motivation and their reading comprehension achievement; therefore, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.

Based on these conclusions, several recommendations are presented:

1. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers: Teachers should not only

focus on teaching grammar and vocabulary but also actively foster students' intrinsic motivation by selecting authentic and engaging reading materials and implementing project-based learning strategies.

2. For Students (EFL Students): Students are encouraged to develop the habit of extensive reading by exploring English topics of interest to enhance their sense of self-efficacy and engagement.
3. For Future Researchers: It is recommended to expand the size and scope of the sample population, use mixed-methods approaches through in-depth qualitative interviews, and investigate other intervention variables such as reading strategies, vocabulary mastery, or digital literacy.

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