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INVESTIGATING EXTERNAL CAUSES FOR LACK OF READING MOTIVATION AMONG PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This article investigates the critical issue of dwindling reading motivation among high school students in Surabaya, Indonesia, specifically focusing on English texts. Against the global context of the paramount importance of reading proficiency, the data reveal a troubling decline in reading interest, particularly evident among private high school students in metropolitan areas. The study advocates for implementing the multiple intelligences strategy and emphasizes the crucial role of teachers in fostering motivation and interest in reading English texts. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with participants from a Surabaya-based private high school, the research employs convenience sampling, incorporating interviews and observations for data collection. The findings spotlight external factors contributing to students' diminished motivation, encompassing unappealing book covers, underutilized free time, comprehension challenges, and limited book availability. The ensuing discussion underscores the necessity for targeted interventions by educators

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and policymakers, extending beyond academic success to cultivate a positive reading culture. Such a culture contributes to holistic student development, nurturing cognitive abilities, effective communication skills, and instilling a lifelong love for learning. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the profound implications of investing in a positive reading culture for the personal and intellectual growth of high school students in Indonesia.

Keywords: Reading Motivation; External Factors; ; Private High School

INTRODUCTION

Reading English is crucial for proficiency, especially for those learning it as a foreign language. According to the data, reading is considered a purposeful way to acquire conscious knowledge and is regarded as the most crucial language skill in academics (Gilakjani, 2011). Essentially, it's a common activity carried out alongside the learning process to understand the main idea of a reading passage. Proficiency in reading should be comprehensive across various levels, particularly for high school students preparing for further education where English is used. However, the reading interest in Indonesian society, including in the realm of education, is notably low.(Bogel, 2011)

Based on the data in 2016, a report from Central Connecticut State University in the United States indicated that Indonesia was positioned as the 60th out of 61 countries in a ranking (Dakhi & Damanik, 2018). According to data from the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), Indonesia still falls below the average English proficiency score for the Asian region (53.00) and ranks fifth among ASEAN countries. This situation is concerning, highlighting the need for a strategy to enhance reading interest in Indonesia. Meanwhile, based on data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbudristek) in 2023, the reading proficiency level of high school/vocational school equivalent students has actually decreased. This year, 49.26% of students have literacy competence above the minimum, which is a decline of 4.59% from the 2022 figure of 53.85%. The issue of low reading interest is influenced by various factors, one of which is a lack of reading motivation.

The issue of low reading interest is evident at Private High School Students in metropolitas city in Indonesia, where it has been observed that the lack of interest in reading, especially English texts, primarily arises from students' insufficient or low motivation in reading English. In reality, students often exhibit reluctance to read, resorting to superficial reading or scanning techniques. This tendency leads to a frequent lack of complete comprehension of the English texts they encounter. Therefore, the role of teachers is crucial in finding ways to instill motivation and reading interest in English texts among students(Lopera Medina, 2014). A method is needed to make students feel enthusiastic and joyful about reading English texts, both in terms of education and their daily lives. In addressing the various issues mentioned above, the multiple intelligences strategy is assumed to be able to overcome these challenges.

The aforementioned challenges are not unique to Indonesia; they resonate with global concerns about literacy and language proficiency. However, the specific socio-cultural and educational context in Indonesia adds nuances to the problem. The 2016 report from Central Connecticut State University places Indonesia in a position that demands immediate attention and targeted interventions. While global benchmarks provide a comparative perspective, it is essential to consider the local factors influencing reading motivation among private high school students in metropolitan areas. These factors may include cultural attitudes towards language learning, the perceived relevance of English in students' daily lives, and the role of educational institutions in fostering a conducive reading environment.

Moreover, the decline in reading proficiency levels among high school students, as indicated by the Ministry of Education and Culture data, raises questions about the effectiveness of current teaching methodologies and the overall approach to literacy education. Is the curriculum aligned with students' needs and interests? Are teachers equipped with strategies to address motivational barriers? These questions underscore the importance of a comprehensive investigation into the external factors contributing to the lack of reading motivation. In light of these considerations, this study aims to delve into the external causes influencing reading motivation among private high school students. By identifying these factors, educators, policymakers, and researchers can collaborate to develop targeted interventions and instructional strategies that not only address the immediate motivational challenges but also contribute to a broader enhancement of English language proficiency among high school students in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with participants consisting of teachers and students in a private hihg school in Surabaya, specifically 32 students in the 10th-grade class. The research was conducted for 30 days, starting from August 13 to September 12, 2023. The sampling method used in this research is convenience sampling. Data collection will be conducted by interviewing teachers and 5 students. Additionally, comprehensive observation will be carried out, involving recording inside the classroom during reading and self-study sessions.(Creswell, 2012).

RESULTS

In this section, the researcher concentrates on discussing the discovered data pertaining to the theories and previous findings that are central to this research. Specifically, the identified challenges faced by students in understanding the factors influencing their lack motivation in reading English texts. The external factors are: unappealing book covers, failure to utilize free time for reading (lack of awareness), and difficulties in understanding the text (reading material) and the limited availability of books (facilities).

1. The cover of book is One factors that influence the students low interest in reading because, the cover of book uninterested. According (Harjasujana and Misdan, 2002) states that, the lack of reading interest of students caused by the cover of the book is less interesting because it includes images that become the attraction of readers and alsothe availability of books is a key factor in creating an atmosphere conducive to reading "Limited book references cause reading interest among the younger generation to decline, let alone to read it, come to him also reluctant because of the limited reference books in the library.
2. The students do not utilize their free time for reading books. Reading is a fundamental skill crucial for a child's success in various aspects of life. Cultivating positive reading habits is not only essential for academic success but also for daily life. The importance of developing these habits early on is highlighted by five key reasons. As per (Bailey & Kadhum Fahad, 2021), engaging in reading helps individuals enhance their writing style, build a rich vocabulary, master advanced

grammar, and become proficient spellers. This improvement in language proficiency contributes to becoming a more articulate and effective speaker.

3. The students face challenges in comprehending the text. According to (Vuong et al., 2019), students' reading achievements are influenced by the text's level of difficulty. The difficulty level of the text can significantly impact students' performance if it does not align with their reading abilities. Written messages may pose difficulties in understanding when they contain numerous unfamiliar words for the students. For instance, in the given text, the instructions may be straightforward, but the language used might be unfamiliar. The key factor that determines the ease of understanding a reading text is the contrast in difficulty, which can make the text challenging to comprehend.
4. The availability of books is severely limited. The waning interest in reading among adolescents and children may be attributed to the inadequate provision or scarcity of facilities, particularly in libraries where the book selection is so restricted that students are not enticed to read due to the absence of new publications. (Walters, 2014) defines library facilitation as the accumulation of books within a physical structure organized based on a specific system or user requirements. Libraries, being crucial sources of information, play a strategic role in supporting educational success and community learning to enhance the nation's quality of life and human resources. However, despite one's strong desire to read, the reality of a meager supply of reading materials can hinder the fulfillment of that desire. The lack of reading materials means that individuals may aspire to read, but the insufficient availability of books impedes their ability to do so.(Oyewusi & Shabi, 2016)

DISCUSSION

Understanding and addressing these external factors is pivotal for cultivating a positive reading culture among high school students in Surabaya. The identified challenges, ranging from unappealing book covers to limited book availability, underscore the need for targeted interventions. Improving book cover designs to make them more captivating can spark students' interest and encourage them to explore the content within. Additionally, promoting the effective use of free time for reading is crucial, emphasizing the long-term benefits of cultivating positive reading habits. Selecting appropriate reading materials that

align with students' abilities and interests, along with enhancing the availability of diverse and updated books in school libraries, are essential steps that educators and policymakers can take to create an environment conducive to reading.

Implementing these interventions goes beyond academic success; it plays a vital role in nurturing a lifelong love for learning and reading (Kuşdemir & Bulut, 2018). The efforts of educators and policymakers can contribute significantly to enhancing students' motivation and proficiency in reading English texts. By fostering a positive reading culture, not only are students better equipped for academic challenges, but they also develop valuable skills that extend beyond the classroom. A love for reading instilled during high school can shape individuals into lifelong learners, fostering intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of the world around them (Maneba et al., 2021). Thus, these efforts not only benefit the academic journey but also lay the foundation for a fulfilling and enriching life marked by a continuous pursuit of knowledge and personal growth.

In addition to the immediate impact on academic success and the cultivation of a love for learning, the initiatives undertaken by educators and policymakers to address these external factors contribute to the holistic development of high school students. Reading, as a fundamental skill (Vianty et al., 2020), not only enhances language proficiency but also nurtures cognitive abilities, empathy, and cultural awareness. By creating an environment that values reading, students are exposed to diverse perspectives, fostering a broader worldview. Moreover, a positive reading culture promotes effective communication skills, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning—essential attributes for success in various aspects of life beyond the educational realm(McMullan & Sutherland, 2020). As students become avid readers, they are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world, continuously expanding their horizons and becoming active, informed participants in society. Therefore, the investment in fostering a positive reading culture has far-reaching implications for the personal and intellectual growth of high school students, preparing them for a future marked by curiosity, adaptability, and a lifelong commitment to learning.(Ahmadi et al., 2013)

CONCLUSION

In summary, the challenges hindering high school students' motivation to read English texts in Surabaya, such as unappealing book covers, underutilized free time for reading, text comprehension difficulties, and limited book availability, underscore the need for targeted interventions. Improving book cover designs, encouraging the effective use of free time for reading, selecting appropriate reading materials, and enhancing book availability in school libraries are critical steps that educators and policymakers can take to create a conducive reading environment. These efforts not only enhance academic success but also foster a lasting passion for learning and reading, equipping students with essential skills for personal and intellectual growth.

Moreover, beyond immediate academic benefits, the initiatives aimed at addressing these challenges contribute to the holistic development of high school students. A positive reading culture not only enhances language proficiency but also nurtures cognitive abilities, effective communication skills, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning. By instilling a love for reading, educators and policymakers play a pivotal role in shaping individuals who are not only academically adept but also well-rounded, adaptable, and intellectually curious—qualities essential for active and informed participation in society. The investment in fostering a positive reading culture holds profound implications for the lifelong journey of learning and personal development.

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