**(An Analysis of Students' Reading Interest in SMKN 1 Mesjid Raya Aceh Besar)**

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**Abstrak**

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui gambaran minat baca siswa. Untuk memperoleh data penelitian, peneliti menggunakan instrumen kuesioner dan wawancara. Untuk menganalisis data, peneliti menerapkan metode analisis tematik dan metode pengkodean. Temuan penelitian ini adalah sebagian besar siswa setuju bahwa mereka tidak memerlukan tempat khusus untuk melakukan kegiatan membaca dan tidak malas membaca buku. Siswa juga menjawab bahwa mereka wajib membaca, lebih suka menonton TV, tidak membaca buku saat liburan, lebih suka membaca buku cerita, hanya membaca buku saat diperlukan, tertarik dengan buku di perpustakaan, dan mudah bosan saat membaca. Lebih lanjut guru menyatakan bahwa siswa difasilitasi untuk membuat kelompok dalam membaca, dimotivasi dan disarankan membaca buku, mengikuti lomba membaca, meringkas bahan bacaan, dan membaca 15 menit sebelum pembelajaran di dalam Program Literasi Sekolah. Guru juga meningkatkan minat membaca siswa. Siswa mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami bacaan. Akibatnya, mereka memiliki kinerja yang buruk dalam tes membaca dan tidak mencapai hasil yang diharapkan.

**Kata kunci**: Minat baca, Membaca buku, Lingkungan membaca.

*Abstract*

The purpose of this study was to find out the description of students' reading interests. To obtain research data, the researcher used the questionnaire and interview instruments. To analyze data, the researcher applied the thematic analysis method and coding methods. The findings of this study were most of the students agreed that they did not need specific places to have reading activities and were not lazy to read books. The students also responded that they were obliged to read, had a preference for watching TV, did not read books during the holiday, preferred to read storybooks, only read books when they needed to, interested in books in the library, and got bored easily when reading.

Moreover, the teacher stated that the students were facilitated to make groups in reading, motivated and suggested to read books, participated in reading competition, summarized reading materials, and read 15 minutes before learning in the School Literacy Program. The teacher also increased the students' reading enthusiasm. The students had a problem with reading comprehension. Consequently, they had poor performances in reading tests and did not achieve the expected outcomes.

*Keywords: Reading interest, Book reading, Reading environment.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION
### 1.1 Background of the Study

Learning is very closely related to reading, because reading is a gateway to knowing all the knowledge and important tools for progress and success. The most important activities in the teaching and learning process include reading, because by reading someone will gain knowledge, information and experience.

Reading is the process of interpreting a piece of writing. Reading is very important, by reading we can get various information from both electronic and non-electronic media. Reading ability is the main capital in the teaching and learning process. Reading is a means and a very important need for humans at this time, because it will add insight and information.

Reading activities will be carried out if there is interest from the person concerned. The role of interest occupies the most decisive position, in addition to the student's ability to read. Interest has a strong driving force in the realization of an activity. Students' interest in reading arises from the curiosity of students to understand or obtain information from their environment. How good and interesting the contents of the reading text are, but if the person is lazy to read, then the reading activity is impossible.

Interest has a great influence on learning, because if the subject matter being studied is not in accordance with the interests of students, then there is no attraction for him. Lessons that attract students' interest are easier to learn and keep in memory, because interest increases active learning. The factors that support and inhibit students' interest in reading tend to be educators and the environment. In addition, the factors of facilities and infrastructure such as school libraries can be decisive in fostering and developing students' reading interest. Another fact shows that interest not only affect learning outcomes. The more you read, the more knowledge you gain. This will affect performance student learning.

But in fact at this time students tend to prefer watching television and playing games than reading books, besides the influence of outside culture also greatly affects the

reading culture of students in Indonesia, so these factors greatly affect students' reading interest. Even globally, the level of reading interest in Indonesia is very low, currently the reading interest of the Indonesian people, the results of a study published under the name "The World's Most Literate Nations", show that Indonesia is in 60th place, only one level above Botswana (Kompas .com 2019.)

On the results of observations that the author did at SMKN 1 Mesjid Raya, Aceh Besar, he found that many students were not interested in English lessons and one of the smallest items in English lessons was reading. The enthusiasm of students in participating in the learning process was very unsatisfactory, it was proven when the authors did PPL at the school, the authors observed that many students were absent and not serious in listening to learning, the same thing was also experienced by other teachers Students are more likely to like majoring materials, such as automotive, textile, computer and fashion.

Actually, the Indonesian government has made the GLS (School Literacy Movement) program with the regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Permendikbud) number 23 of 2015 concerning character building or commonly called the School Literacy Movement program. The author observes that students only read when they need it, it has not been made a habit or culture.

Currently there are 387 students for all majors, the authors take data from the "Our School" application belonging to SMKN 1 Mesjid Raya School, where the number of students is dominated by male students, as many as 228 students and 159 female students. While the number of teachers is only 43 people, the average number of students in one room is 20 people.

This research was conducted to determine the reading interest of students at SMKN 1 Mesjid Raya. This research is also expected can provide benefits for teachers, especially English teachers so that they know the level of interest in reading their students and can find factors that influence students' reading interest, which will later be useful for improving students' reading quality and also as an effort to increase students' insight and knowledge of the reading process done.

### 1.2.    Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the problem above, it can be identified that the research problem was the description of the reading interest of students at SMKN 1 Mesjid Raya.

### 1.3.   The Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to find out the description of the reading interest of students at SMKN 1 Mesjid Raya.

### 1.4. The Benefit of the Study

The results of this study can be useful to teachers and school stakeholders to increase the reading interests of the students.

## 2.  RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
### 2.1. Research Design

The research was designed based on the qualitative research method. The objective of this study was to find out the description of the students' reading interest. The population of this study was the students of SMKN 1 Mesjid Raya Banda Aceh, and English teachers at that school. The samples of this research were 88 students and 1 English teacher.

### 2.2. Data Collection

#### 2.2.1   Questionnaire

The researcher used questionnaire instrument to collect data from 88 students. The questionnaire was closed ended. The questions in the research instrument were firstly arranged based on the questions adapted from the previous researchers. The students needed to answer 10 questions given that related to the descriptions of their reading interests. The scales used were strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The scales of the instrument were aimed to get the objective data from the students.

#### 2.2.2. Interview

The second instrument was interview. The researcher used interview instrument to obtain the data from an English teacher. The instrument consisted of 10 questions. The questions in asked directly, so if the teacher wanted to ask about the explanation of the study, the researcher could provide descriptions and objectives of this study. The questions asked to the teacher were related to the descriptions of the students' reading interests and programs or activities to increase the students' reading interest.

The researcher utilized audio recorder to record the answers of the teacher. After the researcher recorded the interview audio, the next step was to listen carefully to the recorded audio and write the transcription. The purpose of writing the transcription was to make the researcher easier to analyze the interview data. The researcher also wrote direct quotation of the interview data to make sure that the data would be correctly analyzed.

### 2.2.3. Documentation

The researcher also used the students' report cards as the documentation. The report of the students' scores was used as the proof of the students' learning results as well as to be the description of their reading interest. The students' score report was obtained from the teacher that had access at the school. The report was expected to be useful for the researcher to support the findings from the questionnaire and interview instruments.

### 2.3 *Data Analysis*
#### 2.3.1 *Questionnaire*

The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed by calculating the student majority in selecting the questionnaire scales. After that, the researcher created figures to show the exact numbers of the students agreeing and disagreeing with the statements in the instrument. Based on the figures, the researcher was able to accurately describe and explain the finding of this study from the questionnaire.

#### 2.3.2. *Interview*

The interview data collected from the English teacher was analyzed based on the thematic analysis technique. The transcription of the interview was devided into several themes. In the analysis process, the researcher wrote the direct and indirect quotations of the teacher. Besides that, the quotation was explained further and correlated with previous research.

#### 2.3.2. *Documentation*

To analyze the document of the students' report cards, the researcher firstly compared the scores to the minimum requirement score criteria. The comparison was done to ensure that whether the majority of the students passed the requirement or not. Furthermore, the document was also used to correlate between the findings from

questionnaire and interview instruments. Besides that, the document could also be beneficial to describe the students' competences in English. So, the researcher could related to the students' and teacher's responses to the questionnaire and interview.

## 3. RESULT & DISCUSSION

### 3.1 RESULT

#### 3.1.1 The Results of the Questionnaire

The findings from the questionnaires were that the students agreed that the activities of reading could be done anywhere, they thought that they were not lazy to read, got bored quickly, felt obliged to read, preferred watching TV than reading, chose to play than to read, did not read books during the holiday, preferred to read storybooks, read books only when they needed to, interested in books in the library.

#### 3.1.2 The Results of the Interview

From the interview instrument, the researcher found out that the teacher facilitated the students to make reading groups, gave motivation and suggestions to read books actively, conducted reading competitions, assigned the students to summarize reading materials, implemented Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (School Literacy Movement) or reading for 15 minutes before learning, and improved students' interest in reading books. Furthermore, the students' response when being asked to do the assignment was that they had a difficulty in understanding the learning materials. As a consequence, they did not perform well and achieve the expected outcomes.

#### 3.1.3 The result of the Documentation

The third instrument was students' school report cards. From the instrument, the researcher viewed that all the samples had good scores in English. It indicated that the students performed well in the process of learning and the evaluation. All students passed the minimum scores required in the knowledge and practical work sections. The data represented the real descriptions of the students' English language skills. From the assessment results, the researcher viewed that the students' scores were satisfactory. Moreover, it can be seen that there was no indication that the students had difficulties in

the learning process. That because the students' scores were good enough to pass the obligatory score standard.

Besides that, it was clear that the students performed well in the assessment process. The data presented that the teachers were successful in improving their students' reading interest. The students' scores proved that their interest in reading books was not low. However, it also could not be concluded that the students' reading interest were high because the majority of the students' scores were not bad and not very good. Most of the research samples' scores had good assessment results and the students had good reading interest, it could be seen from the assessment report that none of the students had bad performance during the learning process.

Furthermore, since the data was the samples of the students' scores, there were possibilities that the other students had low reading interests or did not have satisfactory performances during the learning and evaluation processes. Therefore, the researcher was difficult to conclude that all of the students at that school had good English academic achievement, English reading competences, and performances in other language aspects. Nevertheless, the researcher was convinced that the data obtained were valid to prove that although the students had obstacles in understanding English reading text, they had good academic scores in the subject.

### 3.2 DISCUSSION

#### 3.2.1 Questionnaire

There were nearly the same numbers of students who agreed and disapproved with reading in anyplace. 37 students thought that reading activities could be performed anywhere, whereas 35 students disagreed. Furthermore, only 13 respondents strongly agreed while 3 students strongly disagreed. From the data, it can be concluded that most of the students did not consider certain places influencing them not to read books. Therefore, they could read books everywhere.

Besides that, 39 students agreed that they got bored quickly when reading books. Nevertheless, the students not agreeing with the statement were 31 students. The difference of numbers between students that agreed and disagreed was not significant. Furthermore, 8 students strongly agreed with the statement, while 10 students responded that they strongly disagreed. The data showed the tendency that the majority of the

students would be easily getting bored when reading books although some other students disagreed with the statement.

Moreover, most of the students did not agree that they lazily read books. 52 students disagreed and 13 students were strongly disagreed to the statement. 19 people agreed, though, and 4 students strongly agreed that they had laziness to read books. The preceding data indicated that most of the students thought that laziness did not affect them to read books.

Besides that, 42 students felt forced to read books. Their parents, their families, instructors and others were responsible for forcing them. It indicated the external motivation of the students to read books. They thought that some people forced them to take academic activities because they were students. 23 students, on the other hand, had different ideas. They believed that, although they were students, they had no responsibility to read books. In addition, only six students strongly disagreed with the statement. The data showed that most of the students felt forced to read books.

Furthermore, the majority of the students preferred not to read books, but to watch TV, because TV was entertaining. 34 students agreed, they preferred to watch TV. 50 students also strongly agreed that television was more fascinating than reading books. On the other hand, 29 students were not happy to watch TV than to read books. In addition, 10 students reacted by stating that watching TV is more amusing. But most of the students believed that TV was more entertaining than reading books.

Students preferred to play rather than read. 42 students replied in opposition to their preference for playing rather than reading books. Moreover, there was substantial disagreement between 13 respondents. Yet 22 students agreed that compared with reading books they would rather to play. The other students agreed firmly that reading books was not better than playing. The conclusion was that the students liked to play than to read books.

Most of the students disagreed with reading books on vacation. During the holiday 43 students were did not read books. Furthermore, nine students disagreed strongly with the statement. Instead, 28 students replied that while they were on holiday, they kept reading books. In addition, 8 students strongly agreed. It showed that during the holiday they continue to read book activities. Moreover, although holiday is recognized as entertainment times, students spend some time reading books.

Most students agreed that they preferred to read storybooks instead of English language textbooks. In addition, 32 students consistently supported the statement. But

only 8 students had no choice but to read storybooks. They preferred to read English books. They were interested in English education books. 37 students agreed to read the book only if it was necessary. Furthermore, 22 students viewed that they did not have to read a book. However, 26 students also responded that they did not need to read a book. Furthermore, just 3 students strongly agreed with the statement.

50 students replied they were interested in reading books in the library. In addition, the statement was strongly agreed by 17 students. Some students, however, disagreed with this statement. 14 students had no interest in library books. Moreover, only seven students disagreed strongly that they had no interest in books from the library. It can be concluded that most of the students were interested in reading books in the library.

Based on the questionnaire data, the solutions to increase the students' reading interest were to provide entertaining environment for the students at schools. Moreover, the teacher can also conduct reading activities collaborated with games. So, the students will be more enthusiastic to read books or other learning materials. Furthermore, the students can also be more often taken to the library, because they were interested in the library book collection. Besides that, the teacher can facilitate the students to watch movies and then ask the students to read the synopsis and the review of the movies. The teaching activities above can be implemented to increase the students' reading interests.

### 3.2.2. Interview

From the interview instrument, the researcher found out that the teacher facilitated the students to make reading groups, gave motivation and suggestions to read books actively, conducted reading competitions, assigned the students to summarize reading materials, implemented Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (School Literacy Movement) or reading for 15 minutes before learning, and improved students' interest in reading books. Furthermore, the students' response when being asked to do the assignment was that they had a difficulty in understanding the learning materials. As a consequence, they did not perform well and achieve the expected outcomes.

When asked how often the teacher made it possible for her students to read in groups, she said that she often gave her students a way to read. In addition, to help her students develop reading habits in the classroom, he also gave the students some learning materials. Learning materials on monologs and dialog readings were provided to the students.

Moreover, the teacher stated she often encouraged students to read books in or outside the classroom in their everyday activities. In addition, she saw that students were also encouraged to boost their excitement consistently. She also said that students were motivated to compete when technology was more sophisticated in this age. The teacher saw that their students were struggling to learn English. The children could not understand the teacher's English learning materials. So, many students did not perform well when the students were asked to work on the task. The desired result was therefore not reached. The assignment's outcome was insufficient.

She also said she often conducted reading competitions. The students were divided into various groups to read and share their opinions with peers. The competition was conducted in order to present the students with an opportunity for active discussion. Some types of lecture contests were held to detect false statements from a topic and to analyse a story. The contest revealed that the teacher wanted her students to work together and solve the challenge. Moreover, the teacher told that she did not assign all students to write a summary of the topic. She therefore requested just some students to write the summary.

The teacher also stated that she had implemented Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (School Literacy Movement) for 15 minutes for students to read books or other reading materials. The reading time was not adequate due of the Covid-19 pandemic. Earlier, the learning duration was 120 minutes and now 60 minutes. As a consequence, if students spent 15 minutes reading, they would have less time to learn the essential substance of the learning material.

In addition, the teacher recognized that the existing school books were not considered to be entertaining for students. As a result, students were occasionally obliged to read books. The teacher admitted that the reading interests of the students were not improved by any particular treatment or program. The teacher stated that she must give her students the best. The teacher recognized that not all children were interested in reading exercises, particularly when they were requested to read English. When they read English material, they were bored much easier. They did not like English. They would rather read text about topics like engineering, metal etc. The teacher viewed that the student's interest in reading books was minimal, based on her observation. They were less excited to read books, particularly English books. If the teacher instructed them to read books, they read. The teacher stated sometimes that she pressured them to read.

The solutions proposed by the teacher to increase the students reading interest were to facilitate the students to have audio-visual learning. Furthermore, the teacher should also make sure the availability of the book content with photographs. In addition, the learning environment was important to enhance students' interest in reading. The teacher said that the teaching activities are occasionally carried out outside the classroom to encourage the students to have good enthusiasm in reading activities.

### 3.2.3. Documentation

The documentation of the students' academic report showed that the students in majority had good score in English. The samples from the students' report card revealed good results in the English course for the students. It showed that the pupils were successfully performed in the learning and assessment process. In the knowledge and practice parts, all pupils passed the minimal scores required. The statistics showed the true descriptions of the English skills of the students. The researchers considered the evaluation findings adequate for the students. Moreover, the student's challenges with the learning process were not indicated. That is because the student performs sufficiently well to meet the compulsory score.

Besides that, it was clear that the students performed well in the assessment process. The data presented that the teachers were successful in improving their students' reading interest. The students' scores proved that their interest in reading books was not low. However, it also could not be concluded that the students' reading interest were high because the majority of the students' scores were not bad and not very good. Most of the research samples' scores had good assessment results and the students had good reading interest, it could be seen from the assessment report that none of the students had bad performance during the learning process.

Furthermore, since the data was the samples of the students' scores, there were possibilities that the other students had low reading interests or did not have satisfactory performances during the learning and evaluation processes. Therefore, the researcher was difficult to conclude that all of the students at that school had good English academic achievement, English reading competences, and performances in other language aspects. Nevertheless, the researcher was convinced that the data obtained were valid to prove that although the students had obstacles in understanding English reading text, they had good academic scores in the subject.

The findings of this study correlated with the previous ones conducted on this topic Meniado (2016). The results of that study showed that the students preferred to read books related to humor or comics. The researcher also measured the students' reading comprehension performance. From the test, it was found that the students did not perform well. Their scores were below average. Besides that, Amirian, Asgari & Ketabi (2019) revealed that specifying learning materials was significantly contributed to develop and enhance the students' reading interest.

Moreover, it was shown that the students' performance in L2 reading comprehension was improved. To improve students' performance, the researcher selected instructional materials that the students were interested in. Noviyanti (2018) also studied students' reading preferences and its implication. The findings of the study were the students had a reading interest in the topics of entertainment, lifestyle, arts, religion, education, history, politic, and sport. Therefore, she suggested that the teachers should consider the selection of learning materials. The learning materials would be better if related to the students' interests. Besides that, the students' reading motivation would be improved.

Furthermore, the result of this study was related to Honchell & Pittman's study (2014). The finding of the study indicated that the students enjoyed reading more when they were discussing the literature of the reading materials. Additionally, the students had a better understanding of the text when they related their lives to the text contents. The researcher found that the activity of discussing the literature aspect of a text had a positive influence on students' learning activities. Similarly, Maulidar (2018) also studied the students' reading interests.

The findings of the study were that the students viewed that reading as not their hobby. They only read when they had to work on their assignments. Besides that, the factors influencing students' reading interest were their view on the significance of reading, reading motivation, languages, library book availability, the frequency of reading, views, environment, internet, and system of learning. The researcher suggested that the teachers should support the students by assigning the students to do tasks requiring them to read many references. The assignment that can be given is to summarize reading materials.

The correlations of findings from the questionnaires, interview, and documents were that the students agreed that the readings could be performed anywhere, thought they were not lazy to read, bored quickly, thought it necessary to read, chose to watch

television instead of reading, chose to play rather than read, did not read books on holidays, had preferred to read storybooks, read books only if they were willing to read, and liked the books in the library. However, from the interview session, the researcher found different results. The findings were the teacher assisted the students' reading grouping, motivated and suggested that they read books actively, organized reading competitions, assigned pupils the ability to summarize reading materials, developed Gerakán Literasi sekolah (School Literacy Movement). In addition, when asked to execute the assignment, the student answered that it was difficult for them to understand the learning materials. As a result, the outcomes were not good and the desired results were not achieved.

Moreover, the from the document of the students' report cards, it was found that In addition, the academic report documentation has shown that the majority of the students have an excellent mark in English. Samples from the report card of the pupils showed good outcomes for the students in the English courses. It proved that the students had been successfully taught and evaluated. All students passed the minimum scores required in the fields of knowledge and practice. The statistics reveal that the pupils' English skills are actually described. The students deemed the results of the evaluation to be sufficient. In addition, the obstacles of the learner were not indicated with the learning process. The reason was that the student did well enough to reach the required score.

The solutions to increase students' interest in reading are to implement effective methods to encourage the students in reading books. The encouragement activities can be done by providing reading materials that the students are interested in. The teachers need to find out the reading topics that most of the students like. After that, the teachers are required to select the learning material based on the preferences of the students. However, the teachers should also consider the teaching and learning purposes, not only to prioritize the reading topics based on the students' preference. Furthermore, the students can also be motivated to read books more by taking them to the library.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
### 4.1. Conclusion

From the questionnaire instrument, the data showed that the students agreed the reading activities not only could be done in specific places. Besides that, the students perceived that they were not lazy to read. However, they thought that they got bored

quickly when reading, felt obliged to do reading activities, had a preference for watching TV and playing than reading, did not read books during the holiday, preferred to read storybooks, read books only when they needed to, and interested in books in the library.

Moreover, from the interview instrument, it was revealed that the students were facilitated to make groups in reading, motivated and suggested to read books, participated in reading competition, summarized reading materials, and reading 15 minutes before learning in the School Literacy Program. Furthermore, the teacher also increased the students' reading enthusiasm. Besides that, the students also had a problem with reading comprehension. Consequently, they had poor performances in reading tests and did not achieve the expected outcomes.

In addition, the academic report documentation of the students showed that the majority of students had a good language score. The samples from the report card of the students showed the students good results in the English course. It has shown that the learners have been successfully taught and assessed. All children passed the requisite minimum marks in the knowledge and practice areas. The stats suggest that the students' English skills have been described properly. The researchers found the assessment results to be appropriate for the students. In addition, the obstacles of the learner were not indicated with the learning process. That is because the student performs sufficiently well to meet the compulsory score. In addition, the students' performance in the evaluation procedure was evident. The statistics showed the students' interest in reading was improved successfully. The difficulties of the students demonstrated that they were not interested in reading books. However, it was not possible to assume, as the majority of the students not have a poor and very good results, that the reading interest was high.

Moreover, as data were samples of the students, there were options in the course of the learning and evaluation process for other students to have low reading interest or unsatisfactory performances. The researchers were therefore hard to conclude that all the students at that school had good academic achievement, English reading skills and other language performance. However, the researcher was certain that the collected data was valid to demonstrate that while the students had difficulties understanding the English material, they had good academic abilities.

*4.2. Suggestion*

The findings of the study indicated that the students' reading interest was low. The analysis of the data showed that the students preferred reading for entertainment only such as reading storybooks. Moreover, they were also more interested in watching TV and playing games than reading books. Therefore the teachers should apply appropriate strategies to increase the students' enthusiasm in reading books by giving reading materials related to the topics that most of the students were interested in. However, the teachers should not only prioritize selecting the learning materials based on students' preferences, but the teacher should also consider the purpose of the learning.

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