

Analyzing Motivation in Junior High School Students' Reading Habits

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v10i5.1423>

*Dwi Duvanny Kalila, Ari Prasetyaningrum, Andri Suherman, Siti Maysuroh 

¹²³⁴Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Hamzanwadi, Lombok Timur, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: kaliladwi7@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines junior high school students' motivation in developing reading habits and identifies the supporting and hindering factors. A mixed-method design was applied, involving questionnaires completed by 64 students at SMPN 2 Sikur, as well as interviews and classroom observations. Findings revealed that most students demonstrated moderate (39.06%) to high (32.81%) levels of reading motivation, with an overall average of 3.15. Intrinsic factors, such as curiosity, enjoyment, and the desire for knowledge, emerged as the strongest drivers, while extrinsic factors, including encouragement from teachers and parents, played a role but inconsistently. Major obstacles included boredom, limited time, and difficulties in understanding texts, particularly in foreign languages. The school environment, such as poorly maintained libraries and the lack of literacy activities, was also found to be unsupportive. These results indicate that intrinsic motivation is crucial for fostering reading habits, yet it must be reinforced by external support and a conducive learning atmosphere. The study suggests revitalizing school literacy programs, increasing teacher involvement, and encouraging parental support to create a sustainable reading culture.

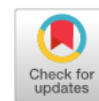
Keywords: *Reading Motivation, Reading Habits, Junior High School Students, Supporting Factors, Hindering Factors.*

Article History:

Received 28th August 2025

Accepted 15th September 2025

Published 17th September 2025



INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in shaping the quality of future generations who are able to adapt to changing times and face global challenges (Hariyadi et al., 2023). Among the basic skills developed in the learning process, reading is particularly crucial at the junior high school level. At this stage, students transition from learning basic literacy to using literacy as a tool for acquiring broader knowledge. Strong reading habits not only enrich vocabulary and language competence but also foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning skills that are essential for academic achievement and personal development.

Despite its importance, reading interest among junior high school students in Indonesia remains relatively low. UNESCO (2023) reports that the reading interest index of students in several developing countries, including Indonesia, is still concerning. Without strong reading habits, students risk falling behind in mastering school subjects, understanding complex information, and developing the intellectual independence needed for higher education. Thus, fostering motivation to read at this stage is critical, as habits formed during adolescence often continue into adulthood.

Reading motivation, defined as the internal drive that encourages students to engage with texts (Ryan & Deci, 2000), plays a key role in cultivating consistent reading practices. Guthrie and Wigfield (2021) highlight dimensions such as curiosity, value, and social engagement, which strongly influence students' attitudes toward literacy. Intrinsic motivation,

*Corresponding Author: kaliladwi7@gmail.com

Authors' Contribution: a-Study design; b-Data collection; c-Statistical analysis; d-Manuscript preparation; e-Funds collection.

such as enjoyment and curiosity, encourages sustainable engagement with reading, while extrinsic motivation—such as grades, teacher praise, and parental encouragement—can provide additional reinforcement (Wigfield et al., 2022). However, motivation alone is insufficient; environmental factors, including school libraries, literacy programs, and supportive social contexts, are also crucial for shaping reading behavior (Skinner, 1953; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

Although numerous studies have examined reading motivation and habits, few have focused specifically on junior high school students in Indonesia. Previous research has shown that motivation and reading habits can be influenced by school environments, family support, and personal reading experiences (Baker & Wigfield, n.d.). Therefore, this study seeks to analyze students' motivation in developing reading habits, and to identify both the supporting and hindering factors. By understanding these dynamics, the study aims to provide practical insights for teachers, parents, and policymakers to strengthen literacy development at the junior high school level.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' reading motivation and habits. Mixed methods allow for objective measurement while also capturing subjective experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative phase used questionnaires to measure students' motivation levels, while the qualitative phase employed semi-structured interviews and classroom observations to explore supporting and hindering factors in greater depth. This approach reflects both positivist (quantitative) and constructivist (qualitative) paradigms (Creswell, 2014).

Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at SMPN 5 Sikur, East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, during the academic year 2025/2026 (July 15–27, 2025). The target population consisted of students in grades VII–IX.

Sampling Method

A mixed sampling strategy was applied to suit the purposes of each data collection technique. For the questionnaire, a saturated sampling technique was used, meaning all 90 students in the population were invited to participate, resulting in 64 valid responses. For interviews, a purposive sampling method was employed, selecting representatives from each grade level who were considered capable of providing rich information about their reading motivation and habits. For classroom observations, purposive sampling was also applied by choosing two classes that represented the general characteristics of the student population. This combination ensured that the quantitative data reflected the broader population, while the qualitative data provided in-depth insights into specific cases.

Instruments

Three instruments were used: (1) a questionnaire with a Likert scale to measure levels of reading motivation; (2) semi-structured interviews to capture students' perceptions and experiences; and (3) classroom observations to examine literacy practices and environmental influences.

Data Collection

Questionnaires were distributed to all students, interviews were conducted with selected participants, and classroom observations were carried out over several teaching sessions. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, distribution), while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This dual analysis provided both numerical evidence and narrative explanations, allowing for triangulation and validation of findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Motivation Levels

The questionnaire results show that students' reading motivation at SMPN 2 Sikur was generally in the moderate to high range. Out of 64 respondents, 39.06% were in the moderate category, 32.81% in the high category, and 14.06% in the very high category. Meanwhile, 4.68% were in the low category and 9.37% in the very low category. The overall average score was 3.15, categorized as moderate. This indicates that while many students have sufficient motivation to read, their engagement is not yet optimal. These findings are consistent with Guthrie and Wigfield (2021), who emphasized that motivation strongly influences students' literacy behavior and comprehension skills.

Supporting Factors

Interview and observation data revealed several factors that encouraged students' reading motivation. (1) Intrinsic motivation: Most students read because they enjoy the content, feel curious, or want to gain knowledge. For instance, some students stated that they felt proud after completing a book, reflecting Ryan and Deci's (2000, 2020) Self-Determination Theory, which highlights curiosity and autonomy as key motivational drivers. (2) Extrinsic motivation: External encouragement, especially from teachers and parents, also supported reading habits. Some students were motivated by role models or by the desire to achieve academic success. These findings align with Skinner's (1953) behaviorism, which explains that reinforcement can strengthen positive reading behaviors. (3) Reading environment: Students reported that home and school environments played a role. Quiet spaces at home supported concentration, while libraries, although limited, were also used. Teachers' efforts in class, such as interactive activities, further motivated some students.

Hindering Factors

Despite these supports, several obstacles limited students' reading motivation. (1) Boredom: Students often lost interest when texts were lengthy or less engaging. (2) Time constraints: Reading time competed with other activities, reducing consistency. (3) Difficulty understanding texts: Especially when reading in foreign languages, comprehension challenges discouraged students. (4) School environment: The library lacked attractive and well-maintained books, and literacy activities were minimal. Observations also showed that some students became distracted or disengaged during reading lessons. These barriers illustrate that while intrinsic motivation exists, external conditions sometimes fail to reinforce it effectively.

Discussion

The findings suggest that intrinsic motivation curiosity, enjoyment, and desire for knowledge was the strongest factor influencing reading habits. However, extrinsic motivation, such as encouragement from teachers and parents, remained necessary to sustain students' engagement. This is in line with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020), which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness in supporting motivation. At the same time, Skinner's (1953) behaviorism highlights the role of reinforcement in shaping reading as a habit. The obstacles identified boredom, lack of time, comprehension difficulties, and limited school facilities indicate that motivation alone is insufficient without a supportive learning environment. Therefore, efforts to strengthen literacy programs, revitalize libraries, and encourage active teacher and parental involvement are essential to build sustainable reading habits among junior high school students.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined junior high school students' reading motivation at SMPN 2 Sikur using a mixed-method approach. The findings showed that most students had moderate to high levels of motivation, with intrinsic factors such as curiosity, enjoyment, and the desire for knowledge emerging as the strongest drivers. Extrinsic support from teachers and parents also contributed, although not consistently. At the same time, several obstacles were identified,

including boredom, limited time, difficulties in understanding texts, and an unsupportive school environment.

Overall, the results indicate that intrinsic motivation is central to developing students' reading habits, but it needs to be reinforced by extrinsic encouragement and a more supportive learning environment. Strengthening literacy programs, improving school facilities, and involving teachers and parents actively are therefore essential to sustaining students' reading motivation and habits.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Above all, I am profoundly grateful to Allah SWT for His boundless blessings and guidance that have accompanied me throughout the process of completing this thesis. My sincere thanks go to my thesis supervisors for their insightful advice, encouragement, and steadfast support. I also wish to convey my appreciation to the English teachers who willingly took part in this research, generously sharing their time and perspectives during data collection. Finally, my deepest gratitude is extended to my family and friends for their patience, motivation, and unwavering encouragement during my academic journey.

REFERENCES

- Abutabenjeh, S., & Jaradat, R. (2018). Clarification of research design, research methods, and research methodology: A guide for public administration researchers and practitioners. *Teaching Public Administration*, 36(3), 237–258.
- Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., & Wilkinson, I. A. G. (1985). *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading*. National Institute of Education.
- Baker, L., & Wigfield, A. (n.d.). Dimensions of children's motivation for reading and their relations to reading activity and reading achievement.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2019). *Motivation, language attitudes and globalisation: A Hungarian perspective*. Multilingual Matters.
- Gardner, R. C. (2006). The socio-educational model of second language acquisition: A research paradigm. *EUROSLA Yearbook*, 6(1), 237–260.
- Goodman, K. S. (1973). Psycholinguistic universals in the reading process. In F. Smith (Ed.), *Psycholinguistics and Reading* (pp. 1–20). Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (2000). Engagement and motivation in reading. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research* (Vol. 3, pp. 403–422). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (2021). Reading motivation: What every teacher should know. *The Reading Teacher*, 75(1), 7–16.
- Hariyadi, H., Supriyadi, S., & Ningsih, L. P. (2023). Peran pendidikan dalam membentuk generasi unggul di era globalisasi. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, 17(2), 101–110.
- Mar, R. A., Oatley, K., & Peterson, J. B. (2006). Exploring the link between reading fiction and empathy: Ruling out individual differences and examining outcomes. *Communications*, 34(4), 407–428.
- Noels, K. A., Pelletier, L. G., Clément, R., & Vallerand, R. J. (2000). Why are you learning a second language? Motivational orientations and self-determination theory. *Language Learning*, 50(1), 57–85.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), 54–67.
- Sardiman, A. M. (2006). *Interaksi dan motivasi belajar mengajar*. PT RajaGrafindo Persada.

- Schunk, D. H., DiBenedetto, M. K., & Pekrun, R. (2022). Motivation and emotion in education: Theory, research, and applications. *Educational Psychology Review*, 34, 313–340.
- Skinner, B. F. (1953). *Science and Human Behavior*. Macmillan.
- Smith, F. (1982). *Understanding Reading* (4th ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sutarno. (2008). *Membudayakan Gemar Membaca: Strategi Meningkatkan Minat dan Kemampuan Membaca*. UPT Perpustakaan UNS.
- Takashi, M. (2018). Integrative motivation and second language acquisition: A historical overview and research perspective. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(5), 1003–1011.
- Tokan, M. K., & Imakulata, M. M. (2019). The effect of motivation and learning behavior on student achievement. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(1), 1–8.
- Toni, A. (2021). Indonesian ELF learners' reading motivation. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 6(2), 145–159.
- UNESCO. (2006). *Education for All Global Monitoring Report: Literacy for Life*. UNESCO Publishing.
- UNESCO. (2023). *World Reading Report*. Paris: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
- Unrau, N., & Schlackman, J. (2016). Motivation and its relationship with reading achievement in an urban middle school. *Journal of Educational Research*, 95(2), 81–90.
- Wigfield, A., Gladstone, J. R., & Turci, L. (2022). Beyond cognition: Reading motivation and reading comprehension. *Child Development Perspectives*, 16(1), 20–26.
- Trigant, B. (1990). *The Psychology of Reading*. University Press.