The Correlation Between Reading Anxiety and Reading Comprehension Achievement of The Eleven Grade Student of SMA Negeri 1 Muara Badak

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of students' reading anxiety and students' reading comprehension on eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Muara Badak. The dependent variable in this research is reading comprehension while the independent variable is reading anxiety. This research was conducted on class XI students of SMA Negeri 1 Muara Badak, with total 60 respondents. This research used quantitative method. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire by testing students' reading anxiety and students' reading comprehension. Multiple regression analysis techniques using SPSS 27 (Statistical Product and Service Solution 27) are used to analyze the data. The results of this research showed several conclusions that can be conveyed. First, reading anxiety for all students provides a significant correlation to their reading comprehension achievement with r 0.896. This can be seen in the high level of correlation. It can be proven that different levels of reading anxiety have a significant influence on students' achievement of reading comprehension. Second, it can be concluded that students' reading anxiety has a significant influence on students' reading comprehension achievement. This showed that one of the psychological factors, namely reading anxiety, has an important contribution to the success of students' reading achievement. This research may have some pedagogical implications for future researchers and students.

Keywords: Reading Anxiety; Reading Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Learning is an educational activity that takes place in schools and has the function of supporting the growth and development of students so that they grow in a positive direction. Student learning paths (subjects) in schools must be directed and not haphazard and aimless. Through the school learning system, engage in learning activities aimed at positive changes in students towards maturity. In carrying out the learning process, the educator's most important task is to determine or adjust the learning environment that is intended to support student changes for the better. To achieve this, educators can use learning resources to support the process of changing student behavior. In addition, educators must use learning methods and

media strategies so that students remain engaged and easily understand the material presented.

Learning English for junior high school students requires mastering four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading is a skill that plays an important role in high school learning. The key or source of knowledge that a person has is obtained through reading. In other words, all learning processes are carried out through reading activities. According to Tarrigan (2015: 7), reading is a process carried out and used by readers to obtain the message the author wants to convey through spoken or written media.

Indonesia is a country with very low interest in reading. According to the results of a 2016 Central Connecticut State University survey of the most polluted countries in the world, Kompas (2016) found that Indonesians' reading interest ranks 60th out of 61 countries. Moreover, according to UNESCO 2020 data, the reading interest of the Indonesian people is very concerning, only 10,001%. This means that out of 1,000 Indonesians, only 1 person likes to read. Strengthening the desire and interest in reading is something that is difficult to achieve unless it starts with a habit. The habit of reading is being introduced in schools, one of which is literacy activities. However, students' interest in reading is still not effective.

Despite the emphasis on reading as a fundamental skill in learning English, students often face complex challenges in improving their reading comprehension. One major issue is psychological factors, such as reading anxiety, which can significantly hinder students' ability to understand texts deeply. Additionally, many students lack access to effective reading strategies or reading materials that align with their interests and needs. The absence of a supportive environment, whether from family or school, further exacerbates students' low motivation to read. Moreover, although literacy has been integrated as a vital component of the curriculum, the implementation of literacy programs often falls short of expectations. Teachers frequently struggle to identify students' levels of reading anxiety and effective methods to address them. This gap between curriculum goals and students' actual performance remains a significant barrier to improving reading skills.

This study offers a novel perspective by exploring the specific relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension achievement at the senior high school level in Indonesia, a topic that remains underexplored in the local context. By employing multiple regression analysis through SPSS, the research quantitatively evaluates the contribution of reading anxiety to students' reading performance, providing an empirical approach to understanding the interplay between these two variables. Furthermore, the study provides insights into how varying levels of reading anxiety can significantly impact students' reading achievement. These findings are expected to serve as a foundation for developing targeted educational interventions, such as reading anxiety management programs, to motivate and empower students in enhancing their reading skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Anxiety

Reading plays an essential role in language learning (Huang, 2012, p. 1521). When texts are read and understood carefully, a wealth of information can be acquired. Anxiety, however, is one of the factors that may hinder this process, preventing readers from fully comprehending texts. Basso et al. (2020) define reading anxiety as an unpleasant feeling toward reading caused by dissatisfaction in the reading process. To achieve fluency in a foreign language, students must engage with the language continuously, which can create anxiety due to fear of making mistakes. This highlights the importance of considering anxiety as a crucial factor in reading comprehension.

Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) identify two sources of reading anxiety: unfamiliar writing systems and unfamiliar cultural material. For instance, a reader may experience anxiety when decoding texts written in unfamiliar scripts, as the unfamiliarity complicates text processing. Similarly, foreign cultural references may provoke anxiety as students encounter culturally unfamiliar elements. In addition, Shboul, Ahmad, Nordin, and Rahman (2013) suggest other factors contributing to reading anxiety, including fear of making mistakes and concern about the effects of reading performance.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process through which students extract main ideas, specific information, and general meaning from texts. It involves a combination of cognitive and linguistic processes (Apriliani, Pramerta, & Sawitri, 2021). According to Nation (2019), reading comprehension can be seen as the product of decoding and linguistic understanding. Grabbe and Stoller (2013, p. 3) describe reading as the ability to extract meaning from written text and interpret it appropriately. To achieve this, students must interact with the text and understand the significance of each word. In English language learning, reading serves both purposes of enjoyment and acquiring information, improving the reader's ability to comprehend written materials.

Previous Related Studies

Previous studies, such as Nazarinasab, Nemati, and Mortahan (2014), have shown a significant correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension achievement. Their findings suggest that highly anxious readers may divert their mental energy to irrelevant concerns—such as vocabulary difficulty, performance comparisons with peers, or time constraints—hindering the efficiency of the reading process. Conversely, less anxious readers can focus their mental energy on reading itself, achieving better outcomes.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study adopted a quantitative correlation design to investigate whether there is a relationship between students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension achievement. The study also examined whether reading anxiety contributes significantly to reading performance. The population of the study consisted of eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Muara Badak, with a total of 67 students. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample, resulting in 60 students participating as respondents.

Instrument and Procedure

The study utilized two primary instruments: the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) and a reading comprehension test. The FLRAS, consisting of 20 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, was used to measure students' reading anxiety levels. Higher scores indicated higher anxiety levels, with items carefully scored to reflect both positive and negative statements. Meanwhile, the reading comprehension test assessed students' ability to understand and interpret English texts, focusing on their proficiency in extracting main ideas, specific information, and general meaning. The data collection process began with students completing the FLRAS questionnaire to gauge their reading anxiety. Following this, they undertook the reading comprehension test to evaluate their performance. The scores from both instruments were then analyzed to explore the relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension achievement, ensuring a systematic approach to data collection and analysis.

Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed using SPSS version 27 to determine the relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension achievement. Validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure the instruments were accurate and consistent, with validity indices above 0.3 and Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.60. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize students' performance in reading anxiety and comprehension tests, while normality tests confirmed that the data followed a normal distribution. Hypothesis testing included an F-Test to evaluate the collective influence of reading anxiety on reading comprehension and a T-Test to determine the individual effect of reading anxiety. Results were considered significant if the significance level was below 0.05. Additionally, Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. These statistical methods provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of reading anxiety on students' reading comprehension.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' Reading Anxiety

The data regarding students' reading anxiety were measured using the *Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale*(FLRAS). The results are summarized in **Table 1**.

Anxiety Level	Score Range	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Low Anxiety	20–40	10	16.7
Moderate Anxiety	41–70	35	58.3
High Anxiety	71–100	15	25.0

The table shows that the majority of students (58.3%) experienced moderate levels of reading anxiety, with scores ranging from 41 to 70. This indicates that more than half of the participants feel uneasy or moderately stressed while reading in English. A significant portion (25.0%) experienced high levels of anxiety, scoring above 70, which could severely hinder their reading comprehension abilities. Meanwhile, only a small group (16.7%) reported low anxiety levels, suggesting they are relatively comfortable when reading in English. The findings emphasize that reading anxiety is a common issue, affecting nearly three-fourths of the students (moderate to high levels). This prevalence highlights the importance of addressing anxiety through teaching strategies, interventions, or relaxation techniques to create a more supportive learning environment.

2. Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement

Students' reading comprehension scores were categorized into five levels: poor, fair, good, very good, and excellent. The data are presented in **Table 2**.

Category	Score Range	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Poor	<60	8	13.4
Fair	61–70	4	6.7
Good	71–80	2	3.4
Very Good	81–90	25	41.6
Excellent	91–100	21	35.0

The table highlights that the majority of students performed well in reading comprehension. A total of 41.6% scored in the "Very Good" category (81–90), while another 35.0% achieved "Excellent" scores (91–100). These high levels of achievement suggest that a significant portion of students has strong reading comprehension skills. However, 13.4% of students scored below 60, falling into the "Poor" category, which may indicate significant struggles with reading comprehension. Additionally, 6.7% scored between 61–70 ("Fair"), and only 3.4% achieved scores in the "Good" range (71–80). This uneven distribution, with a

minority scoring poorly, suggests the existence of a small group that may require additional support and targeted interventions to improve their reading comprehension skills. The high mean score of 84.25 reflects an overall positive performance in reading comprehension among the students. However, the standard deviation of 18.152 indicates some variability in scores, with a minority of students struggling compared to the high achievers.

3. Correlation Between Reading Anxiety and Reading Comprehension

The statistical analysis explores the influence of reading anxiety on reading comprehension. The results of the F-test and t-test are presented in **Table 3**.

Statistical Test	F-value	Significance (p-value)	t-value	Significance (p-value)
F-test	236.480	<0.001	N/A	N/A
t-test	N/A	N/A	15.378	<0.001

The F-test results (F = 236.480, p < 0.001) indicate that students' reading anxiety has a statistically significant overall effect on their reading comprehension. This is further supported by the t-test value (t = 15.378, p < 0.001), which confirms a strong negative correlation between the two variables. The negative relationship suggests that higher levels of anxiety are associated with lower reading comprehension performance. Students with high anxiety may experience cognitive interference, such as difficulty concentrating, fear of making mistakes, or a lack of confidence, which inhibits their ability to fully comprehend texts. Conversely, students with lower anxiety levels may approach reading tasks with greater ease, leading to better performance. These results underline the critical need to address and reduce reading anxiety in classrooms to foster better comprehension outcomes for all students. This could be achieved through supportive teaching practices, stress-reduction activities, and tailored interventions to build students' confidence in reading English texts.

Based on the results of the Pearson product-moment correlation, it was found that there is a weak correlation between students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension achievement among the active eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Muara Badak (r = .896). Although the correlation is weak, the value indicates that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. Specifically, the findings suggest that students with higher levels of reading anxiety tend to experience challenges in achieving high reading comprehension scores, while students with lower anxiety levels generally perform better in reading comprehension tasks.

The results of students' reading comprehension achievement revealed a diverse distribution across the achievement categories. The majority of students (35%) scored in the "excellent" category, indicating their strong ability to understand and interpret the texts they read. A significant portion (41.6%) scored in the "very good"

category, which suggests solid comprehension skills. Meanwhile, 3.4% of students were categorized in the "good" level, 6.7% in the "fair" level, and 13.4% in the "poor" level. These findings highlight a wide range of achievement within the student body, from those performing excellently to those struggling with comprehension.

According to the reading anxiety questionnaire results, most students reported experiencing moderate to high levels of anxiety. This suggests that reading anxiety is a common issue among the students at SMA Negeri 1 Muara Badak. The correlation between anxiety and reading comprehension achievement showed that students with medium to high levels of anxiety tended to either score poorly or perform excellently, with fewer students falling in the intermediate achievement categories. This could indicate that anxiety affects reading comprehension in a way that some students may underperform due to extreme stress, while others may hyperfocus on the task and perform exceptionally well, possibly due to an increased sense of urgency or pressure to perform.

The research also aligns with previous studies, such as the one conducted by Nazarinasab, Nemati, and Mortahan (2014), which found a significant correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension achievement. According to their findings, highly anxious readers expend much of their mental energy on irrelevant thoughts, such as vocabulary difficulty, their perceived performance, or comparison with classmates. These distractions hinder their ability to effectively engage with the reading material. In contrast, less anxious readers can focus their cognitive resources on processing the text itself, leading to better comprehension. This is consistent with the findings of the current study, where students with lower anxiety tended to score higher on reading comprehension tests.

This research offers a novel contribution to the literature on reading anxiety and comprehension in several ways. First, it focuses on SMA Negeri 1 Muara Badak, a regional high school in Indonesia, providing insights into the unique challenges faced by students in this context. Second, the correlation of reading anxiety with comprehension achievement was explored in-depth, revealing the impact of psychological factors on academic performance in the Indonesian educational setting, an area that has not been widely studied. Third, the study provides a clear breakdown of reading comprehension achievement across different levels of anxiety, showcasing how both high and low anxiety levels can influence student performance in different ways, which is often underexplored in previous research that focuses primarily on just the negative effects of anxiety.

The findings of this study offer several pedagogical implications. First, it highlights the importance of addressing students' reading anxiety in educational settings. Teachers and educators can use this knowledge to implement strategies that help reduce anxiety, such as stress-reduction exercises, mindfulness practices, or creating a supportive and non-threatening classroom environment. Given the significant correlation between reading anxiety and comprehension achievement,

reducing anxiety could potentially improve overall reading performance among students. Second, this study can inform future research and interventions aimed at improving reading skills in students with high levels of anxiety. Interventions could include tailored programs that help students develop effective coping mechanisms for anxiety, allowing them to better focus on reading tasks.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and interpretations presented in the previous chapters, several conclusions can be drawn. First, there is a significant correlation between students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension achievement, with a high correlation coefficient of $r = 0.896$. This indicates that varying levels of reading anxiety have a significant impact on students' reading comprehension outcomes. Second, it can be concluded that reading anxiety plays a substantial role in influencing students' reading comprehension achievement. As a psychological factor, reading anxiety contributes notably to students' academic success in reading. This study highlights the importance of addressing reading anxiety as part of strategies to improve reading achievement. The findings may offer pedagogical insights for future researchers and educators.

Based on the results of this research, several suggestions are proposed, particularly for the students of SMA Negeri 1 Muara Badak. Firstly, students should recognize the impact of reading anxiety on their learning and comprehension. It is essential for students to be aware of how anxiety may affect their ability to perform well and actively explore strategies to manage it. Developing self-awareness in learning can lead to improved academic outcomes. Secondly, students should make reading a regular habit and not underestimate its importance. Establishing a reading routine is crucial for improving comprehension skills. Lastly, cultivating a strong desire to learn English reading is essential. A genuine interest in learning will facilitate understanding of the material and increase their overall knowledge. By addressing both psychological and behavioral factors, students can significantly enhance their reading abilities and academic performance.

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