



West Sumba Students' Reading Interests, Motivation, Obstacles, and Strategies

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To build and sharpen good reading skills, it is essential to provide students with engaging reading materials. Without motivation in reading, students may have poor reading comprehension skills. However, students may inevitably face difficulties in their reading, which may decrease motivation levels. In rural areas in Indonesia, several obstacles may affect students' motivation to read, such as a lack of learning resources and unsupportive parents. This study aims to investigate English reading interests, motivation, obstacles, and strategies to overcome the obstacles of West Sumba senior high school students. This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach with a survey design. The results of this study indicated that the students are interested in reading Indonesian and English texts. However, students' interest level was not shown in reading motivation. The common obstacles faced by the students in reading activities are a lack of English reading resources, inappropriate English texts, unsupportive parents and teachers, and a preference to watch TV or use mobile devices rather than read. The strategies to overcome these obstacles were sparing time to read, asking teachers to provide more time to read English reading materials in class, asking parents to allow more reading, limiting screen time, and asking the school to provide more English books.

Keywords: rural senior high school, reading motivation, reading difficulties, reading strategies

It is widely known that reading is a fundamental skill to lead to personal and mental growth, and also to access to social, economic, and civic life (Ameyaw & Anto, 2018). Reading helps people focus, remember things better, be more empathetic, and communicate more effectively. It can lengthen people's lives, lessen stress, and enhance mental wellness. Additionally, people can develop new skills through reading that will benefit in their career and interpersonal interactions. Reading develops man into a complete person because it can impart insight and knowledge while also developing one's comprehensive personality. So, it is undeniable that reading books may broaden one's perspective on people and issues.

In learning languages, reading is one of the skills that is important for the learners to master. Without mastering that skill, learners will have difficulties learning

languages. Indonesian senior high school students must acquire and hone the basic reading skills in order to be ready to read at the tertiary level, when they will need to read more critically. However, students nowadays prefer to watch TV or play with their mobile devices rather than reading. This causes them to have bad reading habits, and to only read texts which are asked by their teachers to read. This is in line with what Priajana (2013) found in his study that EFL students tend to read topics that support their studies or academic purposes rather than reading for pleasure. Therefore, in order for students to develop strong reading skills and eventually amass a solid library of pertinent material for both their studies and their lives, teachers must arouse their interest in reading. In addition, students should also work on developing a strong reading motivation in order to improve their reading comprehension abilities.

There are some factors that contribute to reading problems in the Indonesian context. Two of those factors are students' English reading habits (Chairanissa & Wirza, 2019 and Iftanti, 2012) and students' reading motivation (Salikin, Bin-Tahur, Kusumaningputri, & Yuliandari, 2017; Yulia, 2013; and Yuliandari, Salikin, & Kusumaningputri, 2016). Besides those two factors, another factor which contributes to the reading problems in Indonesian context is the inequality of infrastructure between the developed and developing areas in Indonesia. In Indonesia, the government struggles to provide equal access to education, particularly in rural areas (Pramono, 2018). Students in rural areas have very limited facilities to help them in their study. This may become one of the reading obstacles which are faced by students in rural areas which may decrease their reading interests and motivation, and eventually may decrease their reading habits as well.

There have been many studies conducted about students' reading interests, motivation, obstacles, and strategies to overcome the obstacles in more developed parts of Indonesia (Cahyono, 2019; Dafit, Mustika, & Melihayatri, 2020; Indrayadi, 2021; Lestari & Harisuna, 2019; Putri, 2019; Sari & Pujiono, 2017; and Tahmidaten & Krisanto, 2020). However, very few of those studies were conducted in rural or even remote areas like in West Sumba. Thus, this study aims to investigate West Sumba senior high school students' interests, motivation, obstacles, and strategies to overcome the obstacles in reading English. The findings of this study may provide useful information to all parties involved in arousing reading interests, developing reading motivation among students, solving students' reading obstacles, and supporting them with appropriate strategies to overcome the obstacles.

Literature Review

Reading Interests

Reading is often seen as an activity that opens a human's mind to the world. It is just like a window to the world. This activity lays a foundation for a person's worldview by influencing how they perceive the world. According to Ameyaw and Anto (2018), reading may facilitate access to social, economic, and civic life in addition to personal and mental development. In this modern and global era, it is impossible to ignore information which is disseminated through media in a written form. This fact shows that reading skill is considered as a very important skill to master. Additionally, that skill influences one's academic achievement at a much later time as well as their early performance in other subject areas such as science and humanities (Abbott et al., 2017).

Reading assignments and activities are something that are unavoidable in the field of education. This is due to the fact that practically all types of learning are connected to reading, and reading activities account for the majority of students' information literacy. According to Al-Ghazo (2015), there are four components to this activity that are interactive: the reader, the text, fluent reading, and strategic reading. In order to comprehend communications, interpret, evaluate, and anticipate the meaning of a text, a reader needs to be engaged in this productive action as an interpreter, analyst, and book predictor. Additionally, Benge et al. (2010) stated that a reader is someone who not only absorbs information from the text passively but also contributes to its meaning. Thus, to become a good reader, first of all, someone needs to have interests and motivation in reading because these two factors may affect their success in reading.

Reading interest is a prerequisite that needs to be met before reading. This complex psycho-cognitive phenomenon has an aim to explore or pique students' interest in the topic of the selected reading material

by making the students apply what they already know about the world and by getting their opinions on the topic. Accepting a relationship between oneself and the reading material is what is meant by reading interest. The interest may increase with the strength or closeness of the relationship. Consequently, in order to have a good reading motivation, the readers must be interested in the texts that they are reading. According to Khairuddin (2013), there are personal (within) and institutional (outside) factors that influence the growth of someone's interest in reading besides their desire and attitude toward reading. Those personal factors include a person's age, gender, intelligence, reading ability, attitude, and physiological needs. Whereas, the institutional factors include the number of available books and the types of books, one's social status, economic background and ethnicity, friends of the same age, and the influence of the parents and teachers.

Reading Motivation

When learner needs are ranked as the most important component in second and foreign language learning, motivation has been argued as perhaps the second most important factor. Gardner and Lambert (1959) showed that motivational factors were important in the process of learning a foreign language. As for reading skills, according to Esteria (2017), students have to find reading as an enjoyable activity, so they will feel motivated to read the texts given by the teachers. Nevertheless, students are not the only ones that struggle with motivation. English teachers also need to be aware that their role is important to inspire their students to love reading English texts (Yulia, 2013), and this task is not an easy task to do (Campbell & Kmiecik, 2004; Gambrell et al., 1981). Generally speaking, teachers have to work harder and use more energy to get their students excited about learning and to make sure they comprehend the reading material (Damayanti, 2017).

Extrinsic and intrinsic reading motivation are the two categories of reading

motivation. According to Guthrie et al. (2000), an individual's tendency to read just for the pleasure, interest, and excitement of reading is known as intrinsic reading motivation. Guthrie et al. (2004) breaks down intrinsic motivation into three components, they are curiosity, involvement, and preference of challenge. Extrinsic reading motivation, on the other hand, is the tendency for people to read in order to obtain some distinct results (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The five components of extrinsic reading motivation are Competition, Compliance, Recognition for Reading, Grades, and Social (Wang & Guthrie, 2004).

In summary, it is imperative for students to understand their reading motivation style, as motivation plays a critical role in enhancing their reading comprehension abilities and techniques under varying circumstances (Ahmadi & Hairul, 2012). Understanding one's motivation in reading will also help them to improve their reading skills both in academic and daily life because students who are motivated may become enthusiastic and engaged readers.

Obstacles of Reading in Rural Areas

The government of Indonesia is interested in the state of education in the country's rural areas. According to Luschei & Zubaidah (2012), "The greatest educational challenge facing Indonesia is the country's vast geography and many remote areas" (p. 337). According to Hargreaves et al. (2009), urban schools are better than rural schools because they have more teachers and easier access to resources for instruction. While teachers in rural areas frequently lack the teaching resources they need to support their instruction in the classroom, those in urban schools have greater access to educational resources. The result of this circumstance is a boring teaching and learning environment.

There is also a difference in the quality of teachers' teaching skills between Indonesian schools in rural and urban areas. Indonesian schools in rural and remote areas

“often lack qualified teachers,” according to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Asian Development Bank reports from 2015 (p. 271). According to Wang (2006), the majority of rural teachers still maintain strict control over the classroom and spend the majority of the time teaching. Teachers sometimes monopolize class time, leaving little opportunity for students to voice their opinions or ask questions.

In terms of reading, OECD (2015) revealed that Indonesia is in the 74th position out of 79 countries for the country’s students literacy skills. The cause of this is Indonesian students’ low interest in reading. Kurniasih (2016) cited a report from UNESCO which stated that only 0.01 percent of Indonesian students like to read. Additionally, Kurniasih (2016) also cited National Library’s data in 2015 which showed that only 10% of Indonesian students above ten years old are interested in reading. There are several reasons that contribute to the students’ low interest in reading. For students living in rural areas, two of those reasons may be because of their lack of access to books and lack of reading habit support from the community. Lack of access to printed books is inevitable because of Indonesia’s unique geographical condition which makes it very difficult to have equal book distribution. This causes students living in rural areas to be left behind. Lack of reading habit support from the community may be caused by teachers who only concentrate on reading textbooks due to the lack of teaching time, and they do not encourage the culture of reading. Besides the teachers, the parents may also not support their children’s reading habit because they do not see reading as a productive activity.

Strategies to Overcome Reading Obstacles in Rural Areas

To overcome the obstacles to reading for students living in rural areas, there have to be some strategies done, not only by the students but by the community where the students live. Regular reading activities

in the classroom can be the key to raising students’ reading interests. As a follow-up activity to the Indonesian government’s *Gerakan Literasi Nasional* (National Literacy Movement) (Kemendikbud, 2017a) which was launched in 2014, teachers teaching in rural schools have to be introduced to activities that they can implement in their schools. Realizing the importance of involving the community around the students in arousing the students’ interest in reading, in 2016, *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* (School Literacy Movement) (Kemendikbud, 2016) and *Gerakan Literasi Keluarga* (Home Literacy Movement) (Kemendikbud, 2017b) were launched by the Ministry of Education. This proved that the Indonesian government realized the importance of the role of the school (teachers, administrators, and librarians) and family to arouse the students’ interest and motivation in reading.

On the island of Sulawesi, Givaudan Foundation started to build school libraries at primary schools there in 2018 (Givaudan Foundation, n.d.). This was done to help primary school students develop their interest in reading and have a routine reading activity. Another project is done in rural areas of Papua province by UNICEF partnered with six local Civil Society Organizations to improve the literacy skills of early grade students in 120 targeted schools (UNICEF Indonesia, 2018). According to Wulandari (2021), Danone Indonesia organized a program in 2021 wherein they provided reading materials for children in hospitals who were inflicted with COVID-19 and orphanages. Surely, this program should be continued after COVID-19 and take place once in a month with other genres of books included in the donated books, not just textbooks but also fiction books.

Looking at the importance of acquiring reading skills for senior high school students, the obstacles that rural area students may face to build their English reading interests, and the strategies offered to overcome the obstacles, this study aims

to map the interests, motivation, obstacles, and strategies of senior high school students in West Sumba. Thus, the research question underlies this study is “How do West Sumba students perceive English reading in terms of their interests, motivation, obstacles, and strategies?”

Methodology

The study was in the form of a survey study by using a questionnaire as the instrument of the data collection of this study. This method was considered appropriate in

terms of time and place effectiveness since the data could be collected in a short period of time and could reach students which lived far away from the researcher.

Respondents

The research was conducted in one private senior high school in Waikabubak, the capital of West Sumba Regency. The respondents who answered the questionnaire were 73 students of Grade X (45.2% male and 54.8% female), which were selected randomly. If they were not willing to be the

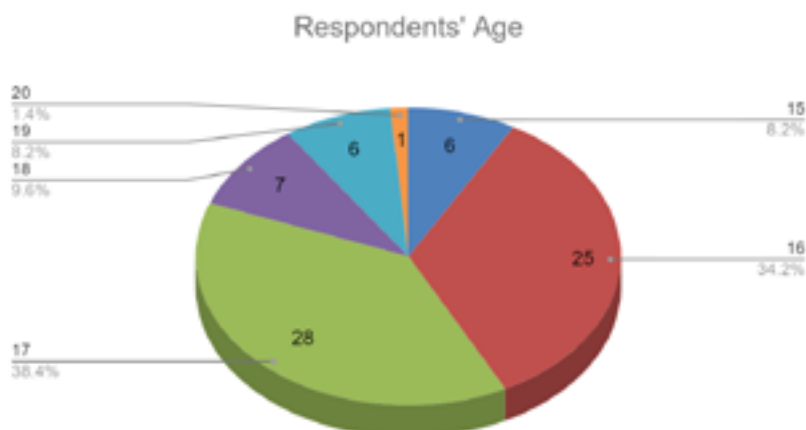
Figure 1

Respondents' Gender



Figure 2

Respondents' Age



respondents of the study, they were allowed not to fill in the questionnaire.

In Figure 1 above, it can be seen that from the total number of 73 respondents who filled in the questionnaire, there were 40 female students and 33 male students. The distribution of female and male respondents is quite balanced with only 7 more female students than male students.

From Figure 2, it can be seen that more than half of the respondents are 16 and 17 years old. Only 20 of them are below or above those ages.

Data Collection

The questionnaire used to collect the data was developed by adapting some of the items from Huang and Reynold's (2022) study for the motivation parts whereas the other questions to ask the respondents about their reading interests, obstacles, and strategies to overcome the obstacles were developed by the researcher.

The questionnaire consisted of five parts. The first part was used to collect the respondents' background information. The second part consisted of 4 close-ended items used to get to know the respondents' interests of reading in Indonesian and English language, and the types of texts and the frequency of reading those texts. The third part consisted of 8 Likert-scale items (4 items on intrinsic motivation and 4 other items on extrinsic motivation). The four scales used for those 8 items are 'A Lot Like Me', 'A Little Like Me', 'A Little Different from Me', and 'Very Different from Me'. The fourth and fifth part of the questionnaire each consisted of one open-ended question asking about the respondents' obstacles in reading English texts and their strategies to overcome those obstacles. All of the items in the questionnaire were written in Indonesian language and in simple sentences to make sure that the participants could understand all items clearly.

After the questionnaire which was created using Google Form was piloted to remove unclear items and revise ambiguous items, the link was then distributed to the respondents of the study at the end of their English class through the English teachers. They were given a week time to fill in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

After the data were collected, they were then analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The answers of all of the closed-ended items were counted and converted into charts or graphs to discuss. On the other hand, the answers for the open-ended items were classified to later be put under the emerging categories from the classification process. The answers under the emerging categories were also counted and then converted into charts or graphs to be discussed in detail in the findings section.

Findings

Findings of Reading Interests

Figure 3 shows that when the respondents were asked about their interest in reading texts in Indonesian language, the majority of them said that they liked it a lot with 49 out of 73 (67.1%) choosing that option. The second highest percentage is 31.5% (23 out of 73 respondents) chose the option of 'Neutral', and only 1 of the 73 respondents (1.4%) who said that he/she did not like reading in Indonesian language.

There are 3 types of Indonesian texts that the respondents liked to read (Figure 4). Those reading texts are Social Media and Phone Messages with the same highest number of respondents choosing these options (38 out of 73 respondents) followed by Picture Books which were chosen by 36 out of 73 respondents. The respondents stated that they read these three types of texts everyday. The type of Indonesian text which was least chosen by the respondents to read everyday is Comics.

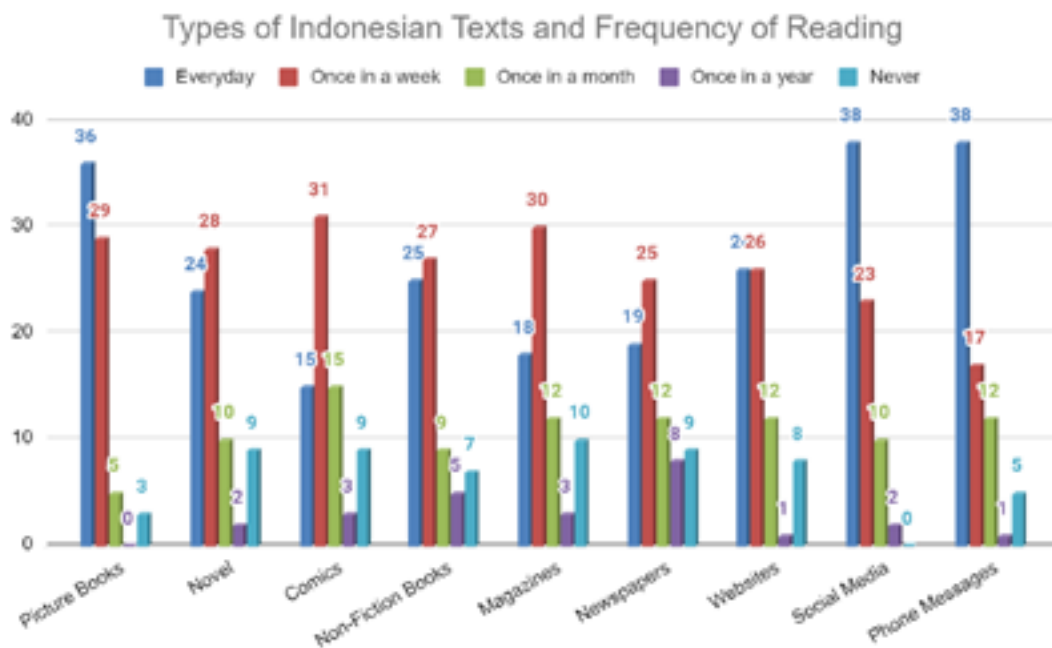
Figure 3

Respondents' Interest of Reading in Indonesian Language



Figure 4

Respondents' Types of Indonesian Texts and Their Frequency of Reading



When they were asked about their interest in reading English texts, the majority of them (50.7% or 37 out of 73 respondents) said that they had a neutral feeling about it (Figure 5). The option with the second highest percentage is the option of 'Like it a lot' (46.6%). This option was chosen by 34 out of 73 respondents. Similar to the item asking about the respondents' interest in reading in Indonesian language, the option

of 'Do not like it' gets the lowest percentage of 2.7%. This option was chosen by only 2 out of 73 respondents.

The 3 types of English texts that the respondents liked to read are the same as the 3 types of texts that they liked to read in Indonesian language (Figure 6). Those reading texts are Social Media as the first highest option chosen by the respondents to read

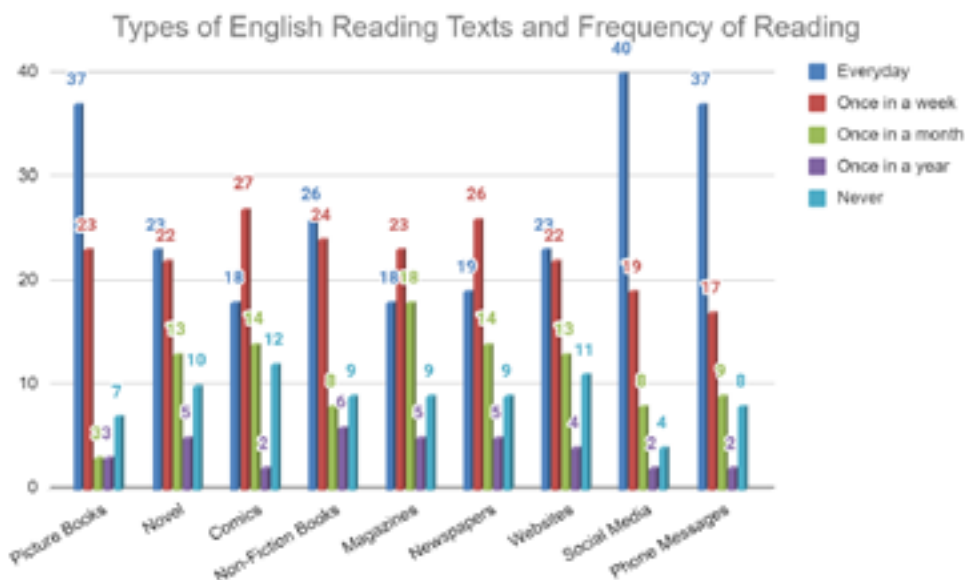
Figure 5

Respondents' Interest of Reading in English Language



Figure 6

Respondents' Types of English Texts and Their Frequency of Reading



everyday (chosen by 40 out of 73 respondents), followed by Phone Messages and Picture Books which were chosen by 37 out of 73 respondents. The respondents stated that they read these three types of texts everyday. The types of English text which were least chosen by the respondents to read everyday are Comics and Magazines.

Findings of Reading Motivation

The respondents' answers for their intrinsic motivation to read English texts do not

show that they have a high intrinsic motivation as their positive responses toward the statements of intrinsic motivation are lower than the negative responses (figure 7). The statement of 'Often lost track of time when reading about an interesting topic' gets the highest positive responses from the respondents (as many as 34 out of 73 respondents chose the positive responses of 'A lot like me' and 'A little like me'). This is followed by the statement of 'Reading English texts which attract my interest' which gets the

Figure 7

Respondents' Intrinsic Motivation in Reading English Texts

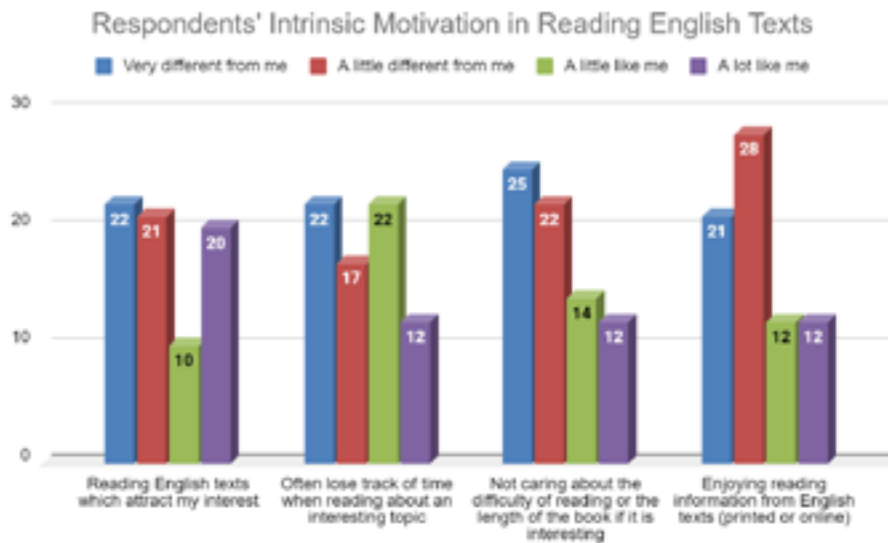
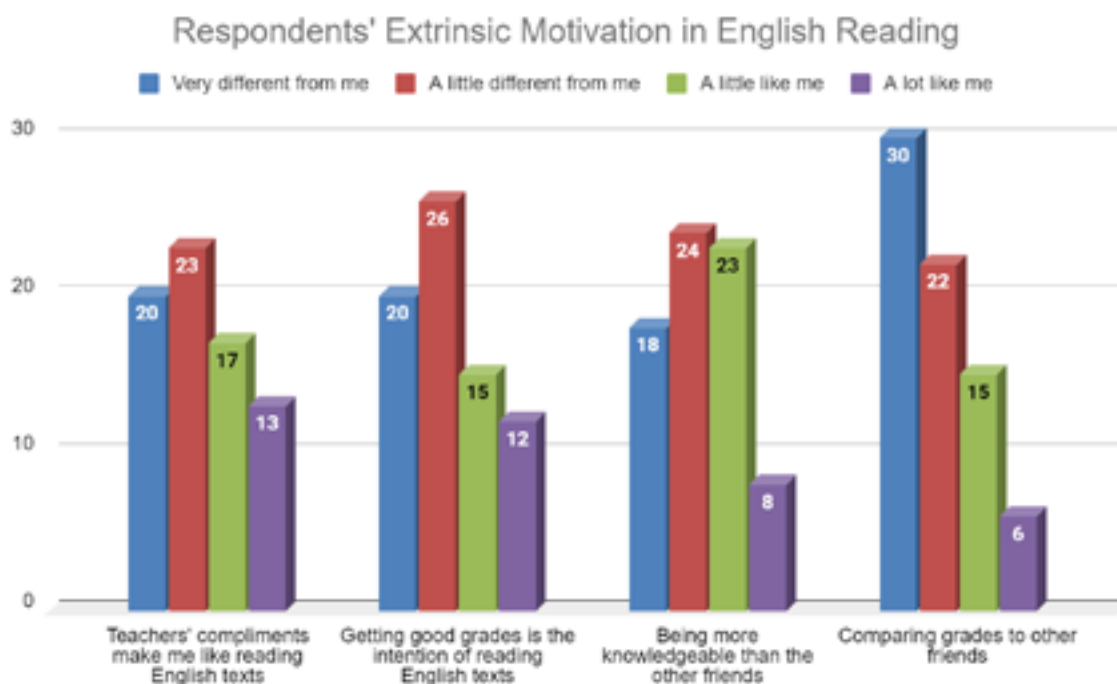


Figure 8

Respondents' Extrinsic Motivation in Reading English Texts

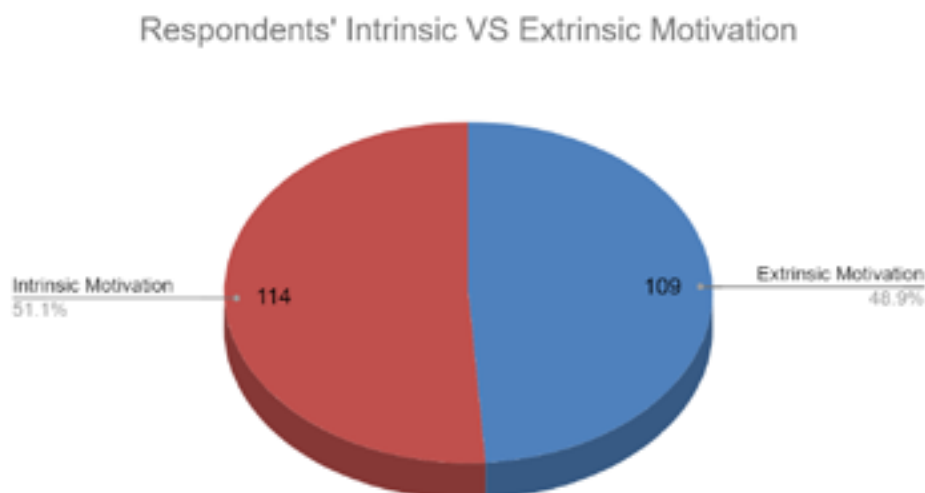


second highest positive responses from the respondents (chosen by 30 out of 73 respondents). The statement of 'Not caring about the difficulty of reading or the length of the book if it is interesting' was chosen by 26 out of 73 respondents. And the statement

which gets the lowest positive responses from the respondents is the statement of 'Enjoying reading information from English texts (printed or online)' which was chosen by 24 out of 73 respondents.

Figure 9

Respondents' Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Motivation



The results are the same for their extrinsic motivation (Figure 8). Their positive responses toward the statements of extrinsic motivation are lower than the negative responses. The statement which gets the highest number of positive responses from the respondents is 'Being more knowledgeable than the other friends' with 31 out of 73 respondents choosing positive responses of 'A lot like me' and 'A little like me' for this statement. The statement of 'Teachers' compliments make me like reading English texts' is in the second place of getting positive responses from the respondents (30 out of 73 respondents). A total of 27 respondents chose positive responses for the statement of 'Getting good grades is the intention of reading English texts'. And the statement which gets the lowest positive responses (chosen by only 21 out of 73 respondents) is the statement of 'Comparing graded to other friends'.

However, when the positive responses for the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are compared, the positive responses for intrinsic motivation is a little bit higher than the positive responses for the extrinsic motivation with the percentage of 51.1% compared to 48.9% (Figure 9).

Findings of Reading Obstacles

There are several obstacles that they face when reading English texts (Figure 10). The major problem is the lack of English books in the school library (44 out of 73 respondents mentioned this problem). Followed by having English reading texts which are too difficult for them to read (stated by 37 out of 73 respondents). Besides that, unsupportive parents (stated by 34 out of 73 respondents) and unsupportive teachers (stated by 29 out of 73 respondents) become the other obstacles that they have to face. The last obstacle faced by the respondents in doing their reading activities is their preference of watching TV or playing on their phone rather than reading (stated by 27 out of 73 respondents).

Findings of Strategies to Overcome the Reading Obstacles

Sparing their time to read (stated by 67 out of 73 respondents) becomes the highest option uttered by the respondents as their strategy to overcome their English reading obstacles (Figure 11). Looking for English books which are appropriate with their English level becomes the second highest

Figure 10
Respondents' Obstacles in Reading English Texts

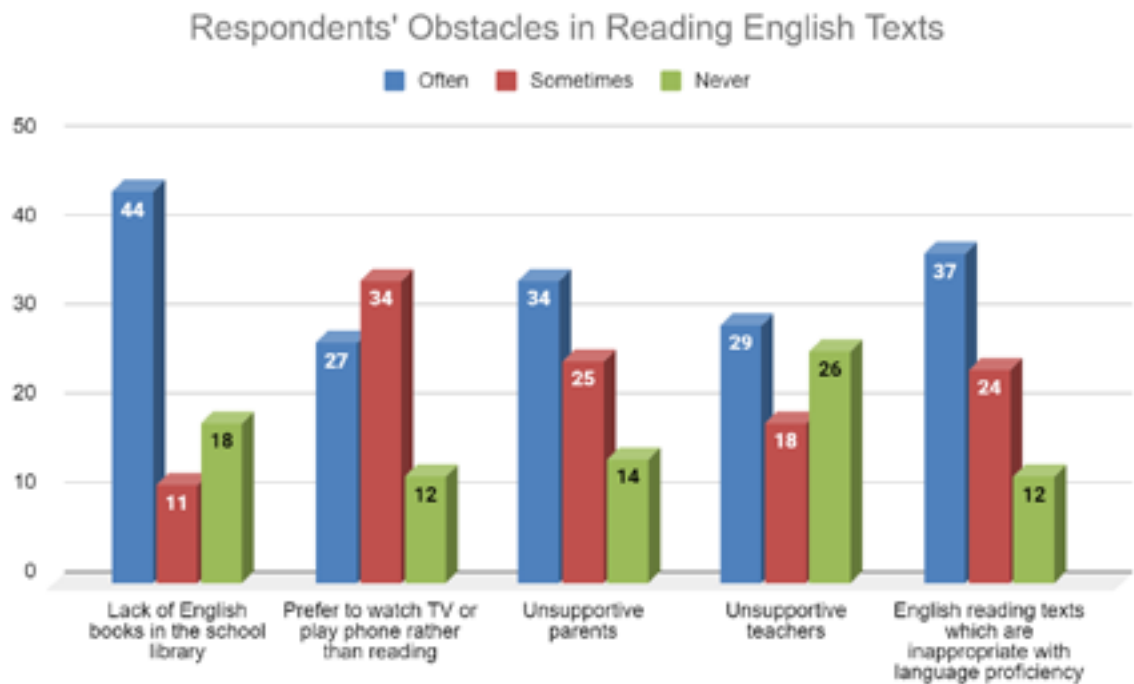
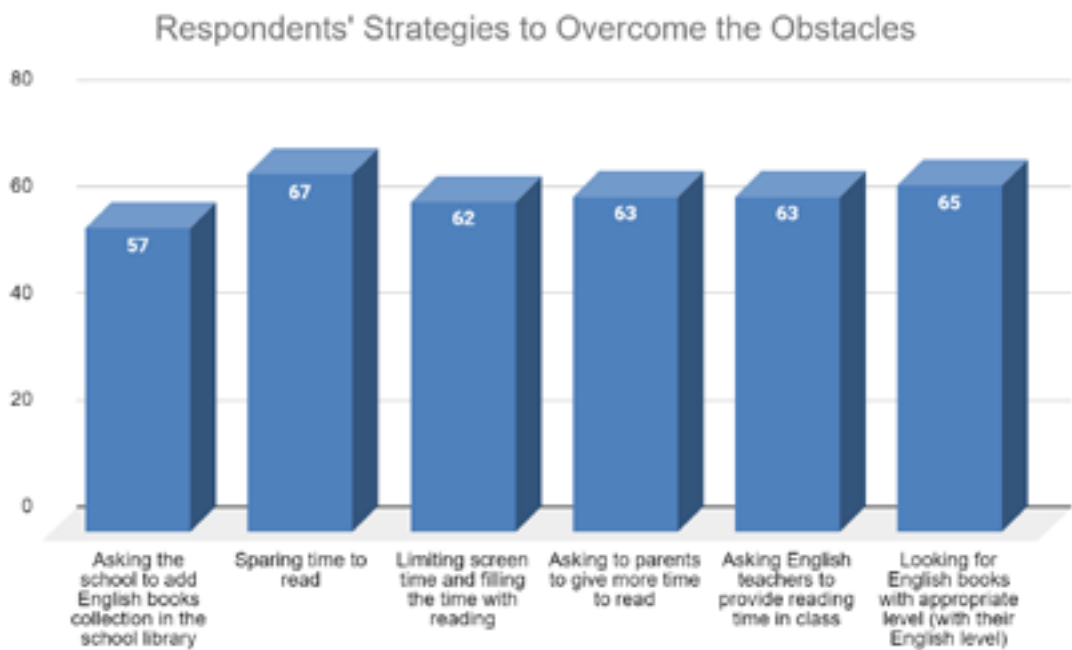


Figure 11
Respondents' Strategies to Overcome the Obstacles



strategy which was stated by the respondents (stated by 65 out of 73 respondents). Asking parents to give more time for them to read and asking their teachers to provide reading time for them in class are the third highest strategies stated by the students (each stated by 63 out of 73 respondents). Limiting screen time was the next strategy stated by the respondents as their strategy to overcome their English reading obstacles (this strategy was stated by 62 out of 73 respondents). The last strategy that they stated they had done is asking the school to add an English books collection (uttered by 57 out of 73 respondents).

Discussion

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that these senior private high school students in Waikabubak have an interest in reading either Indonesian or English texts. This finding gives a shed of light that teachers can instill deeper this interest so it can become the habit of the students. However, looking at the findings of the types of Indonesian or English texts that they read everyday, it can be concluded that no wonder they have a good interest in reading either Indonesian or English texts because the types of text that they read everyday are texts from social media and messaging applications. This finding is in line with what was found by Okocha (2020) and Saraswati et al. (2019) in their study. They found that with the development of science and technology, electronic devices have replaced books as a source of information. This advancement in technology has brought benefits and opportunities for people to get information faster and in a more efficient way.

The findings of students' intrinsic motivation showed that they chose intrinsic motivation with an involvement component more than the intrinsic motivation with curiosity or preference of challenge. Komiyama (2013) defines involvement as the enjoyment that one gets from reading a well-written book, article, or webpage about a fascinating subject. According to Wang and

Guthrie (2004), as cited in McGeown (2013), involvement can also be described as involving and engaging students in texts which are suitable with their language proficiency level whereas for extrinsic motivation, the component of recognition for reading gets higher scores compared to the component of grades. It is understandable that for senior high school students, grades may not become the factor that they are proud of compared to recognition from their teachers and other friends. The findings of students' obstacles in reading English texts show that the problem of lack of reading materials still becomes the highest problem faced by students living in rural areas. Followed by inappropriate reading text, unsupportive parents and teachers, and preference to watch TV or play with their smartphones. This finding is in line with the findings of Febriana et al. (2018). In their study about teachers' challenges of teaching in rural Indonesian schools, they found that teachers in rural schools faced challenges of infrastructure, source of learning, language barrier, parent mindset, inadequacy of teachers, student competence, and student mindset. Thus, the strategies that need to be implemented have to take into consideration those factors.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Further study needs to be done since this study is limited to only a survey study which cannot really check the students' proficiency level of English reading. Besides that, the questionnaire link was only distributed to students of Grade X, and the process of filling in the questionnaire was not controlled by the researcher which might open a chance for the respondents to be not transparent.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the respondents have a good interest in both reading Indonesian and English texts. However, their answers on the motivation parts are not in line

with their responses on reading interests. As they said that they had a good reading interest in reading English texts, but their motivation to read English text is low. Even though their motivation to read English texts is low, their intrinsic motivation to read English text is a bit higher than the extrinsic motivation.

The biggest obstacle for them to read English texts is the lack of an English reading collection in their school library. Followed by inappropriate reading level, unsupportive parents, unsupportive teachers, and more screen time. Half of the respondents (even if it is not all of them) have done several strategies to overcome the obstacles. Such as sparing time to read and asking for reading time from parents.

Two of suggestions that the researcher can think about to help the students in this study is by introducing Extensive Reading to the students and the teachers, and also introducing the students to online reading materials from the internet. It is high time to also introduce Extensive Reading and its principles to the teachers in the eastern part of Indonesia, in Waikabubak, Sumba Barat to be specific, so the teachers can initiate the program to arouse the students' interest and develop their motivation in reading English texts.

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