

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING HABITS AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract

The phenomenon of declining interest in traditional reading among students is seen, despite increasingly easy access to information through digital devices. The development of the digital era brings various conveniences in accessing information, but on the other hand, it poses challenges to students' reading habits, which in turn affect their academic achievement. Literature review is conducted. Several sources, such as journals, articles, and books relevant to the topic, are reviewed. A clearer understanding of the relationship between reading habits and students' academic achievement in the digital era is sought. The results indicate that reading habits contribute significantly to improving students' academic achievement. Previous studies indicate that educational success is influenced not only by cognitive abilities but also by sustainable literacy habits. The main obstacles identified include low regular reading habits, the influence of social media, and limited availability of reading materials. The correlation between reading interest and academic achievement is in the moderate category with a positive relationship. Educational success is not only determined by cognitive abilities but also by a consistent and high-quality literacy culture. Therefore, synergy between traditional and digital reading is an important strategy for building more effective learning patterns in the digital era.

Keywords: academic achievement, digital era, literacy culture, reading habits, student literacy

Introduction

Increasingly easy access to information through digital devices has changed people's reading patterns and habits, particularly among students. While reading was previously done through print media such as books, magazines, and newspapers, students now increasingly read on screens of devices, laptops, or tablets. This shift brings two opposing sides. On the one hand, advances in digital technology make it easier to obtain information and expand reading resources. However, on the other hand, this convenience also poses serious challenges to the quality of reading habits, which impacts students' academic achievement. In education, reading plays a vital role as the primary foundation for understanding and mastering various fields of knowledge. Reading not only functions as a cognitive process but also serves as a starting point for developing critical, creative, and reflective thinking skills in students. Raising students' awareness of reading diligently to broaden their knowledge is a crucial step in developing and optimizing



their potential. Therefore, reading is a crucial part of the learning process, as it supports language development, thinking skills, and academic achievement. Research by Amri and Rochmah (2021) shows that reading literacy skills significantly correlate with student achievement. This demonstrates that reading is not only a learning tool but also an essential element that can impact the overall quality of education.

Academic achievement reflects the level of student achievement in meeting learning objectives in each subject. Grades obtained, whether in the form of letters or numbers, reflect student learning outcomes (Arikunto, 2015). One factor influencing academic achievement is reading interest. Without a strong interest, reading is often seen as an obligation, rather than a pleasurable necessity. In the digital era, reading habits face new challenges due to technological advances and the rise of social media. Students are now more interested in short, visual content than in reading long texts that require concentration and in-depth analysis. This instant reading pattern risks reducing critical thinking skills and in-depth comprehension. Therefore, the role of teachers, parents, and schools is crucial in recultivating a reading culture that balances print and digital media. As stated by Fajar et al. (2022), low reading interest, limited access to quality reading materials, and weak environmental support are major obstacles to strengthening literacy. Therefore, reading habits remain a crucial foundation for improving academic achievement. Technology should be used as a means to enrich the learning process, not replace it, so that students can think critically, reflect, and excel in the digital age.

The purpose of this paper is to understand the relationship between reading habits and student academic achievement in the digital age. Through this paper, it is hoped to determine the extent to which the intensity and type of reading materials, both printed and digital, influence student learning outcomes. Furthermore, this study also aims to explore how changes in reading patterns due to technological developments affect student motivation and learning styles. Thus, this study focuses not only on reading as an academic activity but also as a process that fosters awareness, discipline, and intellectual sensitivity in facing the challenges of the modern era.

Method

This paper employed a literature review with a qualitative descriptive approach. Data sources for this study were obtained from journals and scientific articles discussing reading habits, academic achievement, and literacy dynamics in the digital age. Data were collected through a literature search using Google as a search engine with the keywords: “reading habits”, “academic achievement”, “digital literacy”, and “students.” Analysis was conducted by grouping the data based on the literature search results, namely by key emerging themes, such as the relationship between reading habits and academic achievement, factors influencing student reading habits, and the impact of digital technology developments on reading patterns. Each piece of literature obtained was then analyzed to identify similarities in ideas, differences in perspectives, and the direction of previous research findings. Furthermore, data validation was conducted through cross-referenced sources and an assessment of the credibility of the literature to ensure the validity and relevance of the information used in compiling the paper.

Findings and Discussion

Reading habits are a key pillar of the educational process, both in formal school contexts and in daily life outside the classroom. Reading not only serves as a means of acquiring information but also plays a crucial role in shaping students' mindsets, attitudes, and character. Through regular reading, students can develop cognitive abilities, broaden their horizons, and foster sensitivity to moral and social values. Therefore, reading habits play a crucial role in supporting academic success and character development in the modern era, which is rife with digital challenges. Research by Amri and Rochmah (2021) supports this view by demonstrating a positive relationship between reading literacy skills and elementary school students' academic achievement. Students with high levels of reading literacy tend to achieve more optimal learning outcomes because they are able to understand subject matter deeply and critically. However, the study also revealed that the correlation between reading literacy skills and academic achievement was only 23.2%, with an effective effect of 5.4%. This shows that although reading literacy influences academic achievement, many other factors contribute to student learning outcomes, such as motivation, social environment, and family and school support. Regular reading can improve critical thinking, logic, and reading comprehension, ultimately improving learning outcomes. Meanwhile, research by Aulia and Megawanti (2024) found that study habits, including reading, significantly contribute to improving literacy skills in the Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM). Students who enjoy reading have been shown to excel in understanding test instructions, interpreting texts, and drawing logical conclusions, both in Indonesian and other subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Thus, reading serves as a fundamental foundation that supports the entire learning process in schools.

Literacy culture among students is both a crucial issue and a major challenge in the digital era. Low reading interest in Indonesia remains a serious concern, particularly among secondary school students. Studies, such as the one conducted by Rizal et al. (2024), show that implementing a literacy culture has a positive and significant impact on student achievement. Literacy activities in schools foster reading habits, enrich their knowledge, and provide essential provisions for students to continue to higher education. The higher a student's literacy level, the greater their chances of achieving satisfactory academic performance.

According to Ernalis et al. (2018), reading culture or literacy is a person's ability to understand text and process its meaning to apply it in everyday life. Learning to read not only trains the ability to understand written messages but also hones analytical thinking skills as students learn to connect new knowledge with information they already have. This view is in line with the opinion of Mualimah and Usmaedi (2018), who emphasized that reading plays a crucial role in improving thinking skills, deepening knowledge, and keeping up with scientific developments. The higher a student's interest in reading, the greater their reading intensity, which has implications for improving mastery of subject matter and learning outcomes.

Previous studies suggest a strong correlation between reading habits and student academic achievement. Students who regularly read textbooks and other reading materials have a better understanding of the material taught, enabling them to apply their knowledge in exams and schoolwork. Reading habits also improve language skills, strengthen concentration, and foster self-discipline. Furthermore, regular reading activities can broaden students' perspectives and foster curiosity

about new things. According to Mutadin et al. (2024), four main elements influence students' interest in reading: the availability of reading facilities, the role of teachers, parental support, and teaching methods. First, the availability of facilities such as a well-stocked library and comfortable reading areas can foster students' enthusiasm for reading. Second, teachers play a strategic role in instilling reading habits through interactive and engaging learning activities. Teachers who actively encourage students to read and assign literacy-based assignments can foster a sustained interest in reading. Third, parental support is also a crucial factor. Parents who provide reading materials at home and accompany their children while reading can increase student motivation and discipline.

Meanwhile, according to Ananda and Efendi (2024), students' reading interest is also influenced by other factors such as lack of access to interesting reading materials, a weak literacy culture at home and in the community, and increasing dependence on technology and social media. In today's digital era, many students prefer to spend time with gadgets rather than reading books. This leads to reduced reading time and decreased concentration. Furthermore, less innovative teaching methods in schools can also make reading activities feel boring and irrelevant for students. A supportive social environment, such as peers who enjoy reading and inspiring teachers, can form positive reading habits. However, technological advances are often a double-edged sword. On the one hand, technology facilitates access to digital reading materials such as e-books and online articles. On the other hand, excessive use of gadgets for entertainment actually shifts interest in reading conventionally. Although e-books are increasingly popular, printed books still have their own value in building focus and perseverance in in-depth reading.

In the context of modern education, reading habits are inseparable from information literacy skills, a 21st-century competency. Literacy is no longer simply defined as the ability to read written texts, but also encompasses the ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate various forms of information available in digital media. Students who habitually read both print and digital media will develop sharper critical thinking skills, be able to sort valid information from misleading, and connect various sources of knowledge logically and contextually. Therefore, reading habits are a key asset for navigating the rapid flow of information in the digital era, which is often instantaneous and superficial.

In the digital era, reading habits have undergone a major transformation. While previously students primarily read textbooks or printed magazines, reading resources have now shifted to digital media such as online articles, electronic journals, e-books, and informative social media. This phenomenon has had two contradictory impacts. On the one hand, technology opens up broad access to sources of knowledge without the constraints of space and time. Students can easily download books, read scientific articles, or participate in online academic discussion forums. However, on the other hand, this ease of access also comes with challenges in the form of distractions from non-educational content such as entertainment, online games, and social media. Besides distraction, another challenge that arises in digital reading culture is superficial reading, which involves reading quickly and superficially. Many students are accustomed to skimming or scanning without truly understanding the text's meaning. This results in poor critical thinking skills and conceptual understanding of the subject matter. The habit of instant digital reading and page-hopping can reduce the brain's capacity to maintain

focus and analyze information in depth. Therefore, developing a structured and reflective reading habit remains necessary so students can balance reading speed and depth of understanding (Bresó et al., 2022).

In addition to support from schools and families, digital media can also be used productively to strengthen a reading culture. Digital platforms such as online library applications, educational blogs, and literacy channels on social media can be engaging ways for students to expand their knowledge. However, guidance is needed in selecting quality reading sources to prevent students from falling prey to invalid or hoax information. Therefore, strengthening a reading culture is not solely the responsibility of language teachers, but the responsibility of all stakeholders in education. The government needs to expand access to quality reading materials, improve digital literacy training for teachers, and encourage collaboration between schools, libraries, and literacy communities. Furthermore, students need to be equipped with the skills to select reading materials that suit their learning needs. A daily reading habit, both in print and digital formats, can be incorporated into a curriculum that strengthens the Pancasila student profile, emphasizing independence, critical thinking, and scientific reasoning.

In addition to various studies demonstrating the influence of reading habits on academic achievement, it is also important to understand how these habits are formed and maintained amidst the current wave of educational modernization. The formation of reading habits is not an instant process, but rather the result of long-term habituation influenced by the social environment, school culture, and students' intrinsic motivation. Environments rich in reading and rewarding reading activities tend to produce students with high literacy levels. On the other hand, schools that do not provide space for reflective reading activities often lead students to read only for assignments, rather than for intellectual needs. Furthermore, teacher intervention also has a significant influence on fostering a reading culture. Teachers are not only transmitters of subject matter but also role models for active readers. Teachers who demonstrate enthusiasm for reading and share their literacy experiences with students may foster higher reading motivation. Literacy-based learning, such as Reading Journals, Book Talks, and Reading Circles, has been proven to increase reading interest and text comprehension. In the context of digital-era learning, teachers can also combine technology with reading activities, for example, through the use of e-books, interactive literacy applications, and online platforms like Google Classroom for reading reflection activities.

However, it is important to recognize that challenges to reading habits come not only from technological distractions but also from changes in the learning styles of the younger generation. Generations Z and Alpha, born and raised in a digital ecosystem, have different learning characteristics from previous generations. They tend to prefer information that is visual, interactive, and fast. If not balanced with the habit of reading long and reflective texts, this tendency can weaken analytical skills and reading retention. The government also has a strategic role in strengthening the national literacy ecosystem. Providing dedicated funding for the development of school digital libraries, providing digital literacy training for educators, and providing local reading materials relevant to students' lives are concrete steps that can increase reading interest. Furthermore, synergy between the Ministry of Education, literacy communities, and media institutions can expand the

reading movement into the public sphere. Overall, reading in the digital age is not merely an academic activity but also an integral part of national character building.

Amidst the rapid flow of information and instant culture, the ability to read critically, reflectively, and sustainably is a key determinant of the quality of Indonesia's young generation. Reading is not only about understanding texts, but also about building awareness, fostering empathy, and sharpening reasoning skills. Therefore, strengthening a reading culture needs to be a shared priority so that Indonesian students are not only academically intelligent but also wise in filtering and managing information in this fast-paced and complex digital world. Furthermore, it is important to understand that reading habits in the digital era cannot be separated from the social and cultural context of society. Rapidly changing lifestyles demand a new approach to fostering reading interest among students. Schools need to create a fun literacy ecosystem, oriented not only toward assignments or grades, but also toward an appreciation of reading as part of intellectual needs. Activities such as book clubs, digital reading corners, book review competitions, or "one week, one reading" programs can foster a love of reading. Furthermore, the use of literacy-based digital platforms such as Wattpad, Google Books, and the National Library Digital can provide interactive and contextual learning media. Student involvement in digital literacy projects can also encourage them to play an active role as readers and creators of literacy content. With teacher support and a conducive environment, reading habits not only contribute to academic achievement but also foster independence, curiosity, and critical thinking skills, which are essential tools for Indonesia's young generation in facing the challenges of globalization and the industrial revolution.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that there is a strong relationship between reading habits and student academic achievement in the digital age. Students who have a regular reading habit have been shown to be better able to understand course material, think critically, and have better analytical skills than students with low reading interest. Reading habits also help students develop information literacy, namely the ability to understand, select, and process various sources of knowledge amidst the rapid digital flow. However, the digital age presents new challenges in the form of social media distractions, decreased focus, and the emergence of a tendency towards superficial reading. Therefore, an educational strategy is needed that balances the use of technology with the development of reflective and in-depth reading habits. Teachers, parents, and educational institutions play a crucial role in fostering a culture of literacy that adapts to technological developments. Consistently developing reading habits will improve students' academic achievement not only quantitatively but also cognitively and character-wise. Therefore, reading is key to producing a literate generation that is intelligent, critical, and ready to compete in the digital age. Therefore, it is recommended that schools continue to strengthen literacy programs through daily reading activities and the use of educational digital media. Parents should participate in creating a home environment conducive to reading, while the government is expected to support this by providing digital literacy facilities and modern libraries. With the synergy of all parties, reading habits can develop into a

sustainable learning culture and become a key foundation for the success of national education in the future.

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