

## **A CORRELATIOAL STUDY ON TERTIARY STUDENTS' READING HABITS AND THEIR CRITICAL READING SKILLS**

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**Abstract:** Reading habit influences students' achievement of reading comprehension. It is assumed that if people have good reading habit, they will have good comprehension toward reading texts. The study was highlighted to examine the association between English education department students' reading habits and their critical reading skills. This study was conducted using a correlational research design. The population of this study consisted of 112 undergraduate students of English Education department of Tridinanti University in the academic year 2017/2018. There were 37 students participating as the sample of the study chosen by using purposive sampling. In collecting the data, a questionnaire of reading habit and a critical reading test were distributed. A correlational analysis using Pearson Product Moment was applied to seek the association between the variables measured. Based on the data analysis result, it was found that students' reading habit was not significantly correlated with students' critical reading skills.

**Keywords:** correlational study, reading habits, critical reading skills

### **INTRODUCTION**

Reading is one of verbal communications which helps people to access written information or even knowledge. By the advance of

technology, the way people access written information is changing. Nowadays, the information and knowledge can be read or accessed offline or online. In accessing or

reading a text, the readers will involve their mind. Reading involves a cognitive process in which the readers' mind mentally takes part in communication with the author's mind during reading activity (Zare & Noordin, 2013). When reading activity occurs, the readers activate their thinking to absorb the information in the text. There is an interaction between readers, their minds, and the text being read in understanding the writer's message or intention. When the readers read the text, they are not simply articulating the strings of sentences, but they are also converting the words, sentences, and paragraph into comprehensible messages that communicate something to them.

Reading activity balances its process and its product. Without meaningful product, there is no

meaningful process. The ultimate product of reading activity is comprehension. To gain comprehension during reading, the readers will process the text by eliciting and making meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). It is clear that gaining a comprehension during reading is not a simple activity. It demands the readers to apply certain processes, strategies, or even skills. The readers will link their prior knowledge with the current information from the text, they will try to make meaning from the information, and then they will interpret the information based on their understanding. Those are the signals that the readers comprehend what they are reading.

Critical reading is one of the required skills that should be possessed by tertiary students. This skill enables the students to struggle and reach success in their academic life. They need to access abundant reading sources online or offline in order to complete the school tasks. In processing academic reading sources, the students can not merely apply skimming or scanning, but they also need to critically analyze and evaluate the information to make valid meaning or interpretation from reading sources. Reading critically needs the readers to involve the skills of analyzing and evaluating the information before they comprehend the writer's message, purpose, or tone.

Critical reading is one of reading comprehension levels (Hidayati, Inderawati, and Loeneto,

2020). In addition, Tasnimi (2017), defines critical reading is a more active reading. It is a deeper and more complex engagement with a text. Critical reading is a process of analyzing, interpreting and evaluating the text. When we read critically, we use our thinking skills to question both the text and our own reading of it.

To be critical in reading is not instant. It needs process. The readers can be a good reader if they are fond reading since early. Reader has a good reading habit when she or he has a strong love of reading and desire to read all throughout his lifetime. Kropp (2016) suggests that promoting reading habits since early can contribute positive effects to human's intellect and language development, for example they will have good vocabulary mastery,

communicative skill, critical thinking, literacy skill and positive mind set. However, the level of reading skill in Indonesia is still low. It was revealed by the latest PISA survey conducted by OECD (2015) which showed that the mean score of reading skill was 397 out of 493 (OECD average). This condition is problem in Indonesia. It is believed that this problem was influenced by lacking of reading habits. The lack of reading habits can influence to the students competence in understanding the text being read.

The low level of reading habit in Indonesia was caused by several factors. According to Mustafa (2012), some factors can influence the low reading habit. First, Indonesian people are actually not reading society. They are mostly oral society. Most of them prefer to speak than to read and write. Second, the low

availability of reading infrastructure, such as: books and other library materials cannot be accessed by people easily. Third, books are more often very expensive. Most Indonesian people cannot afford good reading materials, likes reference book, English dictionary, etc. Fourth, Indonesian people consume much time on the electronic media and internet. TVs, internet and other multimedia have potential effect on children's reading performance. It has become an issue of growing concern among education and often cited as a cause for the decline in people reading habit. Children and even adults spent much amount of their time watching entertaining television programs or just playing games.

Based on the previous elaboration, the writer assumed that students' reading habit could

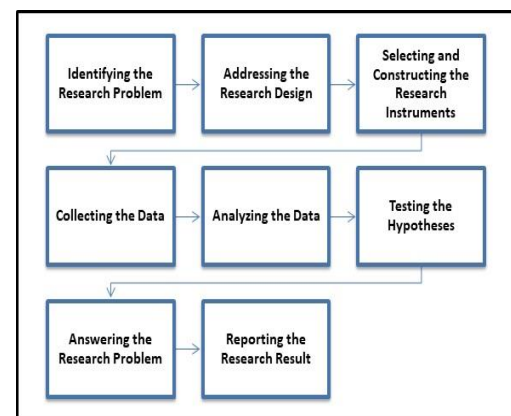
influence their critical reading achievement and the writer was interested to conduct a correlational study to seek the association between English Department students' reading habit and their critical reading skill at Tridinanti University Palembang.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researchers used a correlational study to conduct the investigation since it was the best design to address the research problem. The objective of the research was to find out the association between students' reading habit and their critical reading skill.

The research would be conducted through the following procedures: 1) addressing the research problems and objective; 2) determining the research design; 3) selecting and constructing the

research instruments; 4) collecting the data; 5) analyzing the data; 6) answering the research problem; and 7) reporting the research result. The research procedure is portrayed in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Research Procedures**

The research involved the tertiary students of English Education Department at Tridinanti University in the academic year of 2017/2018. There were 37 students who participated as the object of the research chosen by using purposive sampling. The researchers selected the students who had taken critical reading subject.

The researchers adopted two instruments to obtain the data; those were a questionnaire of reading habit and a critical reading test. The questionnaire was used to gather the data of students' reading habit. It was adopted from Janthong and Sripetpun (2010) and consisted of 20 items. The items measured the aspects of reading attitude (10 items), reading frequency (4 items), book categories (3 items), and reading access (3 items).

Next, a critical reading test was administered to collect the data dealing with the students' critical reading skill. The test consisted of 20 items of multiple choices and it was adopted from Davenport (2007). This test measured critical reading sub-skills as follows: interpreting meaning from context, evaluating writer's purpose and intention, making

inferences, evaluating evidence, and evaluating cause and effect.

After collecting the data, the researchers would analyze it using correlational analysis. Pearson Product Moment was run to inferentially seek the association between the variables measured.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the result of reading habit questionnaire, it was found that the highest score was 88, the lowest score was 55, the mean score was 72.32, and the standard deviation was 7.08. Meanwhile, the result of critical reading test showed that the student's highest score was 75, the lowest score was 20, the mean score was 36.22, and the standard deviation was 13.81. The results of students' reading habit and critical reading test are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**The Results of Students' Reading Habit and Critical Reading Test**

| Variables              | Min | Max | Mean  | Std. Dev. |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-------|-----------|
| Reading Habit          | 55  | 88  | 72.32 | 7.083     |
| Critical Reading Skill | 20  | 75  | 36.22 | 13.815    |

Based on the frequency analysis, it was revealed that out of 37 students, 19 students had good reading habit. It indicated that most of the students were fond of reading activity. Whereas, the result of frequency analysis of students' critical reading showed that mostly students (86.49%) were categorized as poor in critical reading skill. It indicated that even though most of the students fond at reading; they were not a critical reader.

A correlational analysis Pearson Product Moment was used to verify the hypotheses. Based on the result of the correlational analysis, it was found that  $r$  – value was -0.237.

It meant that the correlation level between the students' reading habit and their critical reading skill were weak. The students' reading did not influence the students' critical reading skill. Moreover, the significant value ( $p$ -value) of the correlation analysis was 0.158 which was higher than 0.05. It indicated that there was no significant relationship between the variables measured. Those findings verified that there was no correlation between students' reading habit and critical reading skills. The summary of Correlation Analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**The Result of Correlation Analysis**

| Correlation         | Reading Habit and Critical Reading skill |
|---------------------|--|
| Pearson Correlation | -0.237                                   |
| ( $r$ )             |  |
| Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.158                                    |
| N                   | 37                                       |

Based on the findings of the study, there were some interpretations that could be drawn. First, students reading habit was categorized good. It indicated that most of the students fond at reading. However, the purpose of reading was for pleasure. It was highlighted from their choices of book categories they liked to read.

Third, the finding of correlational analysis revealed that there was no correlation between students' reading habits and their critical reading skills. It means that the results of this study did not correspond with the researchers' initial assumption that reading habit could influence critical reading skills. It might be influenced by the lack of vocabulary mastery and their choices to the books they consumed. The students could not comprehend the

academic texts because they had different level of vocabulary stock.

Second, it was revealed that the students' critical reading skill was categorized as poor. Students were not able to analyze and evaluate the information from the reading passages. Meanwhile, (Hosseini et al., 2012) suggests that in critical reading, the readers need the skills of analysis and evaluation in processing the reading passage. The low level of critical reading skill might be caused by lacking of academic reading activities. They seldom read academic reading passages; therefore they could not process the passages effectively. It was in line with Thanuskodi (2011) who affirms that by reading habitually, readers are able to train their mind to work effectively. This condition was also influenced by their vocabulary stock. They had limited



stock of academic vocabulary. It also influenced their skills to analyze and evaluate critical reading passages.

Lastly, it was revealed that students' reading habit was not significantly correlated with their critical reading skill. The level of association between reading habit and critical reading was weak and reading habit was not positively influenced the students' critical reading skill. It was not in line with what had been found by Kizilet (2017) that reading habit had a positive correlation with reading comprehension. Although the students' reading habit was in the good level, it did not influence their critical reading level. They read the books for pleasure purpose. It is highlighted from the books they choose to read. They just read for fun, such as reading comics, novels, and magazines.

## **CONCLUSION**

There were some conclusions made. First, a good level of students' reading habit will not simply influence students' reading skill, especially critical reading skill. When the students are fond at reading, it does not mean they can struggle for academic reading activity. Second, reading purposes influence the readers' choice in selecting the book they read. Third, it is an urgent that every teacher in tertiary level to raise their awareness that students' critical reading skill should be promoted through academic reading activities.

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