



Students' Self Perception Towards Digital Reading: Findings from Indonesian

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Abstract

Digital Reading is one of the options in the context of online learning to stop the Covid-19 virus from spreading since the Covid-19 pandemic has forced schools and colleges to close. The purpose of this study is to describe how students' perceptions about learning English using digital reading when the Covid-19 pandemic is occurring. This study employed a descriptive quantitative methodology. 40 of 6th semester students from English Education Study Program, Guide and Counseling Study Program and Early Childhood Teacher Training Study Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Palopo, Indonesia were participants. To get data, a questionnaire about student perceptions of the practicality of digital reading was issued as a Google form. According to the study's findings, the majority of students are enthusiastic about the use of digital reading. It is thought to be more helpful and effective in supporting learning activity.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic; digital reading; students' perception.

Introduction

Indonesia is mandating that schools and campuses close and the students attend online teaching class while remaining stay at home in order to combat Covid-19. Teachers are feverishly trying to offer lessons to the students while courses are still in process by releasing courses and lessons online at an unbelievably short notice. Chen & Chen (2014) stated that the abrupt change in spot forced language

teachers to shift dramatically into a new digital epoch, one in which technology dominated every aspect of teaching and resulted in massive and thorough changes in a variety of ways, including how we communicate with students, deliver online lessons, and assess students in virtual classrooms. Every day, plenty of new inventions arise in the field of digital technologies, such as digital reading available on some gadgets.

In some ways, printed books, are still fundamentally needed. Many students and teachers believe that this kind of teaching material is better than the digital one. Mainly because the printed books are more attractive and engaging. Numerous studies shown that reading digital texts results in less comprehension than reading printed texts (Morineau, T., Blanche, C., & Tobin, L., et al.,2005) Van Den Broek, Kendeou, and White (2009) On the other hands, there are still others in beliefs that digital literacy regarding teaching materials is far more remarkable to be considered as a teaching support. Digital reading is in a rise regarding learning through screen, even though not merely should be synchronized with other screen like teacher-students' screen. In an increasingly digital context, readers (especially younger readers) are expected to gradually develop the screen-based reading habit and to use a variety of strategies to navigate the information-rich environment, including browsing and key-word spotting.

Because of various factors, reading is the most important skill that every English as a foreign language (EFL) students must acquire. First, Indonesian's students' university are studying English in a community where English is not the mother tongue. Reading is the best way for them to overcome their lack of stimulus from their regular interactions. Second, reading adds considerably to one's personal and intellectual advancement, future studies, work success, and career progression, as well as the ability to innovate.

The e-books technology spread globally as the internet gained popularity in the late 1980s (Rao, S. S., 2005). Yet, there are some perception believe that the use of digital reading as a medium in teaching and learning cannot exceed as well as substitute the printed text as a medium in teaching reading. Printed text still has something that can intrigue people to grab it, rather than the digital one. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the students' self-perception of digital reading as a medium in teaching and learning process. The majority of readers, especially those who like in-depth reading, will still turn to print media. During in-depth reading,

annotations and underlining are frequently used (Liu Z.,2012). People's preference for paper as a reading medium (particularly for in-depth reading) means that paper is unlikely to disappear in the digital age (Liu Z.,2008)(Sellen, A., & Harper, R, 2002).

The global expansion of digital culture has resulted in an explosion of internet usage and technological asset innovations. "Increased availability of mobile broadband, dropping smartphone pricing, and the allure of social networking have all contributed to the rapid surge in internet use," according to the report (Gillwald, 2017). Understanding the elements that support and obstruct digital reading, as well as how e-resources influence students' digital reading habits, is becoming more and more important. This study aims to investigate the variables that affect students' self-perception of digital reading in Universitas Muhammadiyah Palopo, Indonesia.

Many studies have done to discover the use of digital reading and its implication. Bouaamri, A., Otike, F., & Hajdu, Á. B. (2022) investigated explosion of digital resources and its effects on the development of digital reading culture in Africa. They pointed out that public libraries can connect out to farmers in a range of methods, including by building digital libraries among these communities or by providing wireless internet connectivity in rural locations so that local residents can access digital content. Likewise, Rafiq, S and Warraich, NF (2018) examined medical undergraduate students' perception towards the use and non-use of e-books: a case from Pakistan. They then discovered that students like to use digital resources due to their useful qualities, including quick and simple access, portability, availability around-the-clock, and time savings. Moreover, Rabaud C, et al (2018) studied about independent and digital reading among undergraduates: the case of the University of Mauritius. Their research found that significant factors included gender, reading interest, and amount of time spent reading for academic objectives. Given the influence of technology on lifestyle, it was also crucial to ascertain if respondents had switched from printed to digital reading by taking into account their preferred reading format.

In this research, educational Indonesian students were used by the researcher to discover their perspective toward the use of digital reading, specifically in covid-19 era. This kind of research is crucial to be done for the reason that it will depict students' self-perception regarding the use of digital reading, especially from Indonesian students' context. The research is aimed to enhance the lecturers' horizon regarding the students' self-perception of digital reading in teaching process. As a result, it will gain the lecturers' competence in delivering the material that is suitable with pandemic situation. This can solve the problems of the limitation of printed text that needs more efforts in using it.

The researcher has his own purposes to solve the limit of printed text as a teaching and learning support to reach many students across the globe. This kind of research will try to promote the benefit in using digital reading as a medium in teaching and learning. Furthermore, it is hoped to be used for analyzing the students' self-perception regarding reading digital use in the teaching and learning process.

Thus, this study is expected to have a favorable impact on the advancement of science. It is because the purposes of this research as mention before, are to broaden the teachers' insight and to solve the problems of teaching and learning in pandemic situation. Besides that, it is hoped to promote the technology in teaching that will replace the use of printed text, then will save the forest since printed text mostly use the wood-based paper.

Method

This research was conducted from November 2021 to June 2022 on Faculty of Teacher Training of Universitas Muhammadiyah Palopo, Indonesia. The population of this research was students of Faculty of Teacher Training of Universitas Muhammadiyah Palopo, Indonesia. Sample was chosen purposively by taking only 40 of 6th semester students which are from English Education Study Program, Guide and counseling study program and Early childhood teacher training study program. They were chosen for the reason that they have been studying using printed reading materials and then shifting into mostly digital reading for covid-19 policy. Sport education study program was excluded for the reason that they mostly use video in learning process.

A questionnaire employing the Likert Scale style was used to gather the data. Using the Pearson's Bivariate Correlation test, SPSS version 16 was used to examine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The outcome revealed that the 21 items' Cronbach's Alpha Reliability rating was .810. Thus, it was conceivable to draw the conclusion that the instrument was reliable.

Due to COVID-19 pandemics, the survey was conducted online. The total statements in the questionnaire was 13 items, with 2 items for the students' preference and students' frequency in applying digital reading. The items should be responded by choosing one of five options provided i.e.: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. The score range was from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), while students' frequency question require answer such as always, sometimes, seldom, never and don't know. Next, the questionnaire also

provided question regarding students' preference in using reading material, whether they chose "digital reading, printed reading or both". The questionnaire was responded online by the respondents. The collected data were analyzed using the descriptive analysis technique. The data was presented in the form of tables and explained descriptively.

Results

Students' self-perception of the advantages of digital reading.

40 students of 6th semester who majored in English Education Study Program, Guide and Counseling Study Program and Early Childhood Teacher Training Study Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Palopo, Indonesia became the respondent of the survey. In additional explanation, the questionnaire's results are offered as follow:

Table 1. The advantages of digital reading.

STATEMENT	SD	D	N	A	SA	MEAN
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	
Digital reading materials taught to me manage tasks effectively.	4 (10)	4 (10)	3 (7,5)	19 (47,5)	10 (25)	2,94
Digital reading materials taught me to share thought with other students.	2 (5)	6 (15)	3 (7,5)	15 (37,5)	14 (35)	3,06
Digital reading taught me to discuss opinions and ideas with other students.	3 (7,5)	5 (12,5)	5 (12,5)	17 (42,5)	10 (25)	2,92
Σf	9	15	11	51	34	T:120
$\Sigma\%$	7,5	12,5	9,17	42,5	28,33	T:100

Table 1 gives information regarding the advantages of digital reading used by the students. A significant majority of the participants noticed that digital reading use in learning is auspicious. A large proportion (70,83%) of them strongly agree and agree that digital reading gives some advantages in upsurging their positive attitudes. Only 9,15% of them is neutral, and a small minority (20%) disagree. The mean scores pinpoint that the participants believe digital reading is most advantageous to manage tasks effectively and to teach them a collaborative work .

The students' self-perception of the effectiveness of digital reading.

Table 2. the effectiveness of digital reading

STATEMENT	SD	D	N	A	SA	MEAN
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	
The assignment becomes easier when I work using digital reading.	2 (5)	3 (7,5)	4 (10)	11 (27,5)	20 (50)	3,28
The assignment takes a shorten time to finish when I work using digital reading.	2 (5)	3 (7,5)	6 (15)	11 (27,5)	18 (45)	3,2
It is easy to mark or give note when I work using digital reading.	1 (2,5)	3 (7,5)	6 (15)	10 (25)	20 (50)	3,3
It is easy to carry many digital reading materials in one device.	1 (2,5)	2 (5)	5 (12,5)	11 (27,5)	21 (52,5)	3,38
Σf	6	11	21	43	79	T:160
$\Sigma\%$	3,75	6,9	13,12	26,9	49,4	T:100

As it is presented in the table 2, approximately three quarter (76,3%) of the students either strongly agree or agree that digital reading propose an efficient way to complete the assignments. Moreover, an insignificant minority (13,12) choose to be neutral. Besides, only 10,67% students objected and strongly disagreed with the effectiveness of digital reading in learning process. The participants acknowledge that digital reading is the most profitable way to complete assignments, based on the mean scores. Furthermore, assignments are easier to manage when students use digital reading in learning.

Students' Preferences

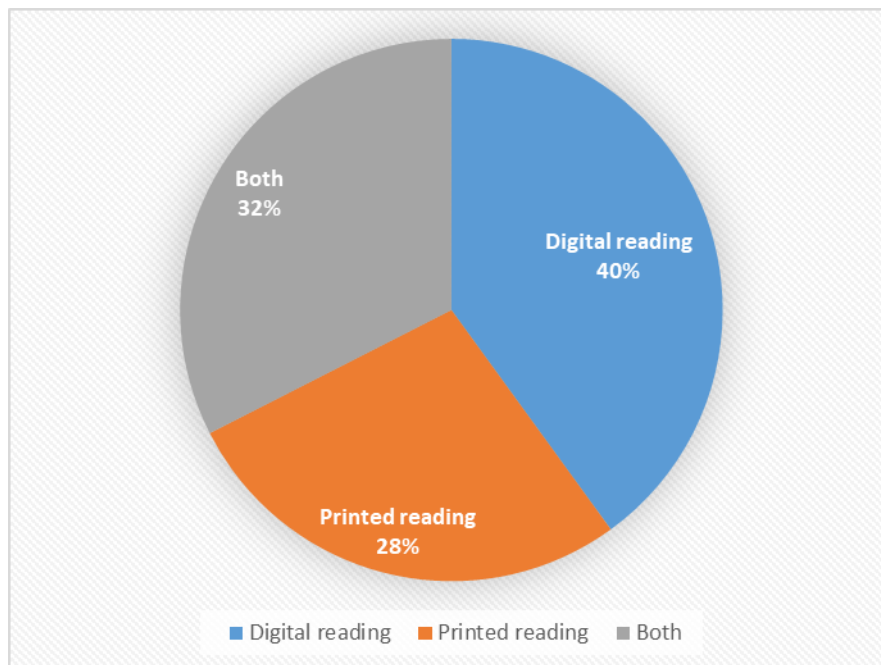


Figure 1. Students' preference in using reading material.

This graph (figure 1) displays the students' preference in using reading material. It is worth to notice that around a half (40%) students prefer to use digital reading in learning process. It is highly understood that they choose to use digital reading for some beneficial, compare to the printed one. On the other hand, roughly one quarter (27%) of the students apply printed reading in the process of learning. uniquely, nearly one-third (33%) students declare to use both digital and printed reading for the reason that those two things has their own capacity and advantages.

frequency to use digital reading.

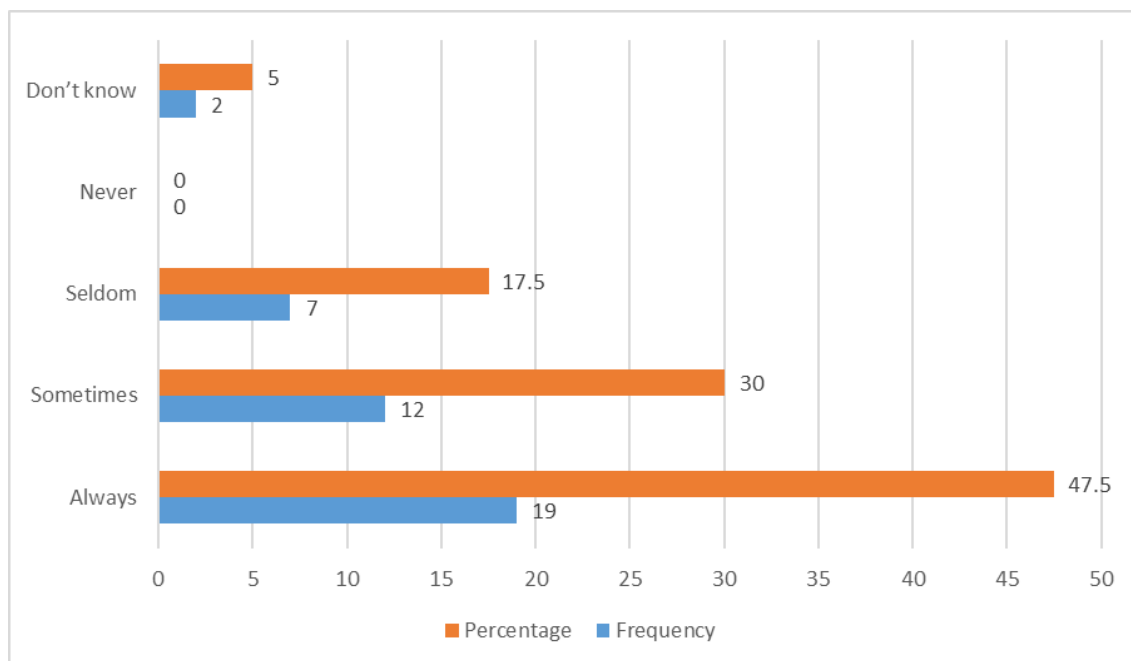


Figure 2: students' frequency to use digital reading

The graph (figure 2) reveals the data regarding the students' frequency to apply digital reading in the learning process. Around a half (47,5%) students state that they "always" utilize the digital reading in their process of learning. Meanwhile, other students nearly one-third (30%) imply that in their learning activity, they "sometimes" use digital reading material. Furthermore, just under a half of "always group", around 17,5% of the students express that they seldom implement the digital reading in their activity of learning. Interestingly, 0% denotes "never" and 5% students indicate that they "don't know" the frequency of using digital reading to support their learning activity.

Hindrance Factors

Even though data showed that students' preferences mostly chose digital reading as a learning medium and support, it should be admitted that there were some factors that hindered its implementation. The data shown as follow;

Table 3. Factors hinder the use of digital reading

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	MEAN
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	
Students do not have proper gadgets.	22 (55)	11 (27,5)	4 (10)	3 (7,5)	0 (0)	3,4
Students do not have open access resources	20 (50)	10 (25)	7 (17,5)	1 (2,5)	2 (5)	3,3
Students do not have internet access.	22(55)	8 (20)	7 (17,5)	2 (5)	1 (2,5)	3,4
Pop up advertisement distract the use of Digital reading.	23 (57,5)	10 (25)	4 (10)	2 (5)	1 (2,5)	3,4
Σf	87	39	22	8	4	T:160
$\Sigma\%$	54,4	24,4	13,75	5	2,5	T:100

According to table 3, It is worth noticing that around 7,5 % of the students agree and strongly agree that they encounter various barriers to implement digital reading. However, a significant majority (78,8%) of students disapprove and strongly disagree about it. Meanwhile, roughly 13,75 percent of students are neutral about it. For them, the biggest obstacles are some students do not have proper gadgets, internet access, as well as pop up advertisement distract the use of digital reading (M=3,4) as can be seen from the mean score. Equivalently, the second hindrance is that some group of students do not have open access resources to administer the digital reading in the teaching and learning process (M=3,3).

Discussion

According to the data on the advantages of digital reading, the majority of students felt that it helps in improving their learning attitudes. They saw digital reading as beneficial because it taught them how to manage tasks effectively, share thought, discuss opinions and ideas with other students. This in line with the findings by Divya P and Mohamed Haneefa K (2020) that students who can access a laptop, a phone, and the internet, their digital reading increases students benefit greatly from tools like save, download, copy, paste, search, and find options for their digital reading (Kissinger, J. S., 2013)

Based on the research on the effectiveness of digital reading, the majority of students thought it was a useful learning support. They believed that working by using digital reading was the most efficient way to do tasks quickly and easily. The effects of technology on students' culture is necessary to consider a rise in the increasing use of digital reading (Rabaud, C, et al 2018). However, Liu, Z. (2021) declared that even though digital technology brings effective learning aids, but they also give people opportunities to lose focus, primarily through multitasking. The advent of a digital environment has brought distraction to a new degree of attention, while it is not a new problem. How we interact with information has changed as a result of digital technologies. It is essential that lecturers understand technology in order to use it as a supporting medium in teaching-learning activities for writing classes as information technology develops.

Most students agreed that the implementation of digital reading in learning process can be beneficial to help them accomplishing their task, according to the data on students' perceptions of the effectiveness of using digital reading in the classroom. Additionally, it demonstrated their belief that working with digital environment gave them a chance to finish the assignment easily and in a shorten time. They also confirmed that it is easy to mark or give note as well as carry many digital reading materials in one device. Supporting that findings, Rafiq, S and Warraich, NF (2018) discovered that students use digital resources due to their useful qualities, including quick and simple access, portability, availability around-the-clock, and time savings. The computer system is superior in several ways, including document storage, distribution, and retrieval, according to Sellen and Harper's (2002) investigations. In contrast, printed reading is frequently employed for jobs that call for a certain amount of prolonged concentration (e.g., editing,

planning, and collaboration).

The information from the graph (figure 1) of students' preference in using reading material revealed the fact that most participants agreed (40%) to choose digital reading even though had slightly different data from those who decided to use both (33%) reading and printed material. It happened as well to the participant who chose printed reading (27%) to implement in the learning process. Numerous studies also shown that reading digital texts results in less comprehension than reading printed texts (Morineau, T., Blanche, C., & Tobin, L., et al.,2005) Van Den Broek, Kendeou, and White (2009). However, Moyer (2021] finds "no statistically significant changes in comprehension across print, e-book, and audio book modalities" based on a survey of 66 college students in the US. Any changes brought about by the shift from paper-based to screen-based reading are anticipated to have significant effects on cognitive, social, and cultural aspects of human civilization given the significance of reading (Mangen and van der Wheel, 2016).

The given bar charts (figure 2) represent the proportion of students' frequency in using digital reading. It is obvious that the students frequently use digital reading in their learning activity (always 47%, sometimes 30%). They tend to adapt with the shift from paper to digital reading material for the sake of covid-19 pandemic. Lining the fact, people's preference for paper as a reading medium (particularly for in-depth reading) means that paper is unlikely to disappear in the digital age (Liu Z.,2008)(Sellen, A., & Harper, R, 2002).

From the data regarding the factors hindered the use of digital reading, it must be admitted that there were some hindrances happened. The fact showed that students do not have proper gadgets, open access resources, internet access, as well as distraction from pop up advertisement hindered them in using digital reading, even though in a small proportion (table 3). It is supported by Liu, Z. (2021) who stated that even though digital technology brings effective learning aids, but they also give people opportunities to lose focus, primarily through multitasking. However, in an increasingly digital context, readers (especially younger readers) are expected to gradually develop the screen-based reading habit and to use a variety of strategies to navigate the information-rich environment, including browsing and key-word spotting. The majority of readers, especially those who like in-depth reading, will still turn to print media. During in-depth reading, annotations and underlining are frequently used (Liu Z,2012).

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, the researcher drew a conclusion that students perceived that the use of digital reading in learning activity is useful and effective. It is recommended for teachers and lecturers to go beyond teaching technical skills to integrating information and communication technology in the classroom where students can truly explore and experience different types of e-resources and a variety of online interfaces. Bouaamri, A. et al (2021) express that it is necessary to promote and launch the creation of a digital reading culture because it cannot happen naturally. One of the fundamental steps towards the development of a digital reading culture is having a team of competent professionals with the necessary skills and having access to a well-equipped library with the necessary infrastructure and information resources.

Moreover, higher authorities at the university should provide libraries with digital devices such as e-readers in order to develop a digital reading culture among students and raise knowledge of e-sources. In other hand, the researcher in the future should investigate how and why students reading behaviors shift in the Post-COVID era. Since this research are in Indonesian students' context, the results of this study could also be expanded upon by future research into comparable research issues in other nations. Finally, further study can increase the number of respondents in order to cover wide range samples. It is because the instrument applied might not be able to reach whole aspects to be revealed.

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