



The Correlation between Social Media Usage and Reading Ability of English Department Students at University

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Abstract:

This research aims to find out the correlation between social media usage and reading ability of the English department students at University of Riau. The research design was descriptive correlational that focused on the quantitative approach. The population of the research is the third-year students of English department with 73 students involved as the research samples. To collect the data, the researcher used two research instruments; a questionnaire and a test. The questionnaire is to gain the data of the students' social media usage while the test is for the data of the students' reading ability. The analysis of the data was carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics. The findings revealed that the mean score of the students' social media usage is 53.29, interpreted as 'average', whereas the mean score of the students' reading ability is 66.75, interpreted as 'good'. Then this research discovered the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.622, and following the classification of correlation by Sugiyono (2014), this number denotes a 'high' and 'positive' correlation. Also, the determinant coefficient is 0.387, indicating that the students' social media usage has 38.7% influence on their reading ability, leaving the other 61.3% to other factors, such as the complexity of the text, the environmental conditions, the anxiety during reading comprehension, interest and motivation, etc. Having found these findings, it can be confirmed that social media usage can influence students' English reading ability very well if they start using it wisely.

Keywords: correlation; reading ability; social media usage

Introduction

The majority of students use their mobile devices to access the internet and carry out learning-related tasks like reading (Wong, 2015). With the increasing needs of social media, smartphones, and innovative device applications, such students eventually lose interest in learning from ordinary books and traditional curriculum. Over time, though, these mobile apps have become increasingly important in daily life, including schooling. Over time, though, these mobile apps have become increasingly important in daily life, including schooling. These mobile apps have improved our quality of life and given us yet another creative means of getting access to knowledge.

Reading is a necessary activity to do for students, especially at the university level. It is a process of comprehending texts and figuring the purpose of them that required complex skills. Reading used to be associated with books or other print media. However, in this modern digital age, reading is no longer restricted to papers because the most recent information is readily available online and through other electronic media (Iftanti, 2012).

Children, teenagers, and adults increasingly rely on technology for knowledge, entertainment, and information. Thus, it can be confirmed that the internet has brought a cultural shift in the reading culture. It has manifested itself, in whole or a part of the reading habits of people. Reading materials have been transformed into various formats due to the internet revolution, including websites, webpages, e-books, e-journals, e-papers, e-mails, chat rooms, instant messaging blogs, and other multimedia publications. People can now use the internet to search a vast network of connected information, find new websites, get the most recent news, and download exciting things (Obaidullah, 2018).

The social media usage is one of the factors that affect the students' reading ability. The research with this topic has been conducted quite a lot by researchers for years, for example Rahmawati et al. (2020), Al-Mukhallafi (2020), and Prima et al. (2020). They all studied the influence or effect of the use of social media on students' reading ability. Although some of them found negative results, such as how social media distracts students and makes them lazy to do anything academic related, some did find positive results, such as how social media helps them improve their reading ability in a new and fun way.

Social media, including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds, allows people to effortlessly engage, share, and create content. For this reason, it is not surprising if many people, especially college students, are using social media. Knowing that reading is not only possible through books, but can also be done through social media, using social media then can be a good medium for students to train reading English. There are many social media platforms that aim to provide a good reading service, for instance Wattpad, Quora, Goodreads, and so on. Therefore, social media can increase students' interest to read, which eventually will result in the improvement of their reading ability.

This research is targeting English students of the English study program of

Faculty of teachers training and education Universitas Riau (2020 batch). Based on the syllabus of the third year of the English study program, they have learned Reading Comprehension I in the 1st semester, Reading Comprehension II in the 2nd semester and Reading Comprehension III in the 3rd semester. Also, they have learned Extensive Reading in the 4th semester. In reading subjects, especially Reading Comprehension students are not just reading English text, but reading to get a deep and thorough understanding. Therefore, learning and mastering Reading Comprehension requires maximum effort.

Based on all the explanation, the students frequently use social media as a source for updating information in accordance with technology trends. However, social media can also be a tool for developing reading skill. Owing to this, the researcher is interested to conduct a research entitled "*The Correlation between Social Media Usage and Reading Ability of English Department Students at University of Riau*".

Method

This research intends to discover the correlation between the social media usage and reading ability of English Department students at University of Riau. The design of the research is correlational with a quantitative analysis method. In quantitative research, numerical data are gathered and analyzed to characterize, explain, forecast, or control relevant occurrences (Gay, 1987). SPSS 25 was used to statistically compute the data from the two variables using the Pearson Product-Moment formula.

The population of this research is the third-year students of English Department of FKIP, Universitas Riau in academic year 2020/2021. The number of the research samples is 73 students. The instruments used in this research are questionnaire and test. The questionnaire was adapted from Iftanti (2012) containing 15 items and calculated using 5-point Likert Scales. To classify the social media usage, the students' score of the questionnaire was categorized using the formula by Azwar (2012):

Table 1. Formula Table

Category	Score
Very Low	$X \leq M - 1.5 SD$
Low	$M - 1.5SD < X \leq M - 0.5SD$
Average	$M - 0.5SD < X \leq M + 0.5SD$
High	$M + 0.5SD < X \leq M + 1.5SD$
Very High	$M + 1.5SD < X$

Meanwhile, the test questions were adopted from sources like eBook 501

Reading Comprehension Questions 4th Edition by Learning Express New York and online Practice TOEFL test adopted from Text.co.id by Pustaka Bahasa Inggris. The students' score of the test was classified using the ability scale category by Riduwan (2011):

Table 2. Ability Scale Category

Score	Classification
81 – 100	Very Good
61 – 80	Good
41 – 60	Mediocre
21 – 40	Poor
0 – 20	Very Poor

Then the correlation test was carried out using SPSS 25 and the coefficient was categorized following the interpretation of correlation number recommended by Sugiyono (2014):

Table 3. Interpretation of Correlation Coefficient

Coefficient	Interpretations
0,00-0,199	Very low correlation
0,20-0,399	Low correlation
0,40-0,599	Moderate correlation
0,60-0,799	High correlation
0,80-1,000	Very High correlation

Results

The Students' Social Media Usage

The researcher analyzed the data's statistical scores, which comprise the range, minimum and maximum scores, mean, and standard deviation. These were all found using IBM SPSS Statistical 25. The results are summarized as follows:

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Social Media Usage

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Media Usage	73	36	33	69	53.29	7.601

Valid N (listwise)	73				
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Based on Table 4, the range score of the students' social media usage is 36 with the lowest score 33 and the highest one 69. The mean score of the students' social media usage is 53.29 while the standard deviation is 7.6. Using the formula by Azwar (2012) from Table 1, the classification of the students' social media usage can be seen as follows:

Table 5. Students' Social Media Usage Classification

Score	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
62 < X	Very High	5	7%
55 < X ≤ 62	High	23	33%
47 < X ≤ 55	Average	24	34.3%
40 < X ≤ 47	Low	14	20%
X ≤ 40	Very Low	4	5.7%
Total		70	100%

As can be seen on Table 5, five students (7%) are classified as having 'very high' social media usage, twenty-three students (33%) have 'high' social media usage, twenty-four students (34.3%) belong to the 'average' social media usage, fourteen students (20%) are on the 'low' category of social media usage, and only four students (5.7%) are on the 'very low' category of social media usage. Overall, with the mean score of 53.29, it can be determined that the social media usage of the English Department students at University of Riau is *Average*.

The Students' Reading Ability

As stated previously, the writer measured the students' reading ability through their reading comprehension. Thus, the second instrument; a reading comprehension test, was used. All of these were discovered using IBM SPSS Statistical 25. The findings are summarized as follows:

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Comprehension

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading Ability	70	70	27.5	97.5	66.750	19.3150
Valid N (listwise)	70					

According to Table 6, the range score of the students' reading comprehension is 70 with the lowest score 27.5 and the highest one 97.5. The mean score of the

students' reading comprehension is 66.75 while the standard deviation is 19.3. Applying the categorization of ability level by Riduwan (2011), the category of the students' reading ability can be seen below:

Table 7. Students' Reading Ability Category

Score	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
81 – 100	Very Good	16	22.8%
61 – 80	Good	32	45.7%
41 – 60	Mediocre	9	13%
21 – 40	Poor	13	18.5%
0 – 20	Very Poor	0	0
Total		70	100%

The reading ability category on Table 7 showed that out of seventy students, sixteen students (22,8%) belong to the 'very good' level class, thirty-two students (45,7%) are on the 'good' level class, nine students (13%) belong to the 'mediocre' level class, and thirteen students (18,5%) are on the 'poor' reading ability level. Luckily, no students belong to the 'very poor' level. With the average score of 66.75, it can be concluded that the reading ability of the English Department students at University of Riau is at *Good* level.

The Correlation Analysis

As previously noted, the purpose of this study is to determine whether social media usage and reading ability are correlated or not. In order to do this, SPSS Statistics 25 was used to statistically compute the data from the two variables using the Pearson Product-Moment calculation. The result of the computation of the correlation coefficient is shown below:

Table 8. Correlation Test Output

		Social Media Usage	Reading Ability
Social Media Usage	Pearson Correlation	1	.622*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	70	70
Reading Ability	Pearson Correlation	.622*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	70	70

Table 8 showed the correlation coefficient between the students' usage of social media and their reading ability is 0.622. According to Sugiyono's (2009) interpretation of correlation level, if the coefficient found is between 0.40 and 0.70, the two variables have a high level of correlation. Owing to this, it can be confirmed

that there is a *highly significant correlation* between social media usage and reading ability of English department students at University of Riau.

The Coefficient Determinant

Another important coefficient to calculate when researching correlations is the coefficient determinant. The purpose of this analysis is to determine how much variable X affects variable Y's value. To see the percentage of social media usage influence on the students' reading ability, finding determinant coefficients is required. The following is the calculation of the coefficient of determination.

$$R = r^2 \times 100\%$$

$$R = (0.622)^2 \times 100\%$$

$$R = 0.3868 \times 100\%$$

$$\mathbf{R = 38.7\%}$$

As can be seen, the R value found is 38.7%. This indicates that social media usage has a 38.7% influence on the reading ability of the students. From then, it can be confirmed that the remaining 61.3% of the reading ability of English department students at University of Riau is influenced by other factors.

Discussion

Based on Table 8, the two research variables have a correlation coefficient of 0.622. This number, in conformity with the correlation level developed by Sugiyono (2009), is deemed as *high* level. Moreover, as the coefficient value is greater than 0 and closer to +1, the type of the correlation is *positive*. This indicates the two variables move in the same direction. The more the students use their social media, the better their English reading ability will be and vice versa.

These findings are compliant with those of studies by Kojo et al. (2018), Rahmawati et al. (2020), and Rafiq et al. (2020). They all discovered that the use of social media by students has a positive and significant impact on their reading ability. The reasons are vary. For instance, social media technologies promote socialization, which in turn helps students with their studies. Moreover, these technologies improve students' abilities to read on screens, provide opportunities for collaborative reading, enable quick and efficient exchange of reading materials, and support instantaneous idea exchange in group studies. Also, social media enable students virtual access to knowledge, which is easy to search and use. Furthermore, Al Mukhallafi (2010) added that social media assists the students correct use of syllables and enriches their vocabulary as well as grammar skills.

There are six factors affecting students' reading comprehension according to Dennis (2008). The first one is *the complexity of the text*. This aspect is determined by the students' strength of the language, their fluency with it, and their understanding of its applications and meanings. Basically, this means students' vocabulary plays a big role. Having adequate vocabulary will help students interpret unfamiliar words by using context-based assumptions. The second factor is *the*

environmental conditions. A calm environment helps students comprehend a text better. When there are distractions like televisions or radios, students will become disengaged and have trouble in understanding a text. The next factor is *the anxiety during reading comprehension*. Situations like examinations, class work, or homework tend to make students feel more pressured to do reading activities. This then will interfere their understanding and lead to poor comprehension. The fourth factor is *interest and motivation*. Undoubtedly, students' interest and motivation are very important in developing their reading skills. An interesting reading material will interest students to read and motivate them to understand it better. The fifth factor is *decoding or word recognition* speed. This is for students who have problems in decoding and recognizing words. It is back again to the vocabulary mastery of students. Those who have sufficient vocabulary can comprehend the meaning or reading passages quicker than those who have to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from context clues. The last factor is *medical problems*. As asserted by Hollowell (2013), poor reading comprehension skill may be concerned with the medical difficulty that students have, for example dyslexia, ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), speech problems, and hearing impairments.

To conclude, this study was able to prove that there is a highly significant and positive correlation between social media usage and reading ability of the English department students at University of Riau. Finding the coefficient determinant to be 0.3868, it was discovered that the students' social media usage has a 38.7% contribution to their reading ability. Meanwhile, the other 61.3% of their reading ability can be confirmed to be contributed by other factors, the complexity of the text, the environmental conditions, the anxiety during reading comprehension, interest and motivation, decoding or word recognition, and medical problems.

Conclusion

Having conducted the research, there are three main research findings and conclusions that can be drawn. The first finding is that the mean score of the students' social media usage is 53.3. Therefore, the English department students at University of Riau use their social media *averagely*. The second finding is that the average score of the students' reading ability is 66.75, and this score is in the range of *good* level. To simply put, the English department students at University of Riau have *good* English reading ability. The last finding is that the correlation coefficient between the students' social media usage and reading ability is 0.622, and it indicates a *high* correlation. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a *highly significant* correlation between social media usage and reading ability of the English Department students at University of Riau.

From this research, the researcher would like to suggest English teachers to start figuring out how to use social media platforms as a teaching tool. It is proven that using social media manages to boost students' enthusiasm during the teaching and learning process. Then for English learners, the researcher would like to urge them to start using social media properly. In addition to being a great source of fun,

social media can be an excellent instrument for learners to improve their English reading ability. Lastly, for other researchers, the researcher would like to encourage them to carry out more research on how social media is used or serves other aspects of English learning. As known, there are numerous more components of the English language that learners must master in order to become fluent. Thus, there are still many aspects of English that could be an appealing research topic, especially with social media being versatile and flexible for all learning styles.

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