

STUDENTS' PREFERENCE OF DIGITAL OR PRINTED BOOKS/READING MATERIALS

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Abstract: This survey study aims to obtain information associated with the 7th graders' preference for reading digital/online and printed books. The data was obtained from an online questionnaire which was distributed to the 7th graders of one state junior high school in Lumajang Regency. The reasons for conducting this study such as to gain information related to students' preference between printed books or digital books. The findings of this study show that the majority of the students prefer to read printed books/reading materials rather than the digital books. This indicates that it is important for both teachers and students to understand what types of books are appropriate to improve students' knowledge in the learning process.

Keywords: *reading, preference, digital book, printed book*

Reading plays a vital role in mastering English. Reading is not only about enjoyment, but it is an activity to gain something beneficial for life. From reading, students can increase their knowledge of the language by doing this kind of pleasurable activity that also gives them much information. (Cimmiyoti, 2013, as cited in Nyarko, Kugbey, Kofi, Cole, and Adentwi, 2018) stated that reading is a significant part of the whole educational process involved in all the courses taught at all levels of the educational system. Reading is a purposeful activity. It aims at gaining new facts, stories, or instructions. Reading is significant for all people, in particular for Junior High School students, as the focus of this study. As we know, it is the transition period from Elementary school to a higher level. Reading can enhance students' ability, knowledge and also their language competence. By reading, students will obtain more information, not only that, but reading also can enhance students' vocabulary that affects their language competence (Haryadi, 2020).

In this modern era, students are surrounded by sophisticated technologies that are connected with internet access. It is very common for students to read various types of books, such as reading through digital screens (Haddock et al., 2020). However, different students will have different preferences, especially related to their preference for the types of books they use when reading. There are two types of books, the online or digital and printed one.

The online or digital book refers to the printed books that have been converted to digital format that can be read using a personal computer (PC), laptop, smartphone, and tablet. It is in line with Grudzien and Casey (2008), online books are print books that have been converted to digital format. On the other hand, the printed book refers to the physical form of a book made of paper. According to Gable and Thompson (2011) there are a number of important differences in the form of retention between online or digital books and the printed books. According to Evans (2017), readers can feel their reading progress and enjoy it when they read through a printed book. Readers remember a story better when reading a book than reading the same story in an e-book (Mangen, Walgermo, & Bronnick, 2013). It has previously been observed that the reading time was faster when students read the printed text (Daniel & Woody, 2013). According to Rose (2011), the reason for using a printed book is because sometimes multiple screens on a computer can distract the reader's focus on reading. Gerlach and Buxmann (2011) state that students cannot feel the tactile feel of a book and are unfamiliar with the feel of e-books. In contrast to earlier findings, however, Kuzmičová, Schilhab, and Burke (2018) state that reading through smartphones also provides an alternative source of reading material that is not available in the printed book. The technical and material features of digital reading devices are different from the printed book. Rosso (2009) states, reading from the screen seems to be unfavourable at first sight, however there are some benefits of reading from a screen such as mobility, portability, saving time and money. As cited in Tveit and Mangen (2014), Harley (2011) states a "do-it-all" device such as a tablet can run and display some features

such as audio, video, and text simultaneously. The other reasons for preferring online reading included quicker and easier to locate, unlimited hours to access, lower cost, can access everywhere, and also the convenience to read.

Several studies have investigated issues related to students' preference for online and printed reading in another country, such as "I'd still prefer to read the hard copy: Adolescents' print and digital reading habits" (Loh & Sun, 2019). The aim of their study is to examine adolescents' print and digital reading habits in Singapore. The study shows that adolescents in Singapore still prefer printed books but these adolescents move toward online reading as they grow older. The second is "A joker in the class: Teenage readers' attitudes and preference to reading on different devices" written by Tveit and Mangen (2014). The aim of their study is to gain data related to students' preference between reading on Sony E-reader and in print. The result of this study reveals that most students preferred reading on the e-reader. This study also shows that this preference was especially robust among boys and unwilling readers. However, avid readers still prefer reading printed materials.

The present study tried to replicate the study by Loh and Sun (2018) and Tveit and Mangen (2014) in the context of investigating students' preference towards reading online and/or printed books at one Junior High School in Lumajang Regency, East Java. The reason for replicating those two studies is because of their focus on junior high school students' reading preference, not only that, but since the previous studies was conducted in other countries, so it can be the gap for this current study to conduct the related topic in Indonesia and more specific into the 7th graders. Therefore, this study aims to gain some information related to the response of 7th graders about their preference of reading online and/or printed books. The reason for choosing 7th graders is because this grade is a transition period where the situation from elementary school to junior high school is quite different, the 7th graders will have a wider range of subject matter than elementary school students. Also, all schools in this situation nowadays apply online learning that makes all materials including English should be given in the form of digital materials. Thus, this study is conducted to know whether the students are comfortable with the teaching and learning process that can affect their study. The instrument used to gain the data from students is a questionnaire in *Bahasa Indonesia*. The reason for having questionnaire in *Bahasa Indonesia* is because it is easier for students to understand each statement in the questionnaire which can increase the values of the responses. This study is conducted to collect data related to the following research questions: "What is the preference of 7th graders between reading digital/online and/or printed books? Why do they prefer digital/online and/or printed books?"

Considering that reading is one of the significant aspects of learning English, this survey is designed to obtain information associated with the 7th graders' preference for reading digital/online and printed books. The reason for conducting this study is to understand students' preference in order to facilitate the teaching and learning better in the context of digital era. The results of this study will be beneficial for the English teachers in this school, and also for future researchers. By understanding the students' preference of reading, the teachers can choose the appropriate book for students to increase their knowledge of English. For future researchers, the results of this research can be used as references to conduct the next research related to the study. The future researcher can apply the same methodology to conduct related studies at different levels. Then, the results of each related study can be used as a consideration for the teachers in choosing the appropriate types of books in the teaching and learning process.

METHOD

This study employed a survey distributed to 7th graders of one state junior high school in Lumajang Regency, to examine their preference for reading online and/or printed books. Because the 7th grade is the transition period from elementary school into junior high school, so that, this grade was chosen to be the respondent of this current study. Not only that, but, the other reason is because all schools in this pandemic situation are applying online learning and teaching. All materials in school including English should be given in the form of online materials. Therefore, this study is conducted to obtain the data from the 7th graders whether they are comfortable with the teaching and learning activity in which all the sources are delivered in online form that can affect the results of their study. Furthermore, this school is chosen because the students were responsive and hospitable, so that the researcher believes that the respondents give the valid data.

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and validated by the expert. The questionnaire consists of 15 Likert scale questions with four options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The description of each option such as, scale 1 means strongly disagree, 2 means disagree, 3 means agree, and the last is a scale of 4 which means strongly agree. The questionnaire is in

the form of a google form that will be distributed directly to the students through WhatsApp. The reason for choosing an online questionnaire is to simplify the process of analyzing and classifying the results of the data obtained.

There are 2 sections in the questionnaire: the first section is about the personal information of the respondents (name, class, and attendee’s number), the second section is 15 Likert scale questions. Furthermore, the questionnaire includes 6 categories that are shown in Table 1

Table 1. Blueprint of Students’ Preference of Reading Online and Printed Book

Variable	Indicators	Items Number	Scale			
			1	2	3	4
Reading preference between digital/online and printed book	a. Reading qualities	Number 1-4				
	b. Reading speed	Number 5				
	c. Reading concentration	Number 6				
	d. Physical reactions to reading	Number 7-9				
	e. Emotional reactions to reading	Number 10-14				
	f. Eligibility for continued use	Number 15				

The description of each indicator in the Blueprint such as, reading qualities means that certain qualities that students obtain when reading both digital/online or printed books. Reading speed is about students’ reading speed when reading certain types of books. Reading concentration means what types of books make students more focused when reading. Physical reactions to reading is about physical reactions felt by readers when reading, such as feeling more comfortable for their eyes and more comfortable to write additional notes when they read certain types of books. Then, emotional reactions to reading is about the reader's emotional reaction when reading certain types of books. Lastly, eligibility for continued use means that certain types of books are better to keep using in the future.

The simple random sampling technique was chosen in taking the sample from 7th graders of one state junior high school in Lumajang Regency. Sample size in this study was determined based on Slovin (1960) as cited in (Fadilah et al., 2017) using the following formula as follows:

- $n = \frac{N}{(1+(N \times e^2))}$

- $n = \frac{186}{(1+(186 \times 0.05^2))}$

- $n = \frac{186}{(1+(186 \times 0.0025))}$

- $n = \frac{186}{(1+0.465)}$

- $n = \frac{186}{1.465}$

- $n = 126.962457$

- $n = 127$

The description of the formula above is n is the sample size, N is the population size, e is the margin of error. From the procedure, 127 students have been selected to be the sample of this study. The collected data is classified into six tables. Then, each table is explained by some sentences that are also completed with the total amounts of respondents who choose a specific scale for each statement in the questionnaire.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings of this study are based on the students’ answers on the questionnaire that are presented in the following six tables, such as reading qualities, reading speed, reading concentration, physical reactions to reading, emotional reactions to reading, and eligibility for continued use.

The first indicator (see Table 2) contains four statements related to the qualities felt by students when reading through certain types of books. The finding from Table 2 shows that most of the students

(55.9%) agreed that reading through printed books makes them understand much better than reading through digital books. Then, they (49.6%) agreed that reading printed books makes them want to read more. Next, most of the students (40.9%) agreed that they can remember much better when reading printed books than digital books. The last statement in this indicator was about students' observation when reading printed books and digital books. The results showed that most students (49.6%) agreed that they observe better when reading printed books than digital books.

Table 2. Reading Qualities

Reading Qualities	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
	Frequency/Percentage			
I understand much better when I read printed books/reading materials than when I read digital books/reading materials	2.4%	6.3%	55.9%	35.4%
I want to read more when I read printed books/reading materials than when I read digital books/reading materials	0.8%	16.5%	49.6%	33.1%
I remember much better what I read printed books/reading materials than when I read digital books/reading materials	2.4%	18.1%	40.9%	38.6%
I observe much better when I read printed books/reading materials than when I read digital books/reading materials	4.7%	8.7%	49.6%	37%

The second indicator (see Table 3) concerns students' reading speed when reading printed books and digital books. The finding from Table 3 shows that the majority of the students (44.1%) agreed that their reading speed is faster when reading the printed books. Meanwhile, 34.7% strongly agreed with the statement. Furthermore, 17.3% of the students disagreed and the rest, 3.9% strongly disagreed.

Table 3. Reading Speed

Reading Speed	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
	Frequency/Percentage			
I am reading faster when reading printed books/reading materials than when I read digital books/reading materials.	3.9%	17.3%	44.1%	34.7%

The third indicator (see Table 4) in the survey was about students' concentration when reading certain types of books. Based on the results that can be seen in Table 4 showed that the majority (45.7%) strongly agreed that they focused better when reading the printed books than digital books. Moreover, 39.4% agreed with the statement. On the other hand, 11.8% of students disagreed and 3.1% strongly disagreed that reading through printed books makes them concentrate better than when reading digital books/reading materials.

Table 4. Reading Concentration

Reading Concentration	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
	Frequency/Percentage			
I can focus much better when I read printed books/reading materials than when I read digital books/reading materials	3.1%	11.8%	39.4%	45.7%

The table below, Table 5, is about students' physical reactions to reading. There are three statements about what types of physical reactions that students felt when reading. Most of the students (49.6%) strongly agreed that reading through printed books makes their eyes feel more comfortable than when reading digital books/reading materials. Then, it was more comfortable for them (48%) to write

additional notes directly when reading printed books. Lastly, they (51.2%) agreed that they felt more comfortable highlighting important passages in the printed books than digital books.

Table 5. Physical Reactions to Reading

Physical Reactions to Reading	1	2	3	4
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Frequency/Percentage				
I feel more comfortable for my eyes when I read printed books/reading materials than when I read digital books/reading materials	0.8%	7.1%	42.5%	49.6%
I can write additional notes directly when I read printed books/reading materials	4.7%	14.2%	48%	33.1%
I find it more comfortable to highlight important passages in the printed books/reading materials than in the digital books/reading materials	6.3%	11%	51.2%	31.5%

The fifth indicator (Table 6) in the survey was about emotional reactions to reading. There were five statements related to students' emotional reactions to reading. It is shown in Table 6 that most of the students (48%) agreed that they really enjoy reading printed books/reading materials. Moreover, they (48%) agreed that they feel relaxed when they read printed books/reading materials. Next, as much as 48% of students agreed that reading printed books/reading materials is not a tiresome activity. They (44.9%) agreed that reading printed books is fun. Lastly, most of the students (59.8%) agreed that people in general love reading printed books/reading materials more than reading digital books/reading materials.

Table 6. Emotional Reactions to Reading

Emotional Reactions to Reading	1	2	3	4
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Frequency/Percentage				
I really enjoy reading printed books/reading materials	5.5%	6.3%	48%	40.2%
I feel relaxed when I read printed books/reading materials	3.9%	6.3%	48%	41.8%
I think reading printed books/reading materials is not tiresome	3.1%	17.3%	48%	31.6%
I think reading printed books/reading materials is fun	3.9%	7.9%	44.9%	43.3%
I think people in general love reading printed books than digital books/reading materials	1.6%	6.3%	59.8%	32.3%

Eligibility for continued use was the sixth indicator in the survey (see Table 7), it contains one statement related to students' opinion that printed books/reading materials should still be used in the future. The results that can be seen in Table 7 showed that most of the students (48.8%) thought that printed books/reading materials should still be used in the future. Then, 40.9% agreed that printed books should still be used in the future. Furthermore, 8.7% disagreed and the rest, 1.6% of the students, strongly disagree with the statement.

Table 7. Eligibility for Continued Use

Eligibility for Continued Use	1	2	3	4
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Frequency/Percentage				
I think printed books/reading materials should still be used in the future	1.6%	8.7%	40.9%	48.8%

The findings that can be seen in the tables above indicate that the 7th graders in this study had different preferences related to the types of books/reading materials. It is shown that the majority of students strongly agree and agree, or in other words they respond positively to the statements. Majority

of the students prefer printed books because of some reasons, such as they can understand better, their reading is faster, it's comfortable for their eyes, and etc. Not only that, but some of the students also give negative responses to the statements by choosing to strongly disagree and also disagree. They believe that reading printed books can't make them understand better about the materials, they did not find the different speed in terms of reading, and also, they think that reading printed books is not fun. In summary, it has been shown from these findings that the 7th graders, especially in this study, had different preferences between the types of books/reading materials they used when reading.

Discussions

This study aims to obtain information associated with the 7th graders' preference for reading digital/online and printed books. There are six important findings in this study related to students' preference for reading digital/online and printed books, such as reading qualities, reading speed, reading concentration, physical reactions to reading, emotional reactions to reading, and better to keep using. By understanding the students' preference of reading, it can help both teacher and students to have the appropriate books/reading materials to support the teaching and learning activity. There are two groups of findings from this study, there are the positive and negative responses. The positive response related to students who chose to agree and strongly agree with the statements. Then, the negative response includes students who chose to disagree and strongly disagree with the statements and it is assumed that they prefer digital books rather than the printed books.

The first group to be discussed, related to the students who respond positively to the statements. The current study found that related to reading qualities, the students understand much better when reading printed books. Perhaps, it is because the distraction when reading through printed books is not as much as when reading the digital books/reading materials. As we know, the notifications that pop up on the screen sometimes can distract students' focus when reading. Not only that, they also feel that by reading the printed books they want to read more than when reading the digital books. It could be sometimes when reading a printed book/reading material the desire to continue reading the next page is higher than reading on screen. When reading on a screen sometimes it is possible to have problems such as losing or missing the lines. According to Tosun (2014) sometimes students have difficulty finding the reading line and even losing it when reading through digital books because their eyes are vacillating in opposite directions. Not only that, but another factor that makes students want to read more using the printed books because reading through a screen can cause some visual problems to the students.

Then, students state that they can remember much better when they read the printed books/reading materials than when they read the digital books. It is in line with the previous study conducted by Mangan et al., (2013) readers remember a story better when reading a book compared to reading the same story on an e-book. It is because sometimes students read something then underlining the text and writing down the notes by their hand while reading makes it easier to remember what they read. In addition, according to Palsdottir (2019) the connection between reading and action is important, by scribbling, underlining the text, and writing notes to make it easier to remember what they have read. Furthermore, they can observe better when reading printed books/reading materials rather than digital books. It is consistent with data obtained in a previous study conducted by Rose (2011) that multiple screens on a computer distract readers' focus from undisturbed reading. In general, therefore, it seems that in aspects of reading qualities the majority of the students have a positive response to the printed books.

Another important finding was that most of the students agree that their reading speed is faster when reading the printed books/reading materials. As we know, sometimes reading on a screen can cause some visual problems for students that makes their eyes tire easily. So, it makes their reading speed not as fast as reading the printed books/reading materials. This finding was also reported by Bao et al., (2019) the reading time by printed materials showed faster than those reading from e-book and tablets. In addition, Daniel and Woody (2013) reported that students' reading time was longer when reading the electronic text.

This study also found that majority students can concentrate much better when reading the printed books rather than reading the digital books. It is in line with Baron et al., (2017) individuals may prefer print for lengthier texts and when they want to concentrate. There are some problems that can easily distract students' concentration when reading digital books/reading materials. As we know, sometimes there are some notifications pop up when reading through PC, tablet, and smartphone. It is possible for students to stop reading and check the notification and even do something else. The previous study, Daniel and Woody (2013) states that there is a temptation to do something else on the computer, so that students feel difficult to concentrate on their reading.

In accordance with the present results, previous studies have demonstrated that the students experienced more eye fatigue when reading e-books than when reading print books (Jeong, 2012). In the current study, the results showed that the majority of students' eyes are more comfortable when reading printed books/reading materials than the digital books. The results of this study also showed students

prefer to read the printed books/reading materials because it is easier for them to write additional notes directly when reading. Not only that, but students feel it is more comfortable for them to highlight the important passages they found in the printed books/reading materials rather than in the digital books. This finding was also reported by Rockinson- Szapkiw et al., (2013) students being able to highlight the text, mark the pages, and to make handwritten notes.

The results of this study showed that most of the students feel relaxed when reading the printed books. This finding is consistent with that of Evans (2017) who states that students can feel their reading progress and enjoy it when reading the printed books. The majority of students also agree that reading through printed books/reading materials is fun and not a tiresome activity. As we know, sometimes it is really tiresome to read through a computer screen or other digital books. It is in line with Baron et al., (2017) reading through a screen can cause some problems for students, such as eyestrain and headaches that makes them tire easily. According to the findings of this study, the majority of students agree that people in general love reading printed books/reading materials more than digital books. Contrary to today's popular belief that students are "digital natives", these results reflect those of Loh and Sun (2019) and Tveit and Mangen (2014) who also state that most of the students prefer to read printed books rather than the digital/online books/reading materials. Loh and Sun (2019) states students still prefer print books but they do not completely eschew e-books and other online resources and will use them depending on the context. Furthermore, (Tveit & Mangen, 2014) states that paper book lovers that have a number of good reading experiences from printed texts are less keen on reading from digital books because it represents another feeling and form.

The next important finding was that most of the students agree that printed books/reading materials should still be used in the future. There are some possible reasons why students think that printed books/reading materials should still be used in the future, such as the familiarity and the experience of reading. As we know, reading through printed books/reading materials has been going on for a long time, it makes them feel comfortable to continue using printed books. Then, students have a lot of experience reading printed books rather than digital books. It is in line with Ball and Hourcade (2011) familiarity and experience with the format are the important factors. In conclusion, they think that printed books/reading materials should still be used in the future.

Not only about students that responded positively to printed books/reading materials, but the findings showed that some students also had negative responses to the printed books. The negative response means that students chose to disagree and strongly disagree with the statements. For example, some students have a negative response to the statement "I am reading faster when reading printed books/reading materials". It is because for some people there is no difference in time between reading on paper and reading on screen. As cited in Tveit and Mangen (2014), according to Grzeschik et al., (2011) in contrast with popular belief, there is no decrease in students' reading speed.

In the next findings, some students responded negatively to the statement about students' concentration stating that their concentration is better when using printed books. Perhaps, it is because for some students they believe that they also can concentrate better even though reading through other types of books. It is in line with the result from previous study, Palsdottir (2019) states, digital materials not only give a negative impact on students' learning engagement, reading through digital books can help to keep students' concentration because sometimes they don't realize how much of the text they have read. In addition, Grzeschik et al., (2011) states that there is no difference in students' concentration when reading digital books.

Then, related to visual issues some students responded negatively to the statement that state reading printed books is more comfortable for students' eyes. Perhaps, it is because students did not find the significant difference between reading on screen and paper. Not only that, but some students feel that reading on screen is more comfortable for them so they give negative responses to the statement. It is in line with Palsdottir (2019) students stating that the brightness of the screen prevents them from becoming sleepy.

Then, there were students that gave negative responses to the statement about reading printed books is fun. We know that students have their own preferences, so it is possible for some students that reading through a screen is more fun, then they choose a negative response to the statement. It is in line with the result of previous study by Evans (2017) students stating that reading on the iPad is more fun than reading the printed books. Sometimes some reading materials in a device have more colorful backgrounds and beautiful fonts, so it makes the reader interesting to read and think that reading through a screen is more fun rather than the printed books.

Next, related to the eligibility for continued use, some students believed that digital books should still be used in the future. As we know, digital books/reading materials also give some benefits for students, so that some of the students think that digital books are suitable for long term use. According to (Baron, et al., 2017; Ji, et al., 2014) sometimes it is possible for students to get reading materials free

of charge. Not only that, Li et al (2011) state that there are two favorable attributes of digital books/materials that are mentioned such as portability and mobility.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

The present study was designed to determine students' preference of digital or printed books/reading materials. This study has identified that the majority of students in one state junior high school in Lumajang Regency, prefer to read printed books/reading materials rather than the digital books/reading materials. The majority of students agree that reading printed books gives them some benefits, such as understanding much better about what they have read, focus much better when reading, more comfortable for their eyes to read the printed books/reading materials, and many more.

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that students have different preferences regarding the types of books/reading materials. Thus, it is important for teachers and students to understand about students' preference between digital or printed books/reading materials. It is in line with previous study conducted by Loh (2018) By understanding the students' preference, hopefully giving a good impact on students' learning process. So, it can be concluded that the 7th graders in one state of junior high school in Lumajang Regency have different preferences related to digital books/reading materials and the printed one.

Recommendations

The results of this study indicate that the majority of the students in one state junior high school in Lumajang Regency responded positively to the printed books/reading materials rather than the digital books. This section contains some recommendations that can be used as considerations for the school and further researchers.

First of all, it is really important to understand what types of books are appropriate to use in the teaching and learning process. By understanding the appropriate types of books, it will be beneficial for both students and teachers. Then, it is important for the English teacher, especially in this school, to understand students' desire for both digital and printed books/reading materials. Furthermore, it will be better for asking the students what types of books that they prefer to read (Loh, 2018). By understanding students' desire between digital and printed books/reading materials, it can help the school to facilitate the right types of books to use in teaching and learning process. Not only that, but using the right types of books will help students to understand better the materials that can improve their knowledge in English.

Since the study was limited, further study needs to be done to establish whether different students have similar preferences or not. It is necessary to capture a better representation of students' preferences for digital or printed books/reading materials. The instrument of this study has limitations in terms of questions on the survey, so it is highly recommended for the future researcher to use different types of survey questions or more neutral questionnaires to prevent bias in certain preferences. Not only that, it is also possible for future researchers to conduct related studies for students at different levels because it can be the gap for further related studies.

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