

# **Factors influencing the completion of extensive reading tasks: A case study of Indonesian students in tertiary EFL class**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Extensive Reading (ER) has received considerable attention in foreign language teaching and learning in Indonesia. However, research on student engagement and completion rates of ER assignments in higher education is limited. This qualitative case study investigates the factors that influence the completion of ER assignments among students in a counselling programme at a state university in Kalimantan. Using semi-structured interviews, the study explores students' perspectives and experiences to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges they face in completing extensive reading assignments. The findings reveal a complex interplay of factors that impede task completion, including lack of intrinsic motivation and interest in reading, vocabulary difficulties, and the learning environment. These findings highlight the critical role of English language teachers in creating a motivating and supportive learning environment, providing targeted vocabulary instruction and fostering a reading culture to maximise the benefits of ER for language acquisition and academic success in higher education.

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## **1. Introduction**

In the higher education system in Indonesia, apart from being administered a wide range of academic discernment from specific cognition clusters, students are recurrently proffered additional assignments to support the independent learning process outside the classroom. Providing additional assignments outside class hours has become a sort of tradition from elementary to university pedagogical systems. This after-class assignment is one of the most widely used activities in EFL classes in Indonesia, as it has been extensively employed to help students retain information, apply previously taught materials, and master the targeted lessons or skills.

Still and all, the use of assignments given after class should be ideally carried out with consideration referring to several theories of previous research findings. Evidence in a study conducted by Wilson and Rhodes (2010) indicates that approximately 86% of students agreed that after-class assignments could be a way to apply the theoretical concepts they obtained in class. Moreover, 67% of students believed that it allows them to understand existing material sufficiently. This study also found that 64% of students consented that the assignments favorably provided benefits in attaining their learning goals expected by each lecturer, of course, with the hope that the assignment could provide a different perspective from each material provided.

In recent years, various approaches have attempted to account for administering tasks to students. Some of the most widely used are Narrow Reading (Chang & Millett, 2017), Audio-Assisted Reading (Brown et al., 2008; Teng, 2018), Repeated Reading (Boily & Turcotte, 2015; Yeganeh, 2013), and Extensive Reading (Jeffries & Mikulecky, 2007; Nation & Waring, 2019; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006). These approaches to teaching reading have dissimilar pedagogical procedures and are often used in different situations, but all have the same goal: to help students improve their reading skills. Septiani et al. (2024) describe reading as a complex cognitive activity that necessitates a dynamic interplay between the reader and the written material. The primary goal of reading is comprehension, which involves an active mental engagement with the text. This process relies heavily on the reader's linguistic proficiency, existing knowledge, and ability to decode meaning, connect ideas, and critically analyze the author's perspective.

One of the most well-known reading approaches is Extensive Reading (ER). Waring (2023) defines it as the practice of reading a large quantity of material while maintaining high comprehension and minimizing interruptions. Extensive research indicates that ER can significantly improve L2 learners' reading skills, in which include reading comprehension, vocabulary, and fostering positive attitudes towards reading (Brown et al., 2008; Jacobs & Gallo, 2002; Jacobs & Renandya, 2015; Nation & Waring, 2019; Renandya & Farrell, 2011). Within the field of foreign language learning and teaching, the Extensive Reading method is also advantageous in promoting learner

autonomy since they direct their learning process while completing the reading task. Therefore, in applying Extensive Reading practice, students can deliberately choose reading material according to their interests. This essence of Extensive Reading indeed becomes a major attraction since the lecturers only choose the uncomplicated reading materials suitable for students' level of English proficiency.

A broadly similar point has also been studied by Asraf and Ahmad (2003), who ascertain that one way to improve language skills is to encourage students to read extensively. In this case, however, the notion of reading extensively outside the classroom in Asraf and Ahmad's (2003) study would sometimes focus on particular foreign language literature, which was considered to be unattractive to the students. In the same vein, a study conducted by Hayashi (1999) in Japan subsequently found that students who reported reading more English books obtained a relatively significant improvement in reading ability and vocabulary mastery compared to students who did not. These two studies reviewed here suggest a pertinent role for Extensive Reading among student readers, leading to its increased popularity in foreign language teaching (Renandya & Farrell, 2011).

While integrative motivation, which focuses on the desire to connect with the culture of a language, and instrumental motivation, which is the desire to gain practical benefits, can motivate students to engage in Extensive Reading, specific types and levels of motivation have been shown to have a significant impact on their reading task completion. For example, Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2018) found that a lack of motivation is a significant barrier to Extensive Reading (ER) among Saudi EFL students. This lack of motivation, often influenced by challenges in time management, technical difficulties, and limited vocabulary knowledge, can create a cycle of disengagement and hinder progress in ER. However, as Ryan and Deci (2000) emphasize, motivation is primarily determined by individual differences, backgrounds, and students' goals, ultimately leading to diverse motivational profiles.

It is, therefore, essential to distinguish between intrinsic motivation, driven by personal enjoyment and interest in reading, and extrinsic motivation, driven by external rewards or pressures. This distinction is essential to understand why some students can efficiently complete Extensive Reading tasks while others struggle.

While both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can drive students to engage in Extensive Reading, the sustainability and depth of engagement may differ depending on which type of motivation is more dominant. Extrinsic motivation, driven by external rewards or pressures, can be effective in the short term. For instance, students might be motivated to complete a reading task on time to earn a high grade or avoid penalties. However, this type of motivation may not lead to sustained engagement or deeper learning over time. In contrast, intrinsic motivation, which stems from personal interest and enjoyment, is more likely to foster a long-term love of reading. This type of motivation is often sparked when students find the material engaging or when they have the freedom to choose texts that align with their interests. As Warton (2001) observed,

students are more likely to complete reading assignments when they perceive them as personally relevant and beneficial.

In support of the aforementioned theories, the next factor that also affects the completion of the task is the deficiency of English vocabulary in students, which continually makes the reading process unpleasant. The students do not understand the contents of the reading and have to keep looking at the dictionary to help them interpret a word. This predicament is time-consuming and causes the reading progress to take much work to complete. Hence, the researchers sincerely hope that this present study can significantly contribute to uncovering what factors influence students in completing reading assignments and existing problems. The findings are expected to cast some solutions to minimize the possibility of the same problem reappearing in the future classroom reality.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1. Extensive reading*

Extensive Reading (ER), also referred to as pleasure reading, self-selected reading, free voluntary reading, or wide reading (Ng et al., 2019), is fundamentally described by its focus on enjoyment and learner autonomy (Yulia, 2018; Yamashita, 2015). The core principle of ER is to foster a positive reading experience by allowing students to choose texts that align with their interests and reading levels. Interest in Extensive Reading has been growing in recent years as researchers attempt to further understand what roles it plays in the complex processes involved in student's language learning.

Many researchers define Extensive Reading in different ways depending on the purpose and context of each study (Jacobs & Renandya, 2015). A broadly similar point has also been made by Grabe and Stoller (2019), who argues that extensive reading is an approach to teaching and learning to read with lots of reading material based on material tailored to each student's understanding. Adopting a similar position, Hunt and Beglar (2005) assert that extensive reading plays an active role in immersing students in an environment full of words in the target language without feeling burnout. These concepts encourage interest in Extensive Reading implementation because students can choose books according to their preferences to make reading more leisurely.

Extensive Reading evidently has the potential to develop a vocabulary repertoire that will be used not only in reading but also in other skills, such as speaking, listening, and writing in English. For example, in a study conducted by Lado (2009), students' oral proficiency was reported to boost after they were assigned the activity of reading a large number of texts regularly. Chun et.al. (2012) found that extensive reading provides opportunities for students to acquire a richer vocabulary for the receptive skill of listening. Hence, students will find it easier to understand what the speakers are saying in listening activities because they have enough lexis to proceed. In addition, Yilmaz et al. (2020) are

also supporting the view that the English writing skills of Turkish students in their study were reported to improve drastically as a result of the extensive reading program.

In practice, however, EFL educators often face difficulties carrying out classroom reading activities. Apart from being bound by the teaching guidelines or curriculum set by the institution, teachers are also invariably constrained by short instructional hours in the EFL classroom (Chang & Renandya, 2017; Macalister, 2010). A previous study conducted by Fergina and Oktavianda (2019) also found that teaching English to non-English Department students at tertiary institutions has its own tribulations because students are less often exposed to the target language other than in English courses. Accordingly, it is beyond question that the sovereignty to choose reading material that students are interested in and according to their needs is one of the advantages of Extensive Reading as an approach to teaching. It also induces most educators to assign additional Extensive Reading tasks to participants outside of class hours.

Due to the students' limited time in class with the teacher, pedagogic practice by giving extensive reading assignments outside of class is an amicable solution. There are several factors that many experts believe have a substantial contribution to the demanding completion of the reading task after the class: motivation, vocabulary repertoire, and learning environment.

## 2.2. *Motivation in ER*

Motivation is one of the principal facets that can influence students in completing reading assignments (Day & Bamford, 1998). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Ryan and Deci (2000) posits two key categories of students' motivational incentives: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation in extensive reading delves into the assessed items themselves, encompassing factors like curiosity and personal engagement in accomplishing the myriad amount of reading. These intrinsic factors originate from within the student who primarily engages in extensive reading for the inherent enjoyment and satisfaction derived from the task itself. Conversely, extrinsically motivated behavior is defined by achievement-oriented engagement (Hayamizu, 1997). Extrinsic motivation arises from external factors that pique the student's interest in the writing activity. Examples include social support from parents, peers, and lecturers within the formal learning context (Listyani, 2022). Hence, extrinsic motivation often centers on the pursuit of grades, competition, and social recognition.

Research by Graham et al. (2021) demonstrates that motivation directly impacts the frequency, effort, and specific actions students undertake in their learning process. Thus, rather than only focusing on how many books or word counts the students have read, effective teachers can generate initial motivation in Extensive Reading which eventually brings positive attitudes and helps learners to learn better. In research at a university in Japan, for example, Mori (2002) found that motivation to read materials in a foreign language does not only rest on general motivation but can influence students' attitudes towards the task. Attitude and motivation are two concepts that are closely

related to success in language learning (Dornyei, 2006). The attitude is believed to firmly stem each student's motivation to learn a target language (Pham, 2021). Thus, it influences the success or failure of accomplishing the reading task.

A qualitative study by de Burgh-Hirabe and Feryok (2013) shows that external demands such as giving assignments and credit to those who read extensively will foster high motivation as students cannot help but prioritize ER activities over other trivial things. In an effort to ascertain this finding, van Amelsvoort (2016) also conducted a study where the teacher did not place any external demands in the form of any reports on 123 students to do Extensive Reading. However, it turned out that the intrinsic motivation expected to emerge from within the students was not as expected because as many as 36 students did not read at all, and nearly 49 students only read less than three books during a period of 14 weeks. Therefore, providing Extensive Reading activities outside the classroom accompanied by external demands such as book reports, quizzes, or progress notes is undoubtedly required so that students become more accountable for the ER learning process.

### *2.3. Vocabulary in ER*

In addition to the factors discussed previously, vocabulary knowledge emerges as another imperative element influencing students in extensive reading assignments. Ghanbari and Marzban (2014) emphasize the complex nature of vocabulary, where individual words often carry multiple meanings or nuances. A robust vocabulary knowledge would undeniably enable students to interpret and understand the diverse meanings in extensive reading materials. However, encountering unfamiliar words can hinder comprehension and discourage engagement. Rott (1999) and Webb (2008) advocate for developing learners' ability to infer word meanings from context to address this challenge. This approach, supported by research from Nassaji (2004), encourages students to focus on grasping the overall meaning of a passage and deducing the meaning of unfamiliar words based on surrounding clues rather than resorting to frequent dictionary consultations. This enhances comprehension and promotes independent learning and critical thinking skills.

Likewise, extensive reading can contribute to vocabulary growth through incidental learning (Horst & Meara, 1999). As students engage in myriad texts, they naturally encounter new words and phrases repeatedly, leading to gradual vocabulary acquisition. This process, similar to how humans learn new words in their native language, is reinforced by research from Waring and Takaki (2003), who found a significant correlation between the amount of reading and vocabulary size. However, researchers like Hulstijn (2001) and Nation (2013) caution that vocabulary development through extensive reading is often gradual, requiring sustained engagement and a well-structured approach over time. This contrasts with intentional vocabulary learning strategies, which may yield quicker results but need more contextual richness and breadth of exposure offered by extensive reading.

Hence, while vocabulary is undoubtedly crucial in extensive reading, it is essential to balance encouraging incidental vocabulary learning through extensive reading and providing explicit vocabulary instruction to support learners' comprehension and confidence. This balanced approach, advocated by researchers such as Grabe and Stoller (2019), ensures that students develop both the breadth and depth of vocabulary necessary for successful reading comprehension and overall language proficiency.

#### *2.4. Learning environment*

The learning environment is also pivotal in students' success in completing extensive reading tasks. Research consistently highlights the impact of peer influence and social context on individual motivation and engagement. For example, Wentzel (2009) found that students are more likely to be motivated when surrounded by highly motivated peers, suggesting a contagious effect within the learning environment and students' engagement. This observation is reflected in Tanaka's (2017) study, which revealed that motivation can spread among students in the same classroom and create positive feedback.

Beyond the influence of peers, the overall classroom atmosphere significantly impacts students' willingness to engage in the completion of reading tasks. A supportive and encouraging environment, characterized by trust, respect, and a sense of safety, empowers students to take risks, explore their interests, and ask questions without fear of judgment or ridicule (Gambrell, 1996). This sense of psychological safety is crucial for cultivating intrinsic motivation, the inherent desire to learn and grow, which is a crucial driver of long-term engagement with reading. When students feel valued and supported, they are more likely to embrace challenges, persist through difficulties, and develop a genuine love for reading.

Conversely, a competitive or judgmental environment can have a detrimental effect on student motivation. When students feel pressured to outperform their peers or fear negative evaluation, they may experience anxiety, self-doubt, and a reluctance to take risks. This can stifle their creativity, curiosity, and, ultimately, their progress in reading (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Such environments prioritize external validation and performance over intrinsic enjoyment and learning, focusing on short-term goals like grades rather than the long-term development of reading skills and habits.

Research consistently demonstrates that a positive classroom climate, characterized by warmth, encouragement, and a focus on effort and growth rather than competition, can significantly enhance student motivation, engagement, and achievement (Reeve, 2006). Creating a conducive learning environment is essential for nurturing student motivation and facilitating their success in extensive reading tasks. Hence, it is imperative for the teachers or facilitators to create a learning environment that supports and amplifies students' intrinsic motivation to read, leading to greater engagement and improved learning outcomes.

### **3. Method**

#### *3.1. Research design*

This research employed a descriptive qualitative case study design to investigate the factors influencing the completion of extensive reading tasks among Indonesian tertiary EFL students. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within its real-life context, allowing for the exploration of the complexities and nuances of students' experiences (Perry Jr., 2011). Furthermore, it allows for a holistic understanding of the phenomenon by examining it from multiple perspectives (McCombes, 2023). The focus was identifying barriers that hinder the completion process and potential facilitators that could support students' engagement with extensive reading.

As Lee (2009) described, the case study approach was deemed most appropriate for this research because it emphasizes obtaining information directly from the participants' perspectives. This statement aligns with understanding the students' lived experiences and the subjective meanings they attribute to their reading practices.

#### *3.2. Sampling*

This study used a purposive sampling strategy to select four first-year students from the Guidance and Counseling study program at a State University in West Kalimantan. The emphasis was on the depth and richness of the data rather than statistical generalization. Purposive sampling is a common approach in qualitative research, which allows researchers to intentionally select participants who are most likely to provide rich and relevant data to answer the research questions (Palinkas et al., 2015).

First-year students enrolled in a General English course were selected for this case study because they represent a highly relevant population to the research questions. They had completed the course that focused on their English language skills and reading habits, where during one semester, they were given extensive reading assignments using the M-Reader facilities and applications available at the university where they are currently studying. In addition, the researchers also selected these four students by looking at their performance in completing reading assignments, where they often experienced obstacles or delays in completing tasks. Then, the participants were invited to participate in this study voluntarily, and their consent was obtained before conducting the interviews. This ensured that their participation was ethical and reflected their genuine interest in contributing to the research.

#### *3.3. Data collection*

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary data collection method due to their unique advantages in eliciting rich, contextualized insights into students' experiences with extensive reading. As Patton (2002) notes, the conversational nature of semi-structured interviews fosters a comfortable environment where participants feel heard and understood. This rapport-building aspect is crucial for encouraging open and



honest communication, especially when discussing potentially sensitive topics such as reading difficulties or motivational challenges.

Furthermore, Kakilla (2021) highlights the adaptability of semi-structured interviews, emphasising how they allow researchers to tailor their questions based on participant responses. This flexibility was essential in this study, enabling the interviewer to probe deeper into emerging themes and unexpected revelations, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of each student's unique experience.

The semi-structured interviews were considered the most appropriate method for this research because they provide direct access to students' thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to extensive reading, as highlighted by Chamot and El-Dinary (1999). Its format struck a balance between providing a structured framework for the interview and allowing for organic exploration of relevant topics. This approach ensured that critical areas of interest, such as motivation, challenges, strategies, and perceptions of task relevance, were covered while allowing students to share their perspectives in their own words.

Before the interviews, all participants were assigned an extensive reading task of 10,000 words using the M-Reader website. This platform offers diverse English books at various difficulty levels and genres, empowering students to choose texts aligned with their interests and language proficiency. The task was to be completed within three months, with students encouraged to exceed the assigned word count.

During the interviews, students reflected on their experiences with the extensive reading assignment, exploring their motivations, challenges faced, strategies used, and perceived relevance of the task. Interviews explored the evolution of their motivation, identifying internal drivers (e.g., enjoyment, curiosity) and external influences (e.g., grades, teacher expectations) and any factors that hindered continued engagement. Students were also encouraged to discuss linguistic and logistical challenges, sharing strategies they used to overcome them. In addition, interviews measured students' subjective evaluations of the assignment, exploring its perceived relevance to their language learning goals, its impact on reading habits, and potential recommendations for peers.

### *3.4. Data analysis*

Data collected from interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method widely used in qualitative research to identify, analyze, and report patterns in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following recent advances in thematic analysis, as outlined by Terry et al. (2021), this approach emphasized the active role of the researcher in constructing meaning from the data, recognizing that themes are not only discovered but also shaped by the researchers' theoretical perspectives and experiences.

The analysis was then guided by Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase framework: familiarisation with the data, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and reporting. However, in line with Terry et al. (2021),

emphasis was placed on reflexivity throughout the process, ensuring transparency and rigour in interpreting the data. Themes were drawn from participant responses, reflecting key factors influencing their completion of the extensive reading task. These factors may include aspects of motivation, perceived challenges, coping strategies, and individual perceptions of the relevance of the task. Following Nowell et al. (2017), the researchers defined initial codes and themes informed by the research question and existing literature while remaining open to emerging themes based on the data.

Furthermore, the analysis acknowledged that their experiences with extensive reading are shaped by their unique backgrounds, language proficiency levels, and learning styles. As Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) highlight, an essential aspect of thematic analysis involves exploring how individual experiences intersect with broader social and contextual factors. This study examined the potential influence of contextual factors, such as educational environment, cultural norms, and resource access, on participants' engagement with reading tasks.

#### **4. Findings**

This section presents the findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with four student participants: Adele, Brian, Carla, and Donna (pseudonyms to protect their identities). The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and subsequently analyzed using a thematic approach to identify recurring patterns and common themes related to their experiences with extensive reading tasks. The analysis revealed four prominent themes that significantly impacted the factors influencing students' completion of extensive reading tasks.

##### *4.1.1. Low motivation and interest in reading*

A prominent theme from the interviews was students' low motivation and interest in extensive reading (ER). Motivation is the combination of thoughts and feelings that drive people to start doing something and keep doing it (Kirchhoff, 2013). However, it was found that all participants were reluctant to engage with the assigned texts, primarily due to a lack of personal interest and perceived relevance.

Adele, for instance, candidly stated "Honestly, I am not really into books. They're not my kind of thing, you know, they are boring. So, it is hard to get excited about reading them. But I love watching English movies with English subtitles." (Adele)

Adele's preference for watching movies with English subtitles over reading books highlights a disconnect between the assigned reading materials and her interests. It suggests that students are more likely to engage in activities they find enjoyable and relevant to their lives.

Another student, Carla, described the assigned books as "dense" and admitted to frequently losing motivation and engaging in other activities, such as social media, instead of reading. To understand Carla's difficulties in maintaining motivation in the extensive reading tasks, consider the following exchange from her interview:

It has been a struggle. I am not a big reader, to begin with, and these books are pretty dense. It's hard for me to stay focused, and I often find myself doing other activities, such as scrolling social media, over and over again. (Carla)

Furthermore, Brian's comments underscore the significance of choice in fostering motivation. He struggled to find texts that piqued his interest despite accessing many books, as he stated:

It is like a never-ending list of books. Our lecturer gave many PDF versions, and our Academic Resource Center also offers many books we could read. But a simple book about aliens or a simple sci-fi novel is really rare. I love them, you know. If I could pick something that interests me, I might be more likely to read it. (Brian)

Finally, Donna's lack of motivation stemmed from a perceived lack of value in the ER tasks. She expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of extensive reading for language improvement, as she said during the interview:

I am not really sure, to be honest. My English lecturer said it is supposed to help us improve our English, but I don't see how reading these books is really going to do that. It feels more like busy work than actual learning. Perhaps that is why I do not feel motivated to finish them. (Donna)

This sentiment emphasizes the importance of clear goals and perceived purpose in motivating individuals. When students like Donna need help to understand the rationale behind a task or perceive it as irrelevant to their learning objectives, their motivation to engage will likely dwindle. Furthermore, Donna's statement suggests a need for more connection between the assigned readings and the specific language skills she aims to develop, highlighting the need for educators to explicitly communicate the goals and benefits of extensive reading and tailor the materials to students' needs.

#### *4.1.2. Vocabulary challenges*

Another research finding from the interviews revealed that vocabulary was also a significant barrier to comprehension and enjoyment of reading for three participants: Brian, Adele, and Donna. Their difficulties with unfamiliar words and phrases in English slowed their reading speed and hindered their ability to engage with and fully understand assigned reading texts.

Brian's experience illustrates just how daunting this challenge can be. He described feeling overwhelmed by the sheer number of unfamiliar words he encountered, stating,

There are so many difficult words in the sci-fi book. I have to constantly look them up, and it really slows me down. My lecturer told me not to look at the dictionary too often, but if I don't look them up, I can't understand the book, right? (Brian)

This constant interruption to consult a dictionary disrupts the reading flow and makes it challenging to maintain focus and comprehension. The cognitive effort required to decipher unfamiliar vocabulary can also reduce overall enjoyment of reading, leading to difficulties completing reading tasks.

Similarly, Adele found that vocabulary difficulties interfered with her ability to visualize and connect with the narrative she was reading. She explained:

I enjoy choosing fantasy reading when I do extensive reading assignments. But, when I read fantasy texts, it is hard for me to visualize what is happening in the story, because I am too focused on trying to understand the words. (Adele)

This statement by Adele highlights the importance of vocabulary knowledge for literal comprehension and deeper engagement and appreciation of literary texts. When readers need help understanding keywords and phrases, they may need to learn the story's nuances, character development, and overall thematic message.

In addition, Donna's experience further highlights the negative impact that vocabulary challenges can have on reading enjoyment. She attributed her difficulties to perceived weaknesses in English, stating "I sometimes get discouraged when I come across too many words I do not know. Maybe it's my poor English. It makes reading not enjoyable." (Donna)

This finding underscores the importance of adequate support from English teachers for vocabulary development in extensive reading programs. When students feel overwhelmed by unfamiliar vocabulary, it can dent their confidence and turn reading into a tedious task rather than an enjoyable experience. Overall, the students' experiences highlight vocabulary's important role in extensive reading. Lack of vocabulary knowledge can hinder comprehension, engagement, and, ultimately, completion of reading tasks.

#### *4.1.3. Unsupportive learning environment*

The learning environment emerged as an essential factor influencing Adele, Carla, and Donna's extensive reading assignments. Their experiences highlighted the diverse nature of classroom environments and their profound impact on students' willingness and ability to engage with assigned reading.

First, Adele shared that her peers did not notably support her extensive reading. This, coupled with her peers' dismissive attitudes towards the activity, highlights the potential impact of peers on the learning environment. When surrounded by peers who do not value reading, students like Adele may struggle to maintain their enthusiasm and commitment to completing the reading, as she noted "I feel like I don't have anyone to talk to about the assigned reading, because my close friends don't really like English either and they don't read much." (Adele)

Another student, Donna, stated she did not experience a positive learning environment when providing feedback on her reading progress. She felt lost and unsure

of what she was doing, leading to difficulties completing their extensive reading assignments. Donna conveyed this in her interview below:

I never received any feedback on my reading. I did not know if what I read was per the lecturer's expectations, if my reading was still too little, or if there was any progress on my English during those three months. (Donna)

As Donna experienced, the absence of feedback can leave students feeling like they are navigating the extensive reading process in isolation, without a clear sense of direction or purpose. This lack of guidance can be particularly problematic for students struggling with the reading materials or lacking confidence in their reading abilities. Furthermore, Carla's fear of being judged by her classmates if she seeks help underscores the importance of creating a safe and supportive learning environment. This can be seen from her explanation below:

I do not want to be seen as the only one struggling. If I tell my English lecturer that I do not understand the texts, my friends will know, and they will think I am not smart. Everyone seems to be doing fine with the assignments. (Carla)

The absence of such a non-judgemental learning environment can create a sense of isolation for struggling students, preventing them from seeking help and further hindering their progress. A classroom culture that rewards effort and encourages open communication about challenges is essential so students feel comfortable asking for help without fear of stigma.

## 5. Discussion

In this section, the researcher explains the relationship between the research results and the theories mentioned in the previous section. In addition, this section will also explain the resolution of all factors that hinder the completion of reading tasks faced by students. The research findings described in the previous section have explained several main factors that hinder the completion of extensive reading (ER) tasks by 4 students in this study. These findings underline the importance of addressing the cognitive aspects of reading, such as vocabulary and comprehension, and the affective and social dimensions, such as motivation, interest, and peer support. All of these factors align with existing theoretical frameworks and empirical research, which provide a deeper understanding of the challenges students face in engaging with ER.

This study's first and foremost research findings indicate that students' low motivation and interest in reading emerged as the most significant barriers to completing reading tasks. As Dörnyei (2007) explains, motivation is not simply a fleeting emotion but a complex psychological construct encompassing a variety of factors, including interest, relevance, and perceived value. In the context of ER, motivation serves as the driving force behind students' desire to engage and persist in reading activities. When

students perceive assigned texts as uninteresting or irrelevant to their lives, as evidenced by Adele and Brian's comments that their motivation to read declined, Carla's loss of focus and turning to alternative activities such as social media, and Donna's skepticism about the effectiveness of ER for language improvement underscore the importance of establishing a clear connection between reading tasks and students' learning goals. Students may seek more engaging alternatives when reading feels like a chore rather than an enjoyable activity.

The finding on low motivation is consistent with research by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2007), who showed that a lack of interest and perceived relevance can significantly hinder students' engagement with reading materials. Supporting this idea, Mori (2015) argued that motivation is a fundamental factor in extensive reading, especially considering the cognitive and linguistic challenges of reading a foreign language. As seen from the results of this study, students who are not motivated by exciting and enjoyable materials tailored to their needs tend to lose interest and abandon their reading efforts. Renandya and Jacobs (2016) further emphasized that motivation is critical to long-term reading habits, as less motivated students are less likely to maintain their engagement with extensive reading activities.

The relationship between motivation and extensive reading can have a significant impact that is believed to encourage someone to do an activity or activity. Xu (2013) stated that completing tasks given to students is related to their interest in the process. Extensive reading activities are highly recommended by Andayani and Maryam (2019) to be developed as an interest that will then become a habit. This statement is, of course, based on the fact that reading habits among Indonesian students are still relatively low. Reading motivation will significantly affect their attitude toward enjoying the activity and choosing reading materials that will provide a sense of pleasure (Sandjaya, 2006).

It also reinforces Krashen's (2004) idea that understandable input is essential for language acquisition and motivation. When texts are too complex or do not match learners' interests, they are less likely to be motivated by the material. They may seek alternative activities that are more stimulating. This also highlights the importance of considering the level of text difficulty and the reading preferences of learners when designing ER programs (Day & Bamford, 1998). By providing learners with text choices that match their interests and reading levels, educators can create a more engaging and motivating reading experience.

In addition to motivation, another factor considered to be a determinant in completing this task is students' low reading comprehension ability, which is a significant barrier to comprehension and enjoyment. Perceived difficulties in understanding the content of the text, even when assessed, often lead to frustration and discouragement, as exemplified by Brian's experience of constantly needing to look up unknown words. This finding corroborates research by Yang et al., (2021), highlighting the critical relationship between the difficulty level of the text's vocabulary in completing reading tasks. This

study highlights that students experience significant difficulties in understanding the reading content, which can lead to frustration and perceptions of incompetence.

Savitri et al. (2024) suggest that ignoring the dictionary and focusing on achieving fluency and enjoyment in reading can be beneficial. Thus, students can handle understanding every word when working in the ER. This idea supports research by Day and Bamford (1998), who found that an extensive reading program that prioritizes enjoyment and fluency can significantly improve reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. Thus, it suggests a cyclical relationship: inadequate vocabulary hinders comprehension, reduces motivation, and hinders reading progress. Although students can choose the books they read, the books available are English books that are only enjoyed by some, especially if they need a better understanding of vocabulary. The study's results support the opinion of Renandya and Jacobs (2016), who emphasized the importance of providing reading materials with a vocabulary that is easier for students to understand to facilitate students' enjoyment and exposure to easy-to-understand language input. English educators must understand that reading is an interactive process in which readers combine their linguistic and background knowledge to construct meaning (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). Reading materials that are broad, relevant, and appropriate to the level of students' abilities must be carefully selected to align with students' interests and language abilities. The three findings in this study influence each other. Day (2018) and Nation and Macalister (2020) advocated providing students with books that they are genuinely interested in. Stoller (2015) further supports this idea, stating that access to individually relevant materials with easily understood vocabulary increased their motivation and enjoyment in completing their extensive reading tasks.

However, Bahmani and Farvardin (2017) cautioned that the difficulty level of the materials selected could significantly affect task comprehension, with more accessible texts producing better results. Birketveit et al. (2018) support this, finding that guided self-selection of materials significantly affected readers' performance. Given these findings, educators should prioritize providing accessible and enjoyable reading materials that match individual interests and language levels to ensure effective, extensive reading programs.

This issue can be a barrier to completing tasks because it is often seen as a factor that slows down the completion. Difficulty understanding reading materials makes many students think that reading tasks are complicated to complete, especially if they have to open a translator or constantly ask someone else. Although the books used as reading sources are assessed, this will only have a significant impact if students have a basic knowledge of the vocabulary they often encounter in reading.

Finally, a supportive reading environment is also a determining factor in completing reading assignments. A supportive learning environment is needed to address this challenge. Adele's feelings of isolation due to her friends' lack of interest in reading and Carla's fear of being judged for seeking help underscore the importance of fostering a positive and collaborative learning community. As Chang and Renandya (2017) notes,

peer influence can significantly affect motivation. The role of English lecturers is fundamental in building a positive perspective on reading activities, hoping that this positive outlook can be transmitted to other students, who will eventually also be transmitted to their peers.

According to Reeve (2006), a supportive learning environment can create a space for students to express their challenges and seek help. Donna's experience of not receiving feedback on her reading progress also highlights the need for regular and constructive feedback, emphasized by Hattie and Timperley (2007), to guide students' learning and maintain their motivation. In this case, it might be better if English lecturers do not simply give students complete freedom to do extensive reading, considering that reading habits in Indonesia still need to be improved. Therefore, feedback on students' reading progress and difficulties completing extensive reading assignments would be essential.

## **6. Conclusion**

This case study reveals the complex interplay of factors influencing Indonesian tertiary EFL students' completion of extensive reading (ER) tasks. Three key challenges emerged from the findings: (1) lack of motivation due to reading material perceived as irrelevant or too complex; (2) limited vocabulary hinders comprehension and further reduces motivation; and (3) there is a need for a supportive reading environment that fosters positive attitudes towards reading. These interrelated challenges require a multifaceted approach to ER instruction. Teachers need to provide engaging and appropriately levelled reading materials, incorporate vocabulary support, and create a classroom culture that promotes enjoyment of reading and peer collaboration.

The present study highlights the importance of tailoring ER programs to students' specific needs and interests for Indonesian EFL education. By addressing motivational barriers, increasing vocabulary knowledge, and fostering a supportive reading environment, educators can empower students to become more confident and proficient readers, ultimately improving their language proficiency. Further research is needed to investigate the long-term effects of such interventions and to explore different reading materials and pedagogical approaches that best promote ER among Indonesian EFL learners.

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