

SELF-ESTEEM AND READING COMPREHENSION: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF TENTH GRADERS

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ABSTRACT: Reading is emphasized as a crucial activity for personal development and academic achievement. Strong reading comprehension skills not only support students' academic performance but also contribute to the development of critical thinking and the expansion of knowledge. Understanding the factors that influence reading comprehension, such as self-esteem, is essential and worth exploring, particularly in the context of secondary education, where foundational skills and cognitive growth play a significant role in learning outcomes. This study aimed to investigate the correlation between self-esteem and reading comprehension achievement among tenth-grade students at MA Patra Mandiri in Palembang. To analyze the correlation between students' self-esteem and their reading comprehension achievement, a correlational research design was applied. The study involved nine classes of tenth-grade students, and a sample of 116 students was drawn using a convenience sampling technique. Data were collected using a ready-made self-esteem questionnaire adopted by Kartika (2023) and a reading comprehension test. The findings indicated that the correlation coefficient (r) was 0.125, which was lower than the critical value of the r -table (0.180). Based on these results, it can be concluded that there was a low but insignificant correlation between self-esteem and reading comprehension achievement of tenth-grade students at MA Patra Mandiri Palembang.

Keywords: *self-esteem, reading comprehension achievement, correlational design*

HUBUNGAN ANTARA HARGA DIRI SISWA DENGAN HASIL PEMAHAMAN BACAAN SISWA KELAS SEPULUH

ABSTRAK: Membaca ditekankan sebagai aktivitas yang krusial untuk pengembangan diri dan pencapaian akademik. Kemampuan pemahaman membaca yang kuat tidak hanya mendukung kinerja akademik siswa, tetapi juga berkontribusi pada pengembangan kemampuan berpikir kritis dan perluasan pengetahuan. Oleh karena itu, memahami faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi pemahaman membaca, seperti harga diri, sangat penting dan layak untuk diteliti, khususnya dalam konteks pendidikan menengah, di mana keterampilan dasar dan pertumbuhan kognitif memainkan peran signifikan dalam hasil belajar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki hubungan antara harga diri dan pencapaian pemahaman membaca di kalangan siswa kelas sepuluh MA Patra Mandiri Palembang. Untuk mengetahui korelasi antara harga diri siswa dan pencapaian pemahaman membaca mereka, metode penelitian korelasional digunakan. Penelitian ini melibatkan sembilan kelas siswa kelas sepuluh, dan sampel sebanyak 116 siswa diambil dengan menggunakan teknik convenience sampling. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner harga diri siap pakai yang diadopsi dari Kartika (2023) dan tes pemahaman membaca. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa koefisien korelasi (r) sebesar 0,125, yang lebih

rendah dari nilai kritis pada tabel r (0,180). Berdasarkan hasil tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa terdapat korelasi yang rendah namun tidak signifikan antara harga diri dan pencapaian pemahaman membaca siswa kelas sepuluh di MA Patra Mandiri Palembang.

Kata Kunci: *harga diri, prestasi pemahaman membaca, desain korelasi*

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in global interactions, enabling people from diverse backgrounds to communicate effectively. English is globally recognized as a primary language for international communication (Indrayani, 2014), making it a vital subject in education. Proficiency in both written and spoken English is crucial for students to master (Rianyansa, 2022), as it is the predominant language used worldwide for international interactions. Four skills must be learned when studying English: speaking, reading, writing, and listening (Falah, 2022). English plays a significant part in the evolution of the academic discipline. The government has included it in the curriculum. According to Lestari, et al (2019) English is a required subject in junior high and senior high school. This incident highlights how crucial it is for all students to understand English. All of the abilities must be learned to study this language correctly. Reading is a cognitive process through which individuals decode written symbols to construct meaning (Julistri, 2024). Reading is emphasized as a critical activity for personal growth and academic achievement (Mutahhara, 2021). Reading proficiency is crucial in all fields of study, especially when students encounter technical English vocabulary relevant to their areas of expertise. It strengthens their abilities in speaking, listening, and writing by requiring them to analyze and interpret written materials. Various resources, including books, articles, newspapers, and online media, play a vital role in this process. As a result, reading is essential for effective language learning. According to Talebi (2015), reading is one of the crucial abilities in the process of learning a language since it allows students to acquire new information and knowledge.

On December 5, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Mendikbudristek) released the PISA 2022 results, reporting remarkable progress for Indonesia. The country gained 5 to 6 positions in literacy compared to PISA 2018, reaching its highest standing in PISA history. This progress highlights Indonesia's education system's resilience amidst pandemic-related learning difficulties. Specifically, Indonesia's rankings in reading, mathematics, and science literacy each rose by 5 to 6 positions. Although there was a slight decrease of 12 points in reading literacy scores, Indonesia exceeded the international average decline of 18 points. The PISA 2022 results reflect Indonesia's steady progress and adaptability in facing global educational challenges. Effective reading comprehension requires more than just familiarity with vocabulary. Andres, as cited in Koosha et. al (2016), highlights non-linguistic factors that significantly impact the reading process, including reader variables and text characteristics. Strategies, background knowledge, motivation, personality, and self-esteem are among the key reader variables affecting reading comprehension. According to Bagheri and Faghih (2012), both reader and text variables play a crucial role in shaping reading and comprehension processes. These variables include strategies, background knowledge, motivation, personality, self-esteem, and gender.

Self-esteem is an individual's overall evaluation or appraisal of their worth. It is the degree to which an individual values, accepts, and respects themselves. According to Gustaman (2015), self-esteem is concerned with how people feel about their abilities to perform tasks successfully. Self-esteem develops through a combination of past experiences, social interactions, and individual traits. In language learning, particularly English, self-esteem significantly impacts a learner's motivation and willingness to participate. According to Novia (2023), students with higher levels of self-esteem are

generally more active and engaged in classroom activities compared to those with lower levels of self-esteem.

METHODOLOGY

1. Design

A quantitative approach was adopted in this study, incorporating correlational analysis to explore the relationship between self-esteem and reading comprehension achievement. Correlation is a statistical measure that describes the extent to which two variables are related to each other. Creswell and Creswell (2023) highlight that research design functions as a blueprint that assists researchers in structuring their studies. In alignment with this principle, the present study examines these variables to derive meaningful insights.

2. Sample

The population in this study refers to the entire group of students who share similar characteristics. Specifically, the population comprised all 236 tenth-grade students at MA Patra Mandiri Palembang. The researchers employed convenience sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique, to select participants from classes X A, X B, and X C, totaling 116 students. Etikan et al. (2016) define convenience sampling, also referred to as opportunity or accidental sampling, as a method based on participant availability and accessibility. The selected sample consisted of 37 students from Class A, 40 from Class B, and 39 from Class C.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

Two instruments were used to collect data in this study: a questionnaire measuring self-esteem and a test assessing reading comprehension achievement. The questionnaire originally by Grey-Little, Baumeister, and Ciarrochi (2007) comprised 24 items, but Kartika modified it in 2023 to contain only 20 items, and the researcher adapted from Kartika (2023). There were five response choices for each multiple-choice question on the test; one was the right answer, and the other four were incorrect. This reading comprehension test consisted of 12 reading passages and 50 multiple-choice questions. Students had 50 minutes to complete the test.

Correlation analysis was conducted to interpret the collected data. Due to the non-normal distribution of the data, the Spearman Rank correlation method was used to assess the relationship between the measured variables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Self-esteem

A self-esteem questionnaire consisting of 20 items was administered to 116 tenth-grade students from MA Patra Mandiri Palembang. The survey used a Likert Scale with a range of 1 to 5. As mentioned earlier, the three self-esteem categories used in this study were Needs Improvement, Fairly Self-Esteem, and Good Self-Esteem.

Table 1. Distribution of Self-esteem

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Good self-esteem	9	7.8%
Fairly self-esteem	107	92.2%
Need improvement	0	0.0%
Total	116	100.0%

The findings indicated that 9 students (7.8%) demonstrated good self-esteem, while 107 students (92.2%) fell into the fairly self-esteem category, and none (0%) required improvement. In conclusion, most students perceived themselves as having high self-esteem.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Self-esteem

	N	Descriptive Statistics			
		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Questionnaire	116	51	94	69.32	7.035
Valid N (listwise)	116				

The descriptive statistical analysis of self-esteem yielded a mean score of 69.32 with a standard deviation of 7.035. The relatively high mean indicates that, on average, participants exhibit above-average levels of self-esteem. Moreover, the low standard deviation suggests a strong central tendency, as most self-esteem scores are closely distributed around the mean with minimal variability. These findings imply a consistent and stable self-esteem profile among the respondents, with negligible individual disparities.

2. Reading Comprehension Achievement

The analysis of the reading test results revealed a diverse distribution of proficiency levels among students. The 'Very Poor' category accounted for the highest proportion of students, whereas the 'Very Good' category represented the lowest.

Table 3. Distribution of Reading Comprehension Achievement

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	3	2,6%
Good	8	6,9%
Average	8	6,9%
Poor	29	25,0%
Very Poor	68	58,6%
Total	116	100%

The result showed that there were 3 students (2,6%) who were indicated very good, 8 students (6,9%) who were in good, 8 students (6,9%) were in average, 29 students (25,0%) were in poor, 68 students (58,6%) were in very poor. In conclusion, it revealed that from the reading comprehension test, a very poor level was the most perceived by the students.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Comprehension Achievement

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
RCA	116	14	82	44.57	16.256
Valid N (listwise)	116				

In this research, a pre-existing reading test consisting of 50 questions was utilized to measure reading achievement. In the descriptive statistical analysis of the participants' reading comprehension test, it was revealed that the highest score attained was 82, while the lowest score was 14. Scores ranged from 0 to 100, with a mean score of 44.57 and a standard deviation of 16.256 among participants.

3. Correlation between Students' Self-esteem and their Reading Comprehension

The examination of students' self-esteem and reading comprehension achievement revealed that the dataset did not meet the assumption of normality, as indicated by a significance value exceeding 0.05. As a result, the researcher applied non-parametric statistical techniques to conduct a more suitable analysis.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis Result

Correlations				
		Questionnaire	RCA	
Spearman's rho	Questionnaire	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.125
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.181
		N	116	116
	RCA	Correlation Coefficient	.125	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.181	.
		N	116	116

The researchers used the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient because the data was not normal. The analysis results showed that the obtained correlation coefficient (0.125) was lower than the value considered significant (0.180). Based on the standard interpretation guidelines by Sugiono (2013), indicating a low relationship. Additionally, the significance level (p) was 0.181, meaning that the p-value (0.181) was greater than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no significant relationship between student self-esteem and their reading achievement at MA Patra Mandiri Palembang. This conclusion was supported by the fact that the p-value was greater than 0.05, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis (H_0) and the rejection of the alternative hypothesis (H_a).

CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the correlation between self-esteem and reading comprehension achievement among tenth-grade students at MA Patra Mandiri Palembang. Although a correlation was detected, it did not reach statistical significance. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.125$) fell below the critical r -table value (0.180), suggesting a weak relationship. Furthermore, the effect of self-esteem on reading comprehension achievement was not statistically significant, as indicated by a p -value of 0.181, which exceeded the standard threshold of 0.05. These findings suggest that self-esteem is not a determining factor in students' reading comprehension achievement. Instead, other cognitive, linguistic, or environmental factors may have a more substantial influence on their reading proficiency.

The results suggest that multiple factors influence students' self-esteem and reading comprehension achievement. Among these, motivation played a key role, as many students exhibited low enthusiasm during testing. Additionally, difficulties in understanding texts due to unfamiliar vocabulary hindered comprehension. A lack of interest in English, especially in reading, further contributed to students perceiving it as a challenging subject. Limited reading experience also intensified these difficulties, leading to lower reading comprehension scores.

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