

# Extensive Reading in Improving Reading Motivation: A Students' Perspective

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**Abstract.** Students nowadays are accustomed to vast yet short information coming from various digital platforms. This affects their concentration span in a negative way and causes a difficulty in focus, including reading a longer text. This study aims to investigate how extensive reading practice improves students' motivation in reading. Specifically, this study aims to elaborate students' experience in English for General Reading subject, how far the extensive reading practice can increase students' reading efficacy, and what impact the practice gives to students' curiosity on specific topics. The finding is expected to uncover new possible ways, which educators can implement to match varied learning needs by optimizing the effectiveness of the activity. Data of this phenomenology study was taken through observation during the class and online questionnaire as the class evaluation after the class has finished. A number of semi-structured interviews were also conducted to a number of students to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena. The interviews are transcribed, coded, and analysed using thematic analysis. This study found that extensive reading practice helps students improving their reading motivation in general, through enjoyment on familiar subjects, reading efficacy, as well as engagement on new topics.

**Keywords:** *Extensive Reading, Reading Motivation, Phenomenology, Student's Perspective*

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## INTRODUCTION

The striking development of digital communication technology has affected human interaction greatly (Saykili, 2019). Internet allows people to interact globally without having boundaries in space and/or time, making it possible for them to communicate across nations anytime they wish to. This unlimited opportunity is also supported by the emergence of new media, whether it is a text, audio, video, or even audio-visual media. They are all designed to ease human interaction across space and/or time.

This huge shift of media leads to a change of people nature regarding to accessing information (Abington-Pitre, 2020; Asif & Yang, 2021). Different from printed media, from which people need to wait for a certain period of time to perceive information across nations, thanks to internet, people now can access information across the world live. Thousands of online media and platforms allows them to get any information they are interested in just one click away. The variety of information types, from the traditional text-based, audio like podcasts, visual like photos, and audio-visual like videos also offers their audience to choose which type of information they prefer the most. Text-based information requires a relatively higher concentration to be processed compared to audio-visual type (Bărbuceanu, 2020). These days, many media are even racing up to grasp most audiences by “entertain”-ing them through a-less-than-a-minute video content. This plethora of information, not to mention the vast yet compact content, unfortunately decrease the young generation attention span, making them difficult to focus on the boring-text-based-type of information (Al-Sharqi & Abbasi, 2020).

Youths’ preference, especially Generation Z’s, to “brain-friendly” media, like short videos (Jambulingam et al., 2018), can affect their academic performance. Meanwhile, to perform well in their academic life, students are required to read a lot of academic sources (Abington-Pitre, 2020), which mostly will be in a form of books and journal articles. If they have little motivation in reading or find it difficult to grasp information from text, students will face a great challenge in their study.

Reading is essential for students, especially in the academic context. Students undoubtedly need reading in order to succeed in their study (Abington-Pitre, 2020). Aside from other interactive media used in the learning process, students are required to gain knowledge by absorbing information provided on their reading materials, whether in a form of books, modules, or journal articles. However, regardless their disciplines, students of higher education often still encounter difficulties in grasping the essence of academic text, whether in understanding key concepts and/or the general content of journal articles (Hamilton, 2018).

When it comes to reading, motivation is described as the individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs about the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading (Gunobgunob-Mirasol, 2019). Reading motivation positively correlates with reading engagement. This happens from the existence of strong association between reading motivation and reading for a lengthy period of time during students’ learning journey (Ro, 2016). This engagement leads to students’ success, especially in language learning. This because motivation is one of the affective

domains of language learning that plays a critical role in L2 reading proficiency (Ro, 2013). When students do not possess any struggle in reading, it is possible for them to gain more in learning any discipline.

Reading motivation is a key factor that affects students' reading proficiency, academic achievement, and cognitive development (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000). Research suggests that students who are motivated to read tend to read more, comprehend better, and achieve higher academic success than those who lack motivation to read (Klauda & Guthrie, 2015).

Intrinsic motivation is particularly significant in reading motivation. When students have intrinsic motivation, they read for enjoyment and personal interest rather than to fulfil external requirements or expectations (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000). Intrinsic motivation is a more robust predictor of reading proficiency and academic achievement than extrinsic motivation (Klauda & Guthrie, 2015).

Several recent studies have investigated the relationship between reading motivation and academic achievement. A study by Pekrun, Elliot, and Maier found that reading motivation is a significant predictor of reading achievement in primary school children (Pekrun et al., 2009). Another study by Klauda and Guthrie revealed that reading motivation positively predicts reading comprehension in adolescents (Klauda & Guthrie, 2015). Furthermore, a study by Schiefele, Schaffner, and Moller found that reading motivation has a positive impact on students' text comprehension and knowledge acquisition (Schiefele et al., 2012).

These evidence supports the significance of reading motivation for students. Students who are intrinsically motivated to read tend to read more, comprehend better, and achieve higher academic success than those who lack motivation to read. It is essential to promote reading motivation in schools and encourage students to read for pleasure and personal interest. By doing so, students can develop a love for reading, leading to better reading proficiency and academic achievement.

The term extensive reading has been existed for decades. In its early emergence, it is mostly related to a large amount of reading activity aiming to get a thorough understanding of the content (Palmer, 1964). Unlike intrinsic reading—in which students should gain complete and detailed understanding towards the texts, extensive reading focuses on getting thorough understanding of the matter (Bamford & Day, 1997). Further, extensive reading is like an everyday skill where one becomes more fluent and skilful only when they do and practice it more (Bamford & Day, 1997). To make it specific, there are ten characteristics needed to be considered to hold a successful extensive reading (Day et al., 1998): (1) students read as much as possible; (2) varied materials on a wide range of topic should be available; (3) freedom to choose what to read; (4) reading purposes are related to pleasure, information, and general; (5) reading is its own reward; (6) reading materials are suitable for students' language proficiency level; (7) reading is individual, silent, and at students' own pace or time preference; (8) reading speed is generally faster since students find it easy to understand; (9) teacher explains the purpose, methods, and what to expect from the program before it starts; and (10) teacher should be the 'reader' role model for students.

Extensive reading is a reading approach that involves reading a large number of texts that are interesting, comprehensible, and easy to read. The primary goal of extensive reading is to improve reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation. According to previous research, extensive reading is an effective way to promote reading motivation in students. Extensive reading enables students to choose what they want to read, leading to an increase in their intrinsic motivation to read (Yamashita, 2013).

One of extensive reading goals is to boost students' familiarity on reading. It is suggested that frequent pleasure reading is capable to lower readers' fears of reading itself, whilst also increasing motivation in general (Ro, 2013). Once the anxiety is reduced, seen from readers confidence, efficacy, ease, and enjoyment towards reading activity, the motivation should then be enhanced (Ro, 2013), which is beneficial for students' learning process.

Some studies have investigated the effectiveness of extensive reading in enhancing students' reading motivation. For example, a study by Ro and Kim found that extensive reading significantly increased the reading motivation of Korean students (Ro & Kim, 2022). Another study by Kim revealed that Korean university students who participated in an extensive reading program showed an improvement in their reading motivation (Kim, 2012). Similarly, a study by Wang and Kim found that extensive reading increased the motivation of Chinese EFL students to read in English (S. Wang & Kim, 2021). The research evidence from recent studies supports the effectiveness of extensive reading in enhancing students' reading motivation. By providing students with a wide range of interesting, comprehensible, and easy-to-read texts, extensive reading can help students develop an interest for reading, leading to better reading proficiency. Therefore, extensive reading should be promoted in schools as a way to enhance students' reading motivation.

A number of study has been conducted on extensive reading. Aside from elaborating how the practice is beneficial in general (Bamford & Day, 1997; Apple, 2005), some discussed on how it helped unmotivated readers (Ro, 2013; Abington-Pitre, 2020). There are also evidence showing how extensive reading is capable to help students improve their academic achievement (Edy, 2013; Wu, 2011). However, the exploration on how extensive reading helps students from their own story during the experience is still limited. By understanding students' personal narratives and reflections, researchers and educators can gain some knowledge on a number of affordances and challenges that arise from the practice. Thus, this study aims to explore how extensive reading practice can help students improving their motivation in reading based on students' own experience. Specifically, it elaborates students' extensive reading experience in English for General Reading subject, how far the practice can increase students' reading efficacy, and what impact the practice gives to students' curiosity on specific topics. The finding is then expected to help uncover new potential strategies, optimizing the practice effectiveness, to be tailored by educators to meet diverse learning needs.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach to answer how extensive reading activities help students enhancing their reading motivation based on their own experience.

### Participants

The subjects of this study were 30 students who took English for General Reading subject during odd semester 2021/2022. This class was delivered online in the middle of pandemic. English for General Reading was a reading class offered to freshmen on their first semester at an English study program in one of prominent universities in Indonesia. This subject aims to introduce students to various reading materials in English whilst also introducing them to college life through various reading topics and materials. Beside synchronous meetings, students were also required to read an article per week to make reading become a habit.

### Data Collection

Data were collected by doing observation ([Ekka, 2021](#)) during the class and through online questionnaire ([Andrade, 2020](#)) as the class evaluation at the end of the semester. Observation was done especially towards students' attitude to the class in general, seen through their enthusiasm, participation, and engagement. The open questionnaire was used to see students' opinion and experience related to the class. A virtual semi-structured interview ([Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021](#)) was also conducted to eight (8) students to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena, especially related to their reading motivation before and during the class. These 45-60-minute-interviews were conducted via video conference which were recorded with the consent of the respondents.

### Data Analysis

The analysis was started by transcribing interview data. Data obtained from the observation, questionnaire and interview were then analysed using thematic analysis techniques ([Nowell et al., 2017](#)). This technique is used to find patterns from the collected data which is then used to look for potential categories. The steps included: (1) understanding the data set by reading and understanding the responses obtained; (2) precoded by attaching labels to different parts of the text; and (3) generate patterns by grouping different codes ([Javadi & Zarea, 2016](#)). Data taken from the questionnaire as well as interview were presented as it was without any changes on the grammatical aspects. Triangulation of interview data was then carried out to check the validity of the interpretation. The findings obtained were then compiled to look at how extensive reading improves students' motivation in reading, by looking at students' experience related to reading in the class, how far the extensive reading practice can increase students' reading ability in general, and what impact the practice gives to students' curiosity on specific topics.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Students' reading motivation from extensive reading experience**

English for General Reading was a reading class offered to first semester students of an English study program in higher education level. During the course, students were provided with plenty of reading materials. The reading materials chosen were mostly the ones that also support them as a new college student. Aside from reading materials available on the provided module, students were also required to read an article per week to boost their reading habit (Day et al., 1998). The articles should be varied in topics but still related to students' or youth life in general. Those might be about college life, study tips, pop science, idols, or trivia. This out-of-class reading activity would then be brought up on the class. Before going to the syllabus material, students were invited to talk about the article they had read the week before. Aside from the content, they could share about what they liked or disliked about the article, their feeling after reading the article, and/or what their opinion towards the article in general. Overall, students were engaged during their discussion. They willingly shared their experience, while others also gave their comment and feedback towards others' sharing.

Motivation involves the mental and emotional processes that underlie a person's decision to act and the intensity in with which to continue doing (Kirchhoff, 2013). By conducting the appropriate learning instruction, students' reading motivation can be encouraged (Ro, 2013; S. Wang & Kim, 2021). The feedback from students showed that extensive reading experiences and structured reading programs could enhance students' reading motivation.

“I like reading article activities when the article is fun and inspiring so I could enjoy read it no matter how long it is.” (S12)

This suggested that the motivational aspect of reading is related to the content's relevance to students' interests (Wigfield & Gladstone, 2019). Students were more likely to be motivated to read when the reading material was related to their interests or experiences. These ‘fun’ materials led to students' engagement to the reading activities. When teachers were able to provide students with reading material that they found enjoyable and relevant, it significantly improved students' reading motivation (Wigfield & Gladstone, 2019).

It is clear that when teachers could provide students with reading material that is engaging, relevant, and challenging, it could improve their motivation to read. This was particularly true for extensive reading experiences and structured reading programs, as they provide students with a wide range of reading materials and activities to choose from, increasing the likelihood of finding material that resonated with their interests. The feedback from the students and previous research both highlighted the importance of providing students with engaging and relevant reading materials to enhance their reading motivation. By doing so, teachers could help cultivate an interest of reading in their students and increase their overall success in academic and personal pursuits.

The frequent reading outside the class also improved English for General Reading students' enthusiasm related to the reading activity. The practice even brought new interest to them.

"... general reading can also make me more have enthusiast to read because honestly, I'm a kind of listening person at the first time. However, day by day, I became more enthusiast in reading more than before." (S16)

Student (S16) noted that general reading had made him become more enthusiastic about reading, despite initially being more of a listener than a reader. The continued practice of reading had even brought about a new interest in reading for him. Frequent exposure to reading was proven can have a significant impact on students' reading motivation and success in reading (Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2016). This evidence suggested that frequent exposure to reading could have a significant impact on students' reading motivation and success in reading. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to encourage students to engage in regular reading activities and provide them with a variety of engaging reading materials to create a love of reading and support their academic and personal growth.

Moreover, extensive reading practice throughout the class also improved students motivation as well as their knowledge in general.

"Before taking part in this class, I don't really read much, if at all ... However throughout this class, I have learned to broaden the topics I read and to become more diligent when it comes to reading." (S24)

Student (S24) noted that before the class, they did not read much. However, throughout English for General Reading class, she learned to broaden the topics she read and became more diligent when it came to reading.

This comment aligned with previous research which found that structured reading programs that offered a variety of reading materials and activities could significantly enhance students' reading motivation (Barton et al., 2020). Students who participated in the structured reading program are proven possess a greater interest for reading, improved comprehension skills, and a better understanding of reading strategies.

Overall, the evidence provided aligned with previous researches, indicating that extensive reading experiences and structured reading programs could enhance students' reading motivation. When students were exposed to reading materials that are engaging, relevant to their interests, and offered in a structured program, they were more likely to develop a love for reading, which could lead to improved academic and personal growth.

### **Extensive reading practice in increasing students' reading efficacy**

Being one important element of motivation, self-efficacy positively correlates with motivation of individuals (Carroll & Fox, 2017; Yang et al., 2018). Bandura's concept of self-efficacy emphasises people's beliefs in their capabilities to attain goals through actions, which influences perseverance, resilience, and skill progress through time (Bandura et al., 1999). Aside from proving that extensive

reading improved students' motivation in reading, this study also found that the practice could improve students' reading efficacy.

“But because of this class I slowly started to be able to read novels as well as articles, and that made me happy.” (S1)

Student (S1) suggested that he experienced a positive emotional response to their improved reading skills, which could be an important motivator for continued reading and further skill development. The enjoyment and satisfaction that student (S1) felt from being able to read different reading materials: novels and articles, suggested that extensive reading could not only enhance his reading efficacy, but also increase engagement and enjoyment in reading activity.

Other student noted that they were able to gradually read novels as well as articles and this progress made them happy.

“... when I can finish them it feels very fun.” (S3)

Student (S3) also expressed enjoyment in completing reading materials, indicating a sense of accomplishment in her reading ability.

Both statements by student (S1) and (S3) were in line with the notion that extensive reading practice significantly improved students' reading efficacy, including motivation and self-confidence towards the skills (Yilmaz et al., 2020; Zhang & Milton, 2022). Extensive reading practice also enhanced students' reading proficiency and positively influenced their attitudes towards reading, not only improved students' reading efficacy but also had a positive impact on their motivation to read (C. Wang et al., 2012).

The feedback provided by students (S1) and (S3) showed a gradual improvement in their reading ability. Meanwhile, the enjoyment that (S3) expressed in completing different reading materials was consistent with the positive attitude towards reading that was observed in previous study (Zhang & Milton, 2022). This evidence suggested that extensive reading practice could not only increase students' reading efficacy, but also could lead to a sense of accomplishment and enjoyment in reading.

### **Extensive reading impact on students' curiosity on specific topics**

Motivated students will willingly explore challenging topics or reading materials, satisfying their curiosity. Even without incentives, motivated students engage in and enjoy reading activities to measure their foreign language reading skills, and they are prepared to put in extra effort to comprehend tough reading sections (Indrayadi, 2021). This will undoubtedly bring valuable benefits to their academic journey. The feedback from students taking English for General Reading also showed that extensive reading activity gave positive impact on their curiosity on specific topics.

“... It's like an article that praises me to be an fiction bookworms.” (S6)

As stated by student (S6), reading can lead to a sense of identity—such as a ‘bookworm’, and a feeling of being praised for one's interest in books which indicated that someone were open with new knowledges—including fiction. This



was in line with a notion that extensive reading could be associated with curiosity (Lake, 2014), providing the students the opportunity to explore the possibilities.

Aside from encouraging students to enjoy new knowledges, extensive reading provided ample opportunities for students to challenge them with further level of language learning, one of which by pushing them to face new vocabularies. Encountering new words and phrases in a meaningful context regularly would help them acquire plenty of new vocabularies. This exposure to new language helped them expand their vocabulary and improve their reading comprehension. According to a student's feedback, the extensive reading activity in English for General Reading class had a positive impact on their language acquisition, particularly on their vocabulary building.

“I'm more into vocabulary after reading the article.” (S15)

Student (S15) noted as being more into vocabulary after reading the article, indicating the impact of extensive reading on language acquisition. This supported the idea that extensive reading could significantly improve vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (Kim, 2012). This showed that extensive reading activities in the classroom had the potential to positively impact language acquisition, particularly related to vocabulary building, which can lead to overall improvement in students' reading comprehension.

Further, extensive reading provided students with exposure to various reading materials, which can help them explore different topics and broaden their understanding of various subjects.

“By reading new article every weeks, I guess that can make open my mind related to the certain issue” (S16)

A note from student (S16) supported the idea that extensive reading could lead to increased knowledge in general, supporting the idea that extensive reading could enhance students' curiosity and promote a desire for new knowledge (Lake, 2014). By being engaged in reading new articles on a regular basis, students can broaden their perspective and increase their curiosity about specific topics. This desire to learn more about specific issues were essential in learning. By reading new articles every week, students were exposed to different ideas and viewpoints that could challenge their existing knowledge and encourage them to explore new areas of interest.

Frequent reading was proven able to provide students with more opportunities to encounter new ideas and concepts, which could help increase their understanding and knowledge. Findings from this study, together with previous studies, also showed that extensive reading could support students in their pursuit of knowledge and understanding by providing them with regular access to new and diverse information (Klauda & Guthrie, 2015). Additionally, extensive reading could improve students' comprehension and understanding of complex texts, further highlighting the positive impact of extensive reading on students' knowledge acquisition (Beck et al., 2014). Therefore, the combination of the variety of reading materials and the frequent reading could help students expand their knowledge and understanding of various subjects.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that extensive reading experiences and structured reading programs can significantly enhance students' reading motivation, efficacy, and engagement in reading activities. The evidence provided in this discussion aligns with previous research, indicating that when students are exposed to reading materials that are engaging, relevant to their interests, and offered in a structured program, they are more likely to develop a love for reading, which can lead to improved academic and personal growth. By providing students with a wide range of reading materials and activities to choose from, increasing the likelihood of finding material that resonates with their interests, teachers can help cultivate a love of reading in their students. This can lead to a better understanding of reading strategies, improved comprehension skills, and a greater love for reading. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to encourage students to engage in regular reading activities and provide them with a variety of engaging reading material to support their academic and personal growth.

While this study provides valuable insights of how extensive reading experiences are beneficial on students' reading motivation and efficacy, further research can be conducted to explore the effectiveness of different types of reading materials and activities in improving reading motivation and efficacy. For example, future studies could investigate the impact of incorporating digital reading materials and interactive reading activities on students' reading motivation and efficacy. Additionally, research could be conducted to examine how incorporating different genres of reading material, such as graphic novels or poetry, can impact students' reading motivation and efficacy. Such research can provide educators with a better understanding of how to design effective reading programs that meet the diverse needs and interests of students.

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