

## ONLINE AND OFFLINE READING MATERIALS FROM STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

In this digital era, reading can be done anywhere and anytime. Nowadays, with the rapid development of technology, there are many learning sources available on online platforms such as websites. As a result, it also affected students' habits in reading. Moreover, reading online is different from reading offline. In reading offline, the students need printed reading materials such as books, novels, newspapers, or magazines. However, offline reading does not need any printed materials, except a computer, laptop, or smartphone. Students often have difficulties in choosing their reading materials when they are given the freedom to choose their materials from online or offline sources. In this article, the researcher aimed to find out the students' perspective on reading using online and offline materials as well as its benefits and drawbacks. This research used a descriptive qualitative research method. The researcher obtained the data from questionnaires, interviews, and field observation. There were 25 students involved in this research. The findings indicated that students usually read in their free time, they are familiar with e-book materials, students' reading motivation is affected by the formal features of a book, the printed book is easier to understand, both online and offline materials are interesting, the online platform is more update in giving news, and they like to read a book from both Indonesian and foreign authors.

**Keywords:** *Online, Offline, Reading materials*

### INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the skills that should be acquired by students in mastering English proficiency. In this digital age, the rapid growth of technology cannot be avoided. Thus, it also affected people's reading habits. Reading can be done not only through printed materials. The presence of electronic reading or e-reading has changed people's reading habits. Nowadays, they can

read through their laptops, smartphones, or tablets. In today's digital age, the nature of reading printed paper is shifting because of the escalating presence of e-reading or electronic reading (Tajuddin & Mohamad, 2019). It is in line with (Dahlstrom et al., 2013) study that 70% of undergraduate students around the world use laptops, 59% use smartphones, and 35% use tablets in class for academic purposes.

In Indonesia, reading plays an important role as one of the ways to measure students' understanding of English competency. It is expected that the existence of e-books will assist students in obtaining more resources escalating their reading competence. Ready access to academic e-books is also improving, although title availability is not sufficiently ubiquitous, and licensing arrangements are too challenging to make academic e-books a comprehensive solution for academic libraries at present (Walters, 2013). Both printed and e-books complete each other to provide detailed resources.

The teaching of reading at the university level nowadays also started to integrate printed and screen reading materials. The reason behind this is because of the easy access to technology where both students and lecturers are engaged in the use of technology. (Rockinson- Szapkiw et al., 2013) described how university students are increasingly using e-books rather than printed paper. It is due to the development of technology, and it automatically also influences how they learn to read. Besides, e-books provide an effective way of reading where students can read anywhere and everywhere. There is no barrier for them to access reading materials. Moreover, e-books are available online and can be accessed 24/7 from one's laptop or desktop, and more than one person can access the same e-book at any one time (Tajuddin & Mohamad, 2019). Moreover, online reading is an important skill for foreign language learners since there are many reading materials provided online (Son, 2013).

There have been several studies that supported the increase in the use of screen reading. A study by (Mangen et al., 2019) recommended that reading through computers had a good impact on the eyes because of the nature of the screen. (Rockinson- Szapkiw et al., 2013) described how electronic documents that optimize hypertext and multimedia to engage students can lead to improved learning outcomes. In addition, (Staiger, 2012) reviewed studies on the usage of e-books among academic communities and found that there is an agreement among the readers on the benefit of being able to access e-books from anywhere, at any time.

E-books provide several benefits for the readers. On the contrary, some people propose that screen reading materials are not efficient for reading materials and they prefer to read printed materials to comprehend the materials. The research by (Rockinson- Szapkiw et al., 2013) revealed that students chose to read e-text due to its cost and portability, yet the remaining students in the same study preferred to read printed text due to familiarity with print versions and the ability to highlight text and jot down their footnotes. It means that not all students agree that e-books or e-texts will ease them in comprehending reading materials.

The choice to use printed or screen reading materials is not only about its effectiveness and how students comprehend the materials. Recent studies prove that paper still continues to be the preferred means for reading activities (Solak, 2014). However, it is also related to health, when students engage too long with the screen, it will affect their eyes condition. The computer screen itself is not good for the eyes because the screen resolution, backlighting and LCD (liq-

uid-crystal display) screen that projects an adverse effect to students' visual processing of text (Mangen et al., 2019). Besides, the students disliked reading hypertext on computer screens and cited eyestrain, font size, web page backdrop colors, inability to take notes, and skipping lines as factors impacting their online reading performance (Son, 2013). The study concluded that laptops and desktop computers may not be much better for reading.

There are several studies conducted to dig more information about students' preference on reading printed version. (Tajuddin & Mohamad, 2019) conducted a study for several art students about their reading habits. The result found that students prefer to print e-books because it is difficult for them to comprehend the reading materials and computers strained their eyes. The research also concluded that many students found printed documents are easier to map-read and missed the ability to browse print books and journals. Some people say that reading an e-book is not like reading a printed book because the sensations when reading a printed book, such as the smell of the book, the weight of a book, the feeling when opening the next page, are missing when they read an e-book (Srirahayu, 2020). It is also in line with (Kuzmičová et al., 2017) that actions like turning a page or feeling the paper of a book produce a multisensory experience that increases the cognitive, affective, and emotional insertion in the subject matter. The changing nature and circumstances of reading, as digitization is growing, is a subject of debate that might influence our reading process (Bresó-Grancha et al., 2022).

This research aimed to find the result of students' perspectives of reading using printed and screen versions. It is expected that the result will be able to help both students and teachers in finding appropriate and suitable reading materials.

## **METHODS**

This research used a descriptive qualitative research design. The design follows the requirements proposed by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) which has an actual setting as a direct data source. The researcher serves as the key instrument in this research. This research is descriptive because the data are in the form of words recorded in interview transcripts, field notes, and personal documents. The researcher used a descriptive method to collect information and provide an overview of the student's views about online and offline reading materials. The participants of this study were 26 students from the third semester of the English Department involved in this study. In this study there are two instruments used, they are questionnaires and interviews. A questionnaire is a data collection method that is carried out by providing a series of written questions to be answered by the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of 10 open-ended questions aimed at collecting data from each participant. The questions in the questionnaire include the perceptions of English Education students about online and offline reading materials.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the questionnaire is various based on students' experiences in learning reading.

**Table 1. Result of questionnaire**

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
I like reading in my leisure time.	26.9%	65.4%	7.7%	-
I usually read the book in electronic version (E-books)	23.1%	46.2%	23.1%	-
Formal features of a book (thickness, font size, illustrations, etc.) affect my motivation in reading	38.5%	57.7%	-	-
I like reading a printed version of book because it can be understood easily	26.9%	57.7%	11.5%	-
Online articles or books are more interesting.	7.7%	61.5%	26.9%	-
Reading a printed version of book is boring	-	19.2%	53.8%	23.1%
I like reading news from online sources because it is more update	23.1%	65.4%	11.5%	-
I like reading textbook of foreign writers.	-	56%	40%	-
I like reading textbook of Indonesian writers.	30.8%	30.8%	7.7%	-

The table above only presents the data from the questionnaire. A detailed explanation will be given in the discussion below.

The total number of respondents who agree with the statement about reading in their free time was 65.4%. It means, most of the students agree to choose reading as their activity in their leisure time. Then, the next statement is about reading e-books. 46.2% of students agreed with this. This is due to the easy access to the internet, so they are familiar with the use of e-books in their daily activity. Most of their subject material is also provided in e-book versions. It is also supported (Son, 2013) that online reading is an important skill for foreign language learners since there are many reading materials provided online.

Furthermore, they also agree that the formal features of books influence their reading motivation. As many as 38.5% of students strongly agree and 57.7% of them agree with this statement. It proved that their reading motivation was mostly affected by the thickness, font size, and illustration of the book. From the interview results, they said that usually, they choose the book because of the title and the first cover of the book. Moreover, according to them, the interesting cover and title will attract them for further reading. It also works for choosing an e-book. (Budnyk et al., 2021) result of the study found that more than 70% of respondents said that a printed book is more convenient for the perception, processing, and memorization of information, 55.6% said that such reading "creates the feeling of a book", fascinates artistic design, etc.

Then, the statement about their preferences in reading printed books also obtained 26.9% strongly agree, 57.7% agree, and 11.5% disagree. Some students still prefer reading printed books to the electronic version. In the interview, they said that by reading printed books, they can underline and highlight important information easily. Thus, reading printed books gives them experiences such as touching and smelling the paper, and bringing it that they cannot find in reading e-books. The experience of flipping paper and physically touching the book directly is an experience that cannot be obtained from reading an eBook (Srirahayu, 2020). These recent

studies prove that paper continues to be the preferred means for reading activities (Solak, 2014).

On the contrary, some students said that they prefer e-books or online articles to printed versions. The distribution of percentage is 7.7% strongly agree, 61.5% agree, and 26.9% disagree with the statement. Reading e-books are more practical since they do not need to bring the book. The students can open the file of reading materials from their smartphones or laptops. A study done by (Rockinson- Szapkiw et al., 2013) revealed that students chose to read e-text due to its cost and portability. Another study by (Noyes & Garland, 2006) proposed that reading from paper led to better information retention and knowledge. In addition, (Tajuddin & Mohamad, 2019) found that e-books are available online and can be accessed 24/7 from one's laptop or desktop, and more than one person can access the same e-book at any one time.

Next, the statement that printed book makes them boring obtained the highest percentage on the disagree option with 53.8% and strongly disagree with 23.1%. It means that according to them, reading printed books is not a boring activity or in other words, they are interested in reading the printed version. The result of (Rockinson- Szapkiw et al., 2013) stated that the remaining students in the same study preferred to read printed text due to familiarity with print versions and the ability to highlight text and jot down their footnotes. Some people say that reading an e-book is not like reading a printed book because the sensations when reading a printed book, such as the smell of the book, the weight of a book, and the feeling when opening the next page, are missing when they read an e-book (Srirahayu, 2020). However, 19.2% of the respondents agreed with the statement. It means that they are not interested in reading the printed version of the book since it leads to eyestrain in reading long text (Son, 2013).

In this digital era, people is easier to update the news from online media. According to students', they prefer to read news from online media since it is more updated. The highest percentage was the agreeing option with 65.4%, while strongly agree obtained 23.1%. It showed that they are already familiar with the use of online media to upgrade the news or information. However, 11.5% of the students stated that they disagree with the statement since they do not engage with their laptops or smartphones all the time. It was discovered that media technologies which are more impressive and efficient in the dissemination of information have continued to replace print methods of information delivery more rapidly (Anyim, 2021). Furthermore, students' responses toward the authors of the book also varied. It can be concluded that students are interested in both foreign and Indonesian books. By reading English books they improve not only their English reading skills but also their knowledge and general English skills (Zur et al., 2022).

All the data above is a good consideration for knowing students' reading perspectives through online and offline materials. The results are varied based on students' experiences in reading. Thus, analyzing students' reading preferences is important to help us decide on reading materials that are suitable for students' needs.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that students' perspectives toward reading materials both online and offline are varied. They like to read in their leisure time. The reading materials also varied, several students preferred to read e-books, while the rest preferred to read printed book

versions. Based on the questionnaire and interview, the formal features of the book affect students' motivation to read. According to them, reading news from online media give more updated information for them than from printed media, such as magazine and newspaper. Moreover, they also like to read books by foreign authors, while the rest of the students often read books by Indonesian authors because they can understand the context easily.

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