

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is one of the four basic skills in the English language. It is a process of understanding words, sentences, or texts, and it is considered the most significant and practical skill (Patel & Jain, 2008; Komilovna, 2023). Any level of education should learn and practice this skill. It is because reading affects how people acquire knowledge from written text. Unlike speaking and listening, which most people can do automatically, reading must be taught and cannot be done unintentionally. Therefore, reading must be mastered by the students to understand any information for academic or social needs. Moreover, people can learn a lot, acquire knowledge, entertain themselves, and find solutions to problems through reading because reading is where most information is found. So, everyone must prioritize this skill.

Reading is a process that requires understanding and interpreting the meaning of printed words with various goals to determine the reader's comprehension. It can be a great way to expand people's language and knowledge. Reading exposes people to a wide range of subjects and topics, allowing them to learn different perspectives and expand their views of the world. This skill involves understanding and interpreting the meaning of written words (Cartwright, 2023). It implies that people with this skill can successfully understand and make sense of the information provided in written texts. In addition, this skill includes understanding the main ideas, identifying supporting details, and getting the intended message or purpose of the text.

Comprehension is the essence of reading itself. Reading comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and integrate it with the reader's knowledge. Reading comprehension is making meaning from text (Woolley, 2011). It states that comprehension is the fundamental aspect of reading, as it involves the ability to not only read the words on a page but also to process and understand their meaning. Moreover, it involves connecting the text and the reader's prior knowledge and experiences. It helps readers derive meaning from the text and know what they read. Thus, reading comprehension is the skill that allows people to comprehend and engage with written material fully.

Having the ability to comprehend the content of every reading passage in daily life is necessary, especially while studying a language like English. Furthermore, reading comprehension plays a vital role in achieving academic success. This is because the students are frequently tasked with comprehending complex texts to gain the concepts and ideas being presented. Therefore, by improving students reading comprehension skill, they can understand complex academic texts better and gain important knowledge. Hence, it is imperative to emphasize the significance of comprehending reading passages in everyday life.

In contrast, the students will learn a range of knowledge if they are able to comprehend through reading what they had not previously known. This is a crucial part of reading comprehension. This is because reading enables students to explore new ideas, concepts, and perspectives by reviewing what they already know. Additionally, reading also encourages students to learn more, think critically, and improve their language skills. Overall, the ability to comprehend through reading what was previously unknown is a valuable skill that opens doors to continuous learning and personal growth.

Developing good reading skills is essential for academic success and personal growth. One effective way to achieve this is by making reading a habit. By regularly engaging in reading activities, students can improve their comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills (Catts, 2022). They become accustomed to different textual and literary structures that can broaden their knowledge and understanding of various subjects. Integrating reading into daily routines allows students to develop good reading habits that will benefit them throughout their lives. Therefore, students should make reading a habit to develop good reading skills.

Reading habit is the act of making meaning. In addition, reading habit more accurately characterizes the automatic and unconscious processes in interpreting meaning from text (Zwiers, 2010; Miranda et al., 2023). Reading habit becomes an essential factor in being a successful reader. Reading habit is defined as how people arrange their understanding (Davidovitch et al., 2016). Thus, students with a good habit of reading would find it easier to understand the meaning of the written material. Students should have a good habit of reading because they can get information from what they read.

Moreover, having a good habit of reading will also help the students get wisdom from the cultural heritage and pass leisure time. In addition, the reading habit has advantages in opening and expanding students' knowledge of the new world. However, a study by Iftanti (2012) states that even though students have been reading in English since elementary school, they seem not to have good reading habit. The study explains that while students have been exposed to English reading materials, they may not have been taught how to approach texts, identify main ideas, make inferences, or analyze the content critically. Without these

essential skills, students may struggle to comprehend the meaning of the passages they read.

The previous research results from Iftanti (2012) show that the correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension was highly correlated or had a strong relationship. The results show there was a gap between the concept of what is expected and the phenomenon that happens in the actual situation. It is where the students still struggle to comprehend reading text since they do not have good reading habits. The students sometimes still find difficulties in reading text, and they rarely engage in reading, which makes them less familiar with the words in the texts. This is caused by the lack of interest in reading and the lack of students' motivation to learn, so students rarely use their time to read.

From the background of the study, the researcher observed that reading habit plays a crucial role in students' academic performance, particularly in the area of reading comprehension. Moreover, it has been acknowledged that students who have good reading habit tend to develop better reading comprehension. Therefore, the researcher was curious about whether reading habit have a significant correlation with the student's reading comprehension and wanted to prove the theories above by conducting research at SMP Widya Sakti. So, the researcher would like to know the correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Widya Sakti.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

A scientific investigation begins with a problem. Moreover, formulating a research problem in doing an investigation is crucial and valuable for the researcher

before doing research. Therefore, based on what has been described in the background of the study above, the research held research on the correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension, in which the researcher's question for the present study can be formulated as follows: is there any significant correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Widya Sakti in the academic year 2023/2024?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The research objective contains the description of the study consistently about what the research was trying to achieve in the present study. The researcher would like to determine whether there is any significant correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension. Therefore, a particular investigation is needed to provide a scientific solution to the research problem. Thus, in line with the background and the research problem above, the present study focused on the correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Widya Sakti in the academic year 2023/2024.

### **1.4 Limitation of the Study**

In doing research, efficiency and practical aspects must be considered. It was supposed to be an essential thing in doing research. To make the present study more specific and deeper, the present study was limited in investigating to be more significant in limitation of the study. Limitation itself was essential to make the discussion more specific; it could also avoid a broad discussion. Therefore, considering the complexity and broadness of the problem that was mentioned



above, the limitation of the study was formulated. In conclusion, the limitations of this research project should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings.

In the present study, the researcher focused on investigating the significant correlation between the reading habit and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Widya Sakti in the academic year 2023/2024. To determine the correlation between those variables, the researcher gave 30 items of statement in reading habit questionnaires to measure the reading habit and 30 items of short answer tasks to measure the student's reading comprehension. Besides, the student's reading habit in this study was limited to the aspects of attitude toward reading, time spent on academic reading, reading frequency, time spent on non-academic reading, and motivation in the academic environment. Furthermore, reading comprehension in this study was limited to the ability of the students to comprehend recount text.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of the anticipated study findings was one of the practical considerations that was considered when conducting the present research. In the present study, the researcher focused on the correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Widya Sakti in the academic year 2023/2024. The researcher hopes this research could provide information about the student's reading habit and reading comprehension. The researcher expected that the finding of the study would make a good contribution to the teaching-learning process in every school as follows:

Theoretically, the result of this study was expected to strengthen the theories about the correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension with more evidence. In addition, it was expected to be used as a source of information for actions or activities related to reading habit and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Widya Sakti in the academic year 2023/2024. Moreover, additional empirical evidence was expected to be used in future studies. Furthermore, it was expected that the results of this study would provide more information regarding the significance of reading habit, which could help students have better reading comprehension.

Practically, the results of the present study were expected to give information, provide informative feedback, and be beneficial for English teachers, students, and other researchers. For the English teachers, the researcher believes that English teachers would enhance the quality of their teaching of foreign languages and assist students in improving their reading habit and reading comprehension. In addition, the results of this study might influence students' mindsets and lead them to believe that reading plays a significant role in the teaching and learning process. For the other researchers, this study might contain information that other researchers could utilize to conduct their research on the correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension.

### **1.6 Definition of Key Term**

Key terms are common words used in the research to prevent misunderstanding and confusion among readers while reading this research. The key terms in the research should be limited to reduce a broad discussion, as mentioned above, and make it more specific. In addition to understanding this study

and its concepts, the researcher provided a clear operational definition. It could lead to the conclusion that the researcher needs to focus on the study. The following discussion could briefly and concisely define the key terms of the two variables that were used in the present study.

a. Reading Habit

Reading habit is defined as the routine reading activity that is done by the eighth-grade students of SMP Widya Sakti in the academic year 2023/2024 in receiving all the words that the students found in any book or written material to get information and entertainment based on their attitude toward reading, time spent on academic reading, reading frequency, time spent on non-academic reading, and motivation in the academic environment.

b. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as the ability of the eighth-grade students of SMP Widya Sakti in the academic year 2023/2024 to understand and interpret written material, which involves their ability to find out the general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual references of recount texts.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

Theoretical review is fundamental for the thesis. Its function is to give the meaning of a word in terms of the specific theories. All of the theories must be discussed clearly. It is realized that constructing theories of related literature is crucial. Moreover, the researcher should underline the theoretical constructs based on theories. The researcher was concerned with a theoretical review of some related theories that focus on the topic that was discussed in this study, which constructed and hoped to give practical significance and empirical evidence. The researcher would like to describe some theoretical frameworks related to the present study in this chapter. Therefore, the description of the concept is presented as follows: reading habit and reading comprehension.

##### **2.1.1 Reading Habit**

The term habit is a characteristic form of behavior. According to Wood and Neal (2007), the term habit is a repeated behavior, and it also becomes a repeated response over time. The statement means that repeated behavior is a form of repetition of actions in the same activity unconsciously. In other words, repeated behavior is the same as something people do regularly. Furthermore, according to Gardner (2012), habit is an abstract theory; in habit theory, there is no single correct definition. So, habit makes people repeat an action without being concerned about why they are doing so.

In addition, individuals need to cultivate self-awareness and mindfulness around their habits. By taking the time to reflect on their behaviors and understand the underlying motivations, individuals can gain a better understanding of why certain habits persist. This self-awareness can empower individuals to make intentional choices about their actions and align their behaviors with their self-concept and personal values (Caldwell & Hayes, 2016). Therefore, individuals can regain a sense of control over their actions. By becoming more aware of their habitual behaviors, individuals can try to avoid harmful patterns and consciously develop healthier habits.

Habit is a repeated action that involves a process of unconscious pattern. Behaviorists view habits as routines of behavior that are repeated regularly and tend to occur subconsciously (Wood & Neal, 2007). Behaviorists also believe that habits are acquired through a process of conditioning, where behaviors become linked to specific environmental cues. It reflects a person's personality, good or bad, and they go constantly and regularly. Moreover, habit play a significant role in shaping people's daily lives. Whether positive or negative, habits are formed through repetition and routine, and they deeply impact physical and mental well-being.

Habit is the constant behavior of the effort to adapt to the environment, which contains elements of affective feeling that are continuously obtained from exercise, imitation, and repetition. When people do some actions without thinking beforehand, it means that they do some habits. It also happens when people do not need more concentration and consideration. Habit can continue while people think about or pay attention to other things. Habit can be a powerful tool in transferring human behavior (Laborde et al., 2020). The result of that study also shows that

habits can help increase productivity and efficiency. Thus, habits are repetitive behaviors that help people adapt to their environment.

Habits are formed through repetition and become ingrained in daily routines. According to Nilsen et al. (2012), a habit is a behavior carried out without conscious thought and mainly without repetition until it loses its automaticity. Habit is an issue when something has been done repeatedly by someone without additional concentration or attention, and it is challenging to stop doing it. When people do something repeatedly, the brain forms strong connections that make it easier for them to keep doing that thing. This is why habits can be hard to break and become deeply set in people's brains. To change a habit, people need to make a conscious effort and be determined to overcome it. Thus, habits are formed through repetition and become deeply ingrained in our daily routines.

Reading habit is the practice of regularly engaging in reading for pleasure or gaining knowledge. The habit of reading is an idea that comes to mind for a split second and encourages readers to create meaning actively (Zwiers, 2010). After that, readers will continue actively generating meaning as they establish reading habits. How a person organizes their understanding is another definition of a reading habit. It involves setting aside dedicated time for reading and making it a consistent part of someone's daily routine. To sum up, a reading habit entails consistently participating in reading activities for enjoyment or acquiring information.

In addition, reading habit implies that readers must read a lot to comprehend what they read. Moreover, reading habit is a gateway to knowledge acquisition and a tool for developing people's personalities and cognitive abilities (Iftanti, 2012).

According to this theory, people's intelligence and attitudes toward things can improve if reading becomes a habit. When individuals engage in reading as a habit, they are exposed to various ideas, perspectives, and information. This exposure helps broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world. Thus, individuals must read extensively to comprehend their reading content.

Developing a reading habit can benefit individuals of all ages and backgrounds. Furthermore, reading habits help students gain knowledge and wisdom from heritage culture and are very helpful in spending their spare time (Patel & Jain, 2008). Developing a reading habit can enhance knowledge and understanding of various subjects. In addition, reading exposes people to different perspectives, ideas, and information, whether reading books, newspapers, magazines, or online articles. Furthermore, reading habit broadens the horizons and helps to stay informed about current events, scientific advancements, historical events, and much more.

Developing a habit of reading is crucial for individuals to benefit from the various aspects of reading fully. It not only enhances language skills and cognitive abilities but also provides pleasure and entertainment. Moreover, there are some aspects of reading habits. The reading aspects will help the readers maximize the benefits of reading and enrich their overall reading experience. Embracing the aspect of reading habit is a pathway to personal and intellectual growth. Gaona and González (2011) state that there are seven indicators of reading habits. The indicators are as follows:

1. Attitude toward reading is the reason for how the students report their thoughts, feelings, and how they behave when it comes to reading.

2. Time spent on academic reading is how the students devote their time to reading academic books, especially for their academic subject.
3. Reading frequency is the frequency of how often the students report reading books during their free time.
4. Time spent on non-academic reading is the time the students dedicate themselves to reading books related to literature that are not directly related to their academic subject.
5. Motivation in the academic environment is the frequency of how often the students report that the teacher uses activities to encourage engagement with psychology literature.
6. Books read is the number of books the students report having read in the last three months.
7. Motivation in the family environment is often reported by the students on the purchase of books, recommending books, and reading interest in the family.

However, in the present study, the researcher only applied five indicators. Among those indicators, the indicator books read and motivation in the family environment were not considered in the present study as they were not really in line with most of the students in Indonesia. It is because of the lack of access to books and limited resources, as well as cultural and socioeconomic factors, that can hinder students in Indonesia from developing reading habits. Based on those theories about reading habits, in this study, the researcher focused on the theory from Zwiers (2010). This is because reading habit is defined as the automatic process of understanding the meaning of the written form.



### 2.1.2 Reading Comprehension

Reading is an activity to get information or ideas from the text. Reading can be called a process of understanding the passage the readers read. In addition, Johnson (2008) states that reading is the practice of using text to create meaning. In other words, reading can be described as a cognitive process that involves comprehending and making sense of the passage or text being read. When individuals read, they embark on a journey of understanding. By actively engaging with the text, readers extract information, form connections, and construct a mental representation of the content. So, reading is an active and complex process that involves understanding the entirety of the passage being read.

Reading is an activity that involves both perceptual and cognitive processes. Reading is about understanding written text (Patel & Jain, 2008). It is a complex activity that involves both perceptions and thoughts. Reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition is the initial stage of reading, where readers decode and identify individual words. It involves the ability to recognize and pronounce words based on their visual appearance accurately and swiftly. Comprehension, on the other hand, is the goal of reading. It involves understanding and interpreting the meaning conveyed by the words and sentences.

In addition, real readers should try to understand and catch the ideas of the text they are reading. Real readers do something with what they read. So, reading is more than just getting information. It is also about applying that information to use it in their daily lives (Barus et al., 2021). Real readers act on what they have read; they might solve issues, apply new ideas, make decisions, or even share their

insights. Therefore, readers think reading is essential when they use it to achieve a goal that is important to them, to achieve their purpose, or to answer questions they want to answer. So, the readers should try to generate information from the text they read to gain knowledge and make their reading activity worthwhile.

Reading is an essential tool for academic success. Moreover, reading is regarded as the most dominant skill in learning any subject because the ability to read is not only performance to pronounce the passage but also the understanding of the message from the passage or text. Reading allows people to stay updated with their knowledge (Patel & Jain, 2008). In addition, when students learn English by reading many kinds of texts, articles, stories, books, or other sources that use English, it can give many advantages for them. They can get new vocabulary, the structure and grammar that are used, and the information that is provided in that text. It means that reading can improve their knowledge and skill in learning a language like English.

Reading and comprehension are two things that cannot be separated from each other and are highly interrelated. Comprehension is the essence of reading itself. Reading comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and integrate it with the reader's knowledge. Fundamental skills required in efficient reading comprehension are knowing the importance of words and understanding the meaning of words from a discourse context. Reading comprehension is called reading comprehension only if the readers are able to comprehend the meaning of the text (Septiyana et al., 2021). It means that if the readers can read but do not comprehend the meaning of the text, it means they do not have reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand the information that has been read. Comprehending what is being read can significantly enhance the reading experience and allow readers to engage more deeply with the content. Reading helps people's knowledge grow and develops their other linguistic skills (Attiyat, 2019). Not only the readers can comprehend what they are reading, but they are also able to extract information, draw inferences, and make sense of the writer's message. Therefore, reading comprehension is a vital component of the reading process. This is because reading involves understanding the information presented in the text, making connections, and engaging with the material on a deeper level.

Reading comprehension has some levels. According to Nurwanti et al. (2019), there are three levels of reading comprehension, namely literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, and critical comprehension. Literal comprehension refers to information explicitly stated in the written text. To recognize a detailed message, readers need to understand the basic meaning of the words, link the grammar theories, and arrange all of the information presented in the passage. Then, inferential comprehension means the process of how a reader derives an implicit idea in the passage. The reader needs the ability to detect the mood of the material, such as the authors' tone, purpose, and attitude, to make generalizations, to see the relationship, and to draw conclusions at the end of a story. The last level of reading comprehension is critical comprehension. It is where the reader should be actively reacting to the information.

In addition, reading comprehension is not just about understanding the literal meaning of the words in a text but also about interpreting the deeper meaning and implications of the text. To achieve this, students are required to understand the

following aspects of reading. They are the ability to find general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual references. The general information refers to the overall context and purpose of the text. Then, the particular information relates to the details and facts that support the text's main idea. Furthermore, the textual meaning refers to the interpretation and analysis of the text. In addition, the textual references refer to the connection and comparison of the text with other texts, so it requires the students to connect and compare the texts they are reading with the other texts or words.

Reading comprehension is a process of extracting and constructing meaning. Reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (Mullis & Martin, 2019). It means that many interactions include the readers in the process of understanding the written text. It is related to what the readers want to know about written text. By reading, readers can get some points. To get the information from the text, the readers have to comprehend the whole text. By combining those aspects, the readers will succeed in reading comprehension and be able to obtain the specific information in the text.

Moreover, in the process of reading, some obstacles may be faced. According to Brown (2006), readers must overcome two main challenges. First, the students must be able to sense basic top-down, conceptually driven comprehension strategies and bottom-up strategies for processing individual letters, words, and sentences. Second, readers of second languages must learn proper formality and content. Students can accomplish all these goals if they can understand and comprehend the reading text. Based on those theories about reading comprehension, in this study,

the researcher focused on the theory from Patel and Jain (2008). It is because reading comprehension refers to someone's ability to understand written words.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Empirical reviews were provided to highlight relevant studies that were like the current research. An empirical review examines relevant research that has already been done and considers how that research relates to the current study. It is essential to review those researches, which can reflect the present research. The knowledge of empirical evidence can help the researcher avoid accidental replication of previous studies' results and place the researcher in a better position to deduce the significance of this result. Additional studies have employed reading habits and reading comprehension as the research variables. The following information was provided about the relevant research that served as references.

The first relevant study was carried out by Arta (2021) entitled "The Correlation Between Reading Habit and Reading Comprehension of The Eighth-Grade Students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar in Academic Year 2020/2021". The research aims to determine the significant correlation between students' reading habit and reading comprehension. The researcher involved 32 students who were chosen by cluster sampling method. In addition, the research instruments were in the form of questionnaires and multiple-choice reading tests. According to the research findings, it could be found that there was a significant correlation between the student's reading habit and their reading comprehension.

The second research was conducted by Sartika et al. (2020) entitled "The Correlation between Students' Reading Habit and their Reading Comprehension."



The study will observe the correlation between students' reading habit and reading comprehension. The researcher involved 64 samples that were taken by using purposive sampling. The research instruments used to collect the required data were questionnaires and multiple-choice tests. The result states a significant positive correlation between students' reading habit and reading comprehension. In addition, the reading comprehension test was about descriptive text.

Furthermore, the results of those studies showed a significant correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension. However, there was no time allotment for completing the questionnaire and the test in both studies. In addition, the multiple-choice test instrument in both studies was not suitable to measure reading comprehension because it allows students to guess the answer, even if they are not fully understanding the reading passage. Therefore, in the present study, the researcher wanted to provide a time allotment to finish the reading habit questionnaire and the reading test. Moreover, the reading test was in the form of a short answer task to measure their reading comprehension. The researcher also provided clear instructions on what kind of reading text the students must read in the test. In addition, the researcher focused on testing the student's reading comprehension of the recount text.

### **2.3 Hypothesis**

A hypothesis is a prediction of what will be found as the outcome of a research project. A hypothesis typically focuses on the correlation between two different variables studied in this research. It is usually based on both theoretical expectations about how things work and already existing scientific evidence. Therefore, the

hypothesis proposed by the researcher in the present research was as follows: there is a significant correlation between students' reading habit and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Widya Sakti. The statistical hypothesis is formulated as follows:

1. Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ): There is a significant correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students in SMP Widya Sakti in the academic year 2023/2024.
2. Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no significant correlation between reading habit and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students in SMP Widya Sakti in the academic year 2023/2024.

