CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

To master English, it is important to develop four fundamental skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading aims to provide information to the reader. It is an active process where readers connect information in the text with their existing knowledge. According to Nunan (1995), reading involves proficient readers combining text information with their background knowledge to construct meaning, with comprehension being the goal. Reading skill is crucial because students' success in their studies heavily relies on their reading skill. Students need reading to acquire information and knowledge. Sometimes, students require more time to comprehend texts slowly. This becomes problematic when they need to comprehend a text within a limited timeframe. Therefore, the researcher will focus on teaching reading comprehension.

Reading is a fundamental skill for acquiring knowledge. Dorn & Soffos (2005) explains that reading is a complex process involving a series of cognitive actions that collaborate to construct meaning, and it requires active engagement from the reader. For many learners, reading is the most critical skill to master for building knowledge from the information they read. When students engage with a text, their cognitive actions must work together to create meaning and extract information. To gain knowledge from reading, a reader must identify printed words and sentences from start to finish. A reader will be successful if they can discern the meaning to obtain information. Supporting this view, Moreillan (2007) states that reading is about creating meaning from printed or visual information.

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In the reading process, comprehending the text is the most crucial aspect. Without proper comprehension skills, students cannot effectively understand what they read. Richards et al. (2014) state that reading comprehension involves perceiving a written text to grasp its content. It is the ability to understand and extract information from a written source, whether the information is explicitly stated or implied. According to Boardman et al. (2007), reading comprehension extends beyond mere responses to the text. It is a multi-faceted, highly intricate process involving numerous interactions between readers and their prior knowledge, as well as their use of reading strategies. Additionally, it includes variables related to the text itself, such as the reader's interest in the text and their understanding of different text types. Consequently, the information students glean from reading becomes valuable. By comprehending the text, students can acquire a wealth of new knowledge.

Additionally, student interest serves as a powerful motivator that energizes students in their reading endeavors. According to Hidi et al. (2022), interest as a unique motivational variable and a psychological state that arises during interactions between individuals and their objects of interest, characterized by increased attention, concentration, and emotional engagement. This means that interest can positively influence students' attitudes towards reading. A positive mindset enhances students' attention and concentration while reading. According to Erdiyasa (2020), high interest leads to greater comprehension, often enabling a child to read beyond their measured reading ability. This indicates that a reader's interest plays a crucial role in understanding a text. Therefore, teachers should provide texts that capture students' interest and create an engaging classroom

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environment. O'Donoghue (2007) suggests that several factors influence reading comprehension, including purpose, active engagement, types of text, the quality of literacy instruction, interest, and independent practice. This implies a correlation between these factors and reading comprehension.

Furthermore, several previous studies support the theory that there is a significant correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension. For instance. Alfatihah & Tyas (2022) conduct a study and found a significant correlation between students' reading interest and reading comprehension of students in the English Language Education study program at Brawijaya University. Likewise, Sandika (2022) finds a significant relationship between reading interest and reading comprehension of eighth grade students at SMPN 1 Sukawati. This finding strengthens the idea that increasing reading interest is closely related to increasing reading comprehension. Therefore, based on the explanation provided, reading interest can significantly influence students' reading comprehension and impact the overall learning process. Given this background, the researcher is both curious and highly motivated to investigate the significant correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension. The researcher wants to prove the theories above by conducting research at SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi and try to figure out whether there is significant correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension.

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1.2 Research Problem

Based on the background of the study described above, the eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi are struggling to locate general information, specific details, textual references, and meanings within their reading materials. The

researcher seeks to explore whether there is a significant relationship between students' interest in reading and their reading comprehension. Consequently, the research problem can be stated as: Is there a significant correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi in academic year 2024/2025?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Every research study has its specific objectives, which succinctly outline what the research aims to achieve. The objective of the study should align with the background and the research problem that has been formulated. The goals of any scientific investigation are always directed towards finding a scientific solution to the research problem previously determined. In relation to this, the objective of this research is to determine whether there is a significant correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi in academic year 2024/2025.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

The limitation of the study is crucial to maintain focus and prevent discussions from straying beyond the main topic. It ensures the study remains accurate, in-depth, and specific. Therefore, this study aims to determine whether there is a significant correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi in the academic year 2024/2025. Additionally, it seeks to analyze how different levels of reading interest influence students' comprehension abilities, offering insights for educators to improve learning strategies. This focus helps provide practical and actionable findings for the school's academic development.

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This study focuses on examining the correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension among eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi in the academic year 2024/2025. In this study, the researcher focuses on discussing two aspects of reading interest; individual interest and situational interest. Related to reading comprehension the researcher focuses on identifying general information, specific information, textual meaning and textual references in relation to descriptive texts that describe a person, place, and animal.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The researcher focuses on examining the relationship between reading interest and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi in the academic year 2024/2025. This study aims to yield findings that hold both theoretical value and practical benefits, which will be discussed in detail in the subsequent sections. Furthermore, the research seeks to shed light on how fostering a love for reading can enhance students' comprehension skills. It also aims to provide valuable recommendations for educators to develop strategies that promote reading interest and improve academic outcomes. The results of this study are anticipated to be important and useful both theoretically and practically, as follows:

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Theoretically, the findings of this investigation are expected to strengthen and expand upon existing theories by providing additional empirical evidence regarding the correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi in academic year 2024/2025. Furthermore, these findings can serve as a valuable reference for future studies exploring the relationship between students' reading interest and reading comprehension. Additionally, the results are expected to be a useful reference for

other researchers conducting similar investigations.

Practically, the results of this study are beneficial for English teachers, eighth-grade students, and other researchers. For teachers, the findings provide insights that can help improve understanding of the correlation between students' reading interest and reading comprehension. For students, the study highlights the importance of developing reading skills to acquire more knowledge and information. For other researchers, the findings serve as a valuable reference for future research on the relationship between reading interest and reading comprehension.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid confusion and enhance understanding, two key terms are defined: reading interest and reading comprehension. Additionally, the researcher provides operational definitions for these important key terms as follows:

1. Reading interest in this study refers to the eighth-grade students' interest to read materials and engage in reading activities. It covers individual interest and situational interests.
2. Reading comprehension is operationally defined as the ability of eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi in the academic year 2024/2025 to understand general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual references within descriptive texts.

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CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This chapter provides a theoretical overview that draws on relevant literature related to the topic. It aims to establish the foundational knowledge for the research, emphasizing the importance of theoretical constructs in scientific inquiry and the potential for practical significance and empirical evidence. The chapter focuses on two main areas: reading interest and reading comprehension, exploring their significance and relationship within the context of the study.

2.1.1 Reading Interest

Reading is a skill that improves through practice. To comprehend various types of texts, readers need supportive skills (Snow, 2002). Different texts serve different purposes, prompting readers to employ varying reading methods. When students find texts interesting, they are motivated to read them frequently, which enhances their learning process. Interest, in this context, arises from the dynamic interaction between individuals, objects, and their environment, facilitating effective learning experiences. Interest in reading not only enhances engagement but also fosters deeper comprehension of texts. When students are genuinely interested in what they read, they are more likely to invest time and effort into understanding and interpreting the material effectively (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

Reading interest is a motivational aspect that encourages people to engage deeply in reading a text. Students will read actively if they are interested in the reading activity. Consequently, they will view reading as a habitual activity. "Interest greatly influences reading activeness. Achievements in reading are also

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dependent upon the student's motivational reading, and poor reading or reading failure may be caused by a lack of interest. To achieve in reading, the students must want to read (Dechant, 1982)"

Reading interest refers to a significant and profound engagement, driven by a sense of enjoyment, that motivates individuals to read willingly. It reflects a personal inclination toward reading activities, supported by a positive emotional connection. Furthermore, it indicates a voluntary and sustained desire to explore various reading materials, be it for leisure, knowledge acquisition, or self-development. This intrinsic motivation fosters a habit of reading that is not influenced by external pressure but by genuine curiosity and satisfaction derived from the activity itself. (Herman in Yunita, 2018). Additionally, Sinambela in Rahayu (2015) states that reading interest arises when someone enjoys reading and understands its benefits. According to Sadoski (2001), reading interest motivates readers to comprehend the main idea of a text..

Hidi (2001:100) explains that the connection between interest and attention is multifaceted. In studies examining this relationship, attention is often evaluated by measuring reading speed and reaction times to secondary tasks. Several hypotheses are proposed: (a) heightened interest contributes to improved learning outcomes, (b) greater interest leads to increased attention, which can be observed through slower reading speeds and delayed reaction times to secondary tasks, and (c) the additional time spent engaging with the tasks can be directly linked to the learning process of the students.

Similarly, McDaniel et al. (2001:101) suggest that interest can enhance the selective allocation of attention, which may slow down the pace of text processing.

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This heightened interest triggers an automatic focus of attention, freeing cognitive resources that, in turn, facilitate faster information processing. To assess the processing time required for texts, reaction times to secondary tasks are measured. This approach enables researchers to compare reaction times during the initial and latter parts of a story. Moreover, these measurements provide valuable insights into how attention shifts and cognitive load vary throughout the reading process. By understanding these dynamics, educators and researchers can design materials that better sustain reader engagement and improve comprehension.

Interest refers to concentrated attention on a lesson or activity, driven by the learner's appreciation for or positive emotional connection to its content or process. According to Hidi and Renninger (2006), interest is both a psychological state and a tendency to reengage with certain objects, events, or ideas. It involves active attention, engagement, or both, directed toward specific content, which provides opportunities for meaningful actions. According to Hidi (2001), two aspects influence students' interest: individual interest and situational interest. Individual interest refers to a lasting tendency to engage with specific topics or activities whenever opportunities arise. In contrast, situational interest is activated in the moment and emerges as a reaction to something in the environment that captures attention and motivates individuals to focus and explore further.

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The researchers can also determine students' interest in English texts from their awareness of reading specific texts, which arises when students have the desire to do so. This interest can also be observed through students' attention to English texts, whether or not they make an effort to comprehend them. When students read English texts, they only understand what they focus on. In conclusion, having an

interest in reading means having the motivation to read and actively seeking self-understanding and a sense of self-worth through reading.

2.1.2 Reading Comprehension

Reading is an activity that connects one idea to another and serves as a primary method of obtaining information from written material. It plays a crucial role in language learning, especially English, as it helps learners understand linguistic structures, cultural nuances, and contextual usage. Johnson (2008) highlights that reading is an active process where readers retrieve information and build their language proficiency. By engaging with texts, learners not only enhance their vocabulary but also develop a deeper understanding of the target language, enabling them to communicate more effectively.

Moreover, reading provides learners with essential exposure to diverse language forms and contexts. This exposure is vital for improving comprehension and fluency, as well as fostering critical thinking. Through consistent reading practice, individuals can strengthen their ability to analyze, interpret, and apply information from texts, making it an indispensable component of language acquisition Boardman et al. (2007)

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Reading constitutes a crucial skill for students studying English as a foreign language, essential for their success in language acquisition. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, "comprehension" refers to the process of transferring thoughts from the author's mind to the reader's mind, making it a crucial part of communication. Comprehension is the essence of reading because the main goal of written language is to communicate a message effectively. This process also involves the retrieval and interpretation of the abstract, deep structural relations

underlying sentences. Without comprehension, the act of reading would merely be decoding symbols without understanding. Therefore, comprehension is a fundamental skill for gaining meaning from written texts.

Johnson (2008) explains that comprehension skills are strategies readers use to retrieve information and construct meaning from expository texts. These skills involve a series of thinking processes, broken down into steps, used to comprehend the text. Comprehension, therefore, is a process of understanding a text or constructing meaning from it. It is not a passive activity but a dynamic interaction between the reader and the text. This construction process integrates various cognitive functions to derive meaning.

Additionally, Smith et al. (2021) defines reading comprehension as the ability to process text and understand its meaning. This involves extracting and establishing meaning simultaneously through the collaboration of the written language and the reader's cognitive processes. Effective reading comprehension allows students to grasp the main points and underlying messages within a text. It is a skill that requires practice and development over time. Students must actively engage with the text to understand and interpret its content fully.

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To comprehend a text, students need to merge their existing knowledge with the new information provided. Boardman et al. (2007) explains that reading comprehension involves constructing meaning by coordinating several complex processes, such as word reading, word and world knowledge, and fluency. These comprehension skills are cumulative, with each skill building upon the previous one, thereby improving the reader's overall understanding. This incremental approach guarantees a deeper and more thorough grasp of the text. As students develop these

skills, they become more adept and confident readers.

Based on Brown (2003: 206) language assessment theory, several criteria are commonly used to measure students' reading comprehension abilities. These include understanding the main idea or topic of the text, recognizing expressions, idioms, and phrases in context, and making inferences about implied details. Additionally, comprehension involves understanding grammatical features, scanning for specific details, and excluding unstated facts. These criteria provide a structured approach to evaluate a reader's comprehension skills comprehensively. By assessing these areas, educators can identify students' strengths and areas for improvement, guiding their instructional strategies accordingly.

2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical review is a necessary component that provides empirical evidence to support this research. This evidence is gathered from studies conducted at other universities. Utilizing empirical evidence helps the researcher avoid inadvertently duplicating previous study findings and aids in defining and clarifying the concepts of the study. In this research, the focus is on understanding the relationship between students' reading interest and reading comprehension. Previous researchers have explored similar topics, examining the correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension. These empirical reviews are detailed as follows:

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The first similar research conducted by Alfatihah & Tyas (2022) titled "The Correlation between Undergraduate-Students' Reading Interest and their Reading Comprehension" as an example. The aim of this study was to gather empirical evidence regarding the relationship between students' reading interest and their

reading comprehension of the English Education study program at Universitas Brawijaya. The results of this study indicate that there is a significant relationship between the reading interest of undergraduate students and their reading comprehension. The significance value obtained is 0.022, which is less than 0.05, indicating a correlation. This correlation is positive but weak, with an r value of 0.356, meaning that the higher the reading interest of the students, the better their reading comprehension, although the strength of this relationship is considered low.

The strengths of this study are including its theoretical grounding in expert literature on reading interest and comprehension, which provided clear guidelines for data collection methods. Regarding the weaknesses, one limitation was noted: the reading comprehension test and questionnaire was administered without a specific time limit, resulting in prolonged completion times and potential issues with test integrity. However, in the present study researcher will add time limits to complete the test and questionnaire to make strict deadline for the tasks was clearly. The researcher adopted an assessment rubric from Brown (2003) to standardize evaluation criteria.

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The second study was conducted by Sandika (2022) under the title "The Correlation between Students' Reading Interest and Students' Reading Comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Sukawati in Academic Year 2011/2022". The objective of this study was to determine whether there is a correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension among eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Sukawati. The research employed a cluster random sampling technique, with a sample of 39 students. Data were collected through a

questionnaire on reading interest and a multiple-choice reading comprehension test, which were statistically analyzed using the Pearson product-moment correlation and T-test. The results showed a correlation coefficient of 0.617, indicating a significant correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension.

The strength of this study is, the researcher use of cluster random sampling ensures a more representative sample, allowing for better generalization of the results and appropriate statistical methods like Pearson product-moment provide strong evidence of the correlation between reading interest and comprehension. Additionally, the use of questionnaires and multiple-choice tests effectively measures the key variables. However, there are also limitations. The small sample size (39 students) may reduce the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, due to time constraints, the results obtained may not accurately represent the actual conditions. In this study, the researcher will extend the data collection period to ensure more reliable and stable results.

The study concluded that a significant relationship exists between reading interest and reading comprehension. This correlation was evident across the two studies analyzed. The first study applied random sampling to select its sample group, ensuring a diverse representation of participants. In contrast, the second study implemented cluster random sampling to obtain a more targeted sample. This method focused on selecting specific groups for more focused analysis. Despite the difference in sampling techniques, both studies used questionnaires as the primary data collection tool. This consistency in methodology reinforced the reliability of the findings. The studies emphasized the role of reading interest as a

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crucial factor in enhancing reading comprehension.

In the present study, the researcher chose to implement cluster sampling to select the sample. A total of 102 students were included as participants, providing a sufficient sample size for analysis. The sampling method allowed the researcher to focus on specific student groups, ensuring the inclusion of relevant participants. For data collection, two main instruments were used. The first was a questionnaire, which aimed to assess the students' level of reading interest. The second instrument was a short answer task designed to measure the students' reading comprehension abilities. Data was gathered through Google Forms, which provided a convenient and accessible platform for respondents to complete the instruments.

2.3 Hypothesis

A hypothesis is used to define the relationship between two variables. The purpose of a hypothesis is to find the answer to the research. A formalized hypothesis will force the researcher to think about the results they should look for as a correlation. The first variable is called the independent variable. The second is called dependent variables. The independent variable is the factor that is controlled by the researcher and the dependent variable is a measure of the effect of the independent variable. In this present study, the hypothesis is stated as follows:

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a. Alternative Hypothesis (Ha)

   There is a significant correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension at eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi in academic year 2024/2025.

b. Null Hypothesis (H_0)

   There is no significant correlation between reading interest and reading

comprehension at eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi in academic year 2024/2025.

