

Students' Perception of Webtoon as a Self-Directed Learning Medium for Reading Skill

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Abstract: This research aims to describe Students' Perception of Webtoon as a Self-Directed Learning Medium for Reading Skills. Further investigation into this issue was required because Webtoon is considered a medium that enhances students' reading skills. This research uses mixed methods, with questionnaires as the main instrument and interviews as support. The object of this research was Webtoon for English learning medium. Through 16 questionnaire items distributed to 48 students, the research found a mean of 76% from 4 indicators: English learning motivation, students' reading interest, self-directed learning medium, and students' reading skills. This research found that students believe Webtoon could enhance their English learning motivation and reading interest. Furthermore, students believe that the efficacy and accessibility of Webtoon make it an appropriate medium for learning English independently. Although students encounter certain challenges, it does not reduce the value of Webtoon as a medium for learning English because they feel a positive influence on their reading skills. As a result, students believe Webtoon was not only a fun activity but could also serve as a suitable medium for learning English.

Keywords: Reading Skill, Students' Perception, Webtoon

Introduction

Students in Indonesia start learning to read in elementary school, and they learn to read with teachers or parents at home. However, it is unfortunate that English reading comprehension lessons are not the main subject at school. Gusmeri (2020) states that the main subjects of learning English at school are learning to speak, grammar, and vocabulary. Although grammar and vocabulary are the main focus of learning English, many students still have difficulty understanding English sentences well due to their lack of reading comprehension skills. According to Lee (2017), students' problems in reading comprehension are due to their lack of proficiency in decoding skills, vocabulary, and the ability to connect ideas within and between sentences. Students' difficulties in understanding sentences are due to poor reading comprehension skills. In this case, reading activities will become boring because students do not understand what they read, so that students' interest in reading decreases. Reading is not a skill that can only be learned at school with a teacher. In the effort to enhance students' English reading skills, it is necessary to implement the method of self-directed learning.

Self-directed learning is a learning system that enables students to acquire knowledge independently across various subjects through the media that they prefer. According to Gibbons (2002), Self-directed learning is a student's effort to improve knowledge, skills, and achievements that are self-driven and relatively independent. From this statement, students need to possess intrinsic learning motivation to apply self-directed learning. Student motivation in learning activities plays an essential role in determining success in the self-directed learning process. Students' learning motivation can be influenced by at least two factors: the study subject and the learning media.

According to Miarso (2009), learning media serves as a mediator to effectively communicate certain goals and objectives, thus stimulating students' emotions, thoughts, motivation, and focus, ultimately encouraging learning. The purpose of using learning media is to facilitate student comprehension of the learning material. In the present era of rapid technological advancement, multimedia has emerged as a prevalent learning medium due to its ease of use and the ability to capture student's attention. The use of multimedia in learning is expected to encourage active student engagement and enhance independent knowledge building (Holley & Dobson, 2008). Therefore, instructional media is crucial in determining the effectiveness of students' self-directed learning to develop their intellectual capabilities and acquire new knowledge.

One of the multimedia that has the potential to be a learning medium is the Webtoon app. An application that allows users to explore comics in various languages, both for free and for a fee. Webtoon is a term developed in the early 2000s by combining the words "Web" and "Cartoon," which specifically refers to a form of digital comic released online in chapters (Man, 2023). The colorful visuals, diverse narratives, and effortless accessibility of Webtoon via internet-connected smartphones have made it a preferred educational medium among students. McVicker (2007) states that Webtoon, as a visual comic, enhances and extends language use. The text, combined with colorful pictures, attracts the attention of readers. Besides being interesting to read, it makes reading less challenging to understand by examining the pictures presented. Considering these advantages, Webtoon can be a unique and effective educational medium for students.

Several studies have shown the advantages of using Webtoon as instructional media. Ramos & Prestoza (2022) found that Webtoon media facilitates easy comprehension of learning, particularly for narrative. Because engaging visuals help students concentrate and quickly grasp the main idea of a story or lesson, Webtoon can stimulate students' interest in reading texts. Webtoon can be implemented in the classroom as a media format due to the potential to enhance student learning outcomes (Ali & Emirati, 2021). Webtoon can help students gain a deeper understanding of a subject, enabling them to find the answer. On the other hand, Maharani (2021) discovered that using Webtoon to teach vocabulary is beneficial. Students' vocabulary achievement skills may benefit from it. As a result, Webtoon not only helps students learn English but also has the potential to make the process more engaging and exciting.

Based on previous research and explanations above, the researchers found several benefits of Webtoon as an English learning medium. To improve students' English skills, fun learning media needs to be used so that students can be more actively involved in learning. This is related to the problems that occur in students. Students tend to get bored

quickly and lack motivation to learn English, which causes their reading skills to not improve. Therefore, to distinguish this research from others, researchers are interested in finding out how students' perceptions of Webtoon as a medium that was present for English language learning independently deal with the problem of poor student reading skills.

Methodology

This research uses a mixed methods approach. Mixed methods are research in which investigators collect and analyze data, integrate findings, and draw conclusions using qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or inquiry program (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). In this study, the researcher used a sequential explanatory design, a research methodology that uses a two-stage design in which quantitative and qualitative data were combined sequentially. The explanatory strategy in mixed methods research involves two consecutive stages. The first phase involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data, followed by gathering and interpreting qualitative data in the subsequent phase (Ivankova et al., 2006). This research design was employed to determine the students' perception of Webtoon as a self-directed learning medium for reading skills.

This research was conducted at a private junior high school in Purwokerto, Banyumas Regency. This research was conducted at Featured English Class, which uses various English learning methods and media. Arikunto (2006) says that in cases with a population size below 100, including all individuals as samples is preferable. Meanwhile, Fraenkel & Wallen (2009) argue that correlational research uses appropriate sampling methods to choose samples, with a minimum of 30 participants generally considered acceptable. According to the two opinions provided, the researchers' sample size for this study consisted of 48 students.

This study uses two instruments for data collection technique: a questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire comprised 16 items with four indicators: English learning motivation, students' reading interest, self-directed learning medium, and students' reading skills. Additionally, the researcher uses interviews and engages in discussions with the participants to acquire comprehensive data. The primary instrument used for data collection in this study was the questionnaire.

The questionnaire used in this study was a closed-ended question type. According to Sugiyono (2017), a closed-ended question is any question that demands information in the form of nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio data. Meanwhile, The Likert scale is a tool used to quantify the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals or a collective on social issues. The Likert scale used in this study ranges from 1 to 4, enabling accurate determination of respondents' level of agreement or disagreement from the respondent. Likert rating scale as shown below:

Table 1: The Likert Scale of the Questionnaire

No.	Answers	Scores
1.	Strongly Agree (SA)	4
2.	Agree (A)	3
3.	Disagree (D)	2
4.	Strongly Disagree (SD)	1

A semi-structured interview utilizes a combination of closed and open-ended questions, frequently supplemented by follow-up inquiries such as why or how (Adams, 2015). The interview was conducted by presenting questions in a relatively free way while nevertheless following the established interview guidelines. This approach enables the development of new questions based on the responses provided by the interviewers, allowing for a deeper obtaining of information throughout the session. The focus of this interview was to describe students' perceptions of Webtoon as a learning medium based on the questionnaire indicators in more detail.

The data analysis methodology used in this study was descriptive analysis. This approach was utilized to analyze and clarify the variables in the study. The data collected in this study through questionnaires was quantitative and analyzed descriptively using a percentage by the researcher. The percentage calculation for each indication is then explained concisely in a narrative to enhance comprehension. After the descriptive score was obtained for each indication, it was next analyzed with the following criteria:

Table 2: The Criteria of Perception

No.	Percentage	Criteria
1.	75,1% - 100%	Very Good
2.	50,1% - 75%	Good
3.	25,1% - 50%	Low
4.	1% - 25%	Very Low

Qualitative data analysis was started by conducting in-depth interviews with primary respondents. The criteria of the primary respondents were based on the students' highest and lowest scores from the questionnaire results. After obtaining the interview results, data analysis begins following the qualitative data analysis procedure, which includes data reduction, presentation, and conclusion (Miles et al., 2014).

Result

The research revealed several main findings regarding the Webtoon as a self-directed learning medium for reading skills. Questionnaires and interview data showed that students believed that Webtoon could enhance their motivation to learn English and interest in reading. Furthermore, students believe that the efficacy and accessibility of Webtoon make it an appropriate medium for learning English independently. Although students encounter certain challenges, it does not reduce the value of Webtoon as a medium for learning English because they felt a positive influence on their reading skills. As a result, students believe that Webtoon was not only a fun activity but could also serve as a good medium for learning English.

The results showed that students feel more motivated to learn English after reading Webtoon. Moreover, students' confidence in using English also increased as they believed that the story content on the Webtoon helped them understand the English culture.

Table 3. English Learning Motivation

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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I feel more motivated to learn English after reading Webtoon	4.2%	14.6%	58.3%	22.9%
I feel more confident in using English after reading Webtoon	2.1%	27.1%	47.9%	22.9%
I feel that the story content on Webtoon helps me understand English culture	8.3%	14.6%	50%	27.1%

The majority of students in statement 1 agreed with the statement that reading Webtoon increased their motivation to study English. Within all of respondents, 22.9% strongly agree and 58.3% agree. In ongoing learning sessions, motivated students were typically more engaged and made an effort to provide precise responses to questions asked.

In other hand, students' self-confidence also looks very good when they enthusiastically participated in practicing the conversation contained in the Webtoon in front of the class. This is shown from the data in the second statement, which shows that 22.9% strongly agree and 47.9% agree. This sense of self-confidence comes from students understanding how intonation in English conversation is a part of the language culture known as language accent. This statement was agreed upon by 27.1%, who strongly agreed, and 50% agreed.

In this case, there are some students who are motivated to learn English because they really like reading Webtoons, as said by one of the interview respondents:

Yes, because if I want to read a Webtoon series that I like with faster updates, I have to read with English translations because the Indonesian version is not yet available. Sometimes, there are also series that don't have Indonesian translations at all. Therefore, I feel more motivated to learn English so that I can understand the story content better.

This shows that student learning motivation was not limited to classroom activities. Students with certain tendencies, such as liking to read Webtoon, could be one of the factors that contribute to the growth of students' intrinsic motivation.

Table 4. Students Reading Interest

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that my interest in reading English has increased after reading Webtoon	2.1%	29.2%	43.8%	25%
I feel happy to use Webtoon because it is free	6.3%	6.3%	45.8%	41.7%
I feel happy because the story content on Webtoon has a variety of topics discussed in English	2.1%	10.4%	58.3%	29.2%

Students show more interest in reading material that does not lack visual appeal or contains a variety of attributes, such as colorful images. This makes the Webtoon more captivating to read so that it could increase students' interest in reading. Besides that, getting exciting and free reading material was the best scenario for influencing students' interest in reading. Most students (45.8%) agree that Webtoon is easily accessible. Moreover, 58.3% of students agree that Webtoon has a massive amount of free content that makes students not confused when determining their preferred reading themes and does not decrease their interest in reading. Meanwhile, the statement

that Webtoon was an interesting media to use in learning English so that it could have a positive influence on students' reading interest was supported by one of the students' statements:

Yes, because I feel that English Webtoons are quite fun to read, especially when we know the meaning of the story. It feels like doing math and getting it right, exciting.

Educators can use An effective strategy to foster a passion for reading in children by providing them with captivating literature. Webtoon was a famous form of Webcomic media that was widely recognized as an enjoyable medium suitable for individuals of all age groups, including children, teenagers, and adults. Webtoon is a media platform that offers an extensive selection of captivating reading material with various features like appealing visuals, story content in many languages, and an extensive selection of interesting free content across many genres. These aspects enable the development of students' interest, so in an ideal situation, students persist in their investigation and ultimately engage in reading the readily available content.

Table 5. Self-Directed Learning Medium

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that Webtoon can be used to learn English outside of school hours	4.2%	14.6%	45.8%	35.4%
I feel that I can learn English using Webtoon without anyone's help	8.3%	33.3%	41.7%	16.7%
I find it helpful to use Webtoon with the existing features.	4.2%	16.7%	52.1%	27.1%
I feel that the colorful images on Webtoon help me understand the story.	2.1%	10.4%	41.7%	45.8%

The first statement shows that 35.4% strongly agree and 45.8% agree that Webtoon could be utilized for learning English outside of school hours. The number was very high due to the fact that Webtoon was no longer considered a foreign medium by a majority of the students in the class, although not all of them have actually used it personally. Therefore, when Webtoon was employed as an English learning medium in the classroom, students tended to suppose that it could be used for the same purpose as learning English through movies.

In the second statement, there was a significant decrease in the percentage values compared to the prior statement, with 16.7% strongly agreeing and 41.7% agreeing with the statement that they could learn English using Webtoon without anyone's help. This result was far from what was expected because almost half of the respondents disagreed with the statement. This was because students felt unsure that they could learn English independently using webtoons. Feeling that they cannot learn independently in learning English, they were not confident that they could understand Webtoon content. Consequently, students' think they still need the assistance of the teacher in order to comprehend the English material.

Regardless, Webtoon could be a medium for independent learning because of its complete features. This statement was approved by 27.1% strongly agree and 52.1% agree. Students realized that features in Webtoon were also very important, so users found it easy to use. The students

perceived the attributes of Webtoon as complete, encompassing high-resolution image display, straightforward genre selection, series bookmarking, and notifications for the latest updates on favored series. Webtoon, characterized by comprehensive features, user-friendliness, and accessibility, represents an excellent option for independent learning.

Of the several features available on Webtoon, the colored image feature has the greatest value of Webtoon as a medium for independent English learning. Students believe that the color image on Webtoons could facilitate them in learning reading comprehension independently without anyone's help. This shows that illustrated text can help students understand stories without knowing the entire meaning of the sentence. The statement was agreed by 45.8% strongly agree and 41.7% agree.

The assertion that Webtoon serves as an effective medium for independent English learning is reinforced by its amusing component. Students who previously regarded reading as tedious no longer hold that perception.

One of student said:

Yes, there are many kinds of English learning media such as quizezz, duolingo, etc. But I think Webtoon is more interesting to be used as an independent English learning media besides having several different levels of language difficulty also because it easy to use and has an element of entertainment that can fill spare time at home.

Webtoon's characteristics as an entertainment medium make it an appropriate medium for independent English language study outside of school hours. Students further explained in the interviews that they were satisfied with the amount of English they were able to learn at school. If they truly needed to improve their English outside of school hours, they had no other option but to seek learning media that exciting, enjoyable and easy to use.

Table 6. Students Reading Skill

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that my English skills have improved after reading Webtoon	4.2%	14.6%	45.8%	35.4%
I feel that the English phrases on Webtoon are easy to understand	8.3%	33.3%	41.7%	16.7%
I can remember English vocabulary easily on Webtoon.	4.2%	16.7%	52.1%	27.1%
I can understand the sentence structure on Webtoon easily.	2.1%	10.4%	41.7%	45.8%
I can understand the main idea contained in the Webtoon well.				
I can understand the implied information contained in the Webtoon well.				

Regarding the first statement, among all the respondents, 25% strongly agree and 50% agree that their English proficiency had increased after reading the Webtoon. In this particular case, students had a good understanding of the tenses and vocabularies in Webtoon. Students perceive that reading Webtoon represents reading and serves as a platform for enhancing their English language proficiency.

The second statement indicates that the English phrases in Webtoon were easily comprehensible. In this case, students' Webtoon material was categorized into two degrees of difficulty, specifically easy and difficult. Based on this statement, 22.9% strongly agree and 60.4% agree. Students comprehensively understand the different phrases used in everyday conversations shown in Webtoon. They were able to describe the intended meaning of a conversation within the Webtoon content, regardless of its reading level.

In the third statement, 50% strongly agree and 22.9% agree that students could easily remember English vocabulary through Webtoons. The great proficiency that students translate Webtoon conversations was proof of this. With the use of the provided images, students might even make a guess about unfamiliar words.

The fourth statement says that students could easily comprehend the English sentence structure in Webtoon. Students' expressed agreement was 22.9% strongly agree and 54.2% agree. Students perceive that the grammar used in Webtoon content was not as challenging as they thought it would be. Students could easily identify the basic sentence structure used in a conversation found in a Webtoon.

The fifth statement, 25% strongly agree, while 62.5% agree with the statement that students have a good understanding of the main idea presented in the Webtoon. The significant percentage statistic was caused by the fact that students easily identify the main points of the conversation contained within the Webtoon content. This was relevant to the claim on the influence of images on students' comprehension of the narrative in the Webtoon contents. This evidence shows that an image has a highly substantial influence on assisting students' comprehension in identifying the main idea in a text.

The sixth statement showed that 27.1% strongly agree and 60.4% agree that they could effectively comprehend the implied information in Webtoon content. The percentage exceeds the expected numbers, indicating that students perceive comprehending the implied information in Webtoon not more difficult as understanding the main idea in the text. How students perceive implied information in Webtoon again relies on the available image features. They could easily find and understand unwritten information by looking at an image.

Meanwhile in the interview session, some respondents claimed that they found it easier to comprehend the main idea in the writing, while others found it easier to remember the vocabulary in the Webtoon. In accordance with the statement of one respondent:

Yes, I feel that the picture feature on Webtoon really helps me understand the main idea of the writing, even when I don't know the meaning of all the sentences, I can roughly interpret by looking at the picture carefully.

Students needed to comprehend the definition of the main idea to comprehend the main idea of a text. Students' challenges in grasping the main idea are partially due to their lack of comprehension of its exact meaning. In this case, students who use Webtoon could easily find important sentences implicitly or explicitly using images, which shows good understanding of the main idea. So that students can accurately and correctly conclude a reading text.

Discussion

English Learning Motivation

According to the questionnaire data, most of the students expressed that they perceived an influence in their motivation to learn English after using Webtoon. This result aligns with Erya & Pustaka (2021) which revealed that 72% of 50 students indicated an increase in their motivation to learn English due to using Webtoon. This outcome could be classified as very good. Based on the interview data and the respondents' perspectives, it was evident that their motivation to learn English was intrinsic or a self-generated learning motivation that was not influenced by external factors. The attitude change was a result of the desire to understand English texts more thoroughly. Santrock (2010) defines intrinsic motivation as the innate drive to perform an activity for a particular objective. Basically, students believe that they require English proficiency to pursue their own passions.

In this case, Webtoon was a medium that helped students acquire increased English proficiency. Webtoon was a captivating medium for English language learning due to its comprehensive features, user-friendly interface, and diverse variety of narratives. Therefore, it serves as a medium that could enhance students' intrinsic motivation in learning English. Other than that, 4.2% (2 students) and 14.6% (7 students) expressed the belief that their lack of confidence in their learning skills impacted their drive to learn English. Based on the findings, the researchers found that students had a good impression of Webtoon as a medium that could enhance their motivation to acquire English language skills.

Students Reading Interest

According to the questionnaire data about 25% (12 students) and 43.8% (21 students) said they experienced an increase in reading interest after reading Webtoon. This finding provides comparable outcomes to the study conducted by Ningsih et al. (2021) which showed a percentage of 77.84% out of a total of 153 students, indicating very good results. The paper also mentions several factors that influence the increase in students' interest in reading, one of which was the availability of a variety of different story content.

According to Kartosedono (1998), reading interest is related to books or themes that arouse a person's interest in reading. This statement was in line with Sutarno (2004), who states that reading interest means a desire or high inclination towards reading material. The reading material has a crucial role in determining students' reading interests. Children tend to favor light reading material, such as narrative texts, during their early years, particularly in junior high school. This was the reason for the significant increase in students' interest in reading. Webtoon emerges as a media platform offering an extensive variety of story content, enabling readers to select their preferred

genre. Meanwhile, 2.1% (1 student) and 29.2% (14 students) said that their reading interest wasn't increasing because of unrelated factors with the research. Based on these findings, the researcher found that students considered Webtoon has good benefits to enhance their interest in reading English.

Self-Directed Learning Medium

Survey data revealed that around 35.4% (17 students) and 45.8% (22 students) believe that Webtoon could serve as a medium for learning English outside of school hours. On the other hand, 16.7% (8 students) and 41.7% (20 students) felt they could learn English using Webtoon independently outside of school hours. The data in statements 7 and 8 show a significant decrease in agreement among students who deal with learning English autonomously. The issue at hand relates to students' confidence level in their ability to learn independently. While most students admit that Webtoon could be utilized for learning English outside of school hours, they also express concern about their ability to do so without assistance from classmates or teachers. The study data indicates that students have low confidence in their ability to learn and utilize English skills properly.

Yamin (2013) argues that independent learning has multiple benefits, particularly the development of solid self-confidence in students. The analysis of the questionnaire data revealed that 2.1% (1 student) and 27.1% (13 students) lacked confidence in using their English abilities. When students were directed to engage in conversations sourced from Webtoon, some experienced concern over their comprehension and lacked the confidence to step forward due to their fear of making mistakes and consequently facing criticism from other students. The researcher believes that students' confidence level should be restored by maintaining the practice of independent learning, which would improve their ability to learn English in terms of independent learning skills and confidence. Apart from that, the data shows that students had a fairly good view of Webtoon, which is a medium for independent learning outside of school hours.

Students Reading Skills

According to the data from the questionnaire about 25% (12 students) and 50% (24 students) expressed that their reading skills improved after reading Webtoon. Ningsih et al. (2021) stated in her study that Webtoon facilitates students' text comprehension. Students perceive Webtoon as a valuable tool for easily grasping the plot and also because it offers captivating visuals within the story. Based on the data obtained from surveys and interviews, researchers have found that students felt an improvement in their reading skills. These skills include the acquisition of new vocabulary, new idioms, comprehension of the main idea of reading, ability to identify grammar in a sentence, and identification of implied information in Webtoon content. The results of the questionnaire support this claim, as indicated by the quite good percentage results in statements 11 - 16.

Furthermore, an impressive 45.8% (22 students) and 41.7% (20 students) expressed that images on Webtoon significantly contribute to their reading comprehension. As Sabiq & Sukirno (2020) stated in his studies that students are more likely to remember new vocabulary when presented with visual aids, as they could observe the form of the described object. In line with students'

perceptions, images on Webtoon significantly influence their comprehension of the main idea in complex readings and foreign vocabulary. Some students who maintain a different opinion argue that the images sometimes fail to explain the true significance of the text, leading to a perceived lack of comprehension of the reading material. Based on these results, the researcher agreed with the students' perception that Webtoons positively influenced their English reading skills.

Conclusion

According to the findings, it could be inferred that the average results of the questionnaire maintains a positive opinion of Webtoon as an instrument for learning English reading skills. Researchers collected and analyzed data by distributing 16 questionnaires to 48 students and 4 interview questions to 7 students as representatives. According to the questionnaire data, the mean percentage of student responses was 76%, which was categorized as outstanding. The survey results indicate four primary assessment categories: English learning motivation, students' reading interest, self-directed learning medium, and students' reading skills.

This percentage could be classified as a very good result since nearly all statements regarding using Webtoon as an instrument for learning English receive a positive response. Unfortunately, some students had difficulties learning the English language through Webtoon. Some of the issues encountered by students include a disinterest in reading, a lack of motivation to learn English, a lack of optimism for learning English, low confidence in learning English, insufficient specifications of their devices, and other factors unrelated to the study.

Aside from these issues, a significant number of students were willing to enhance their English reading abilities through the use of Webtoon media. Additionally, certain students possess a strong interest in reading, a strong ambition to learn, and the confidence to learn English independently using Webtoon outside of school hours. Thus, the overall findings of this study could be classified as excellent results because Webtoon is a fun medium for learning English, so students have a positive perception of the use of Webtoon as a self-directed learning medium, which has a good influence on English learning motivation, reading interest, and students reading skills.

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