The Correlation Between Students' Anxiety and Reading Comprehension At SMP MITRA Nusantara Bekasi

Popi Susanti*, Yanti Rusmiati, Rini Septa Angraini
Universitas Panca Sakti, Bekasi, Indonesia

*Coresponding Author: yantirusmiati@gmail.com

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara kecemasan siswa dan pemahaman membaca pada 30 siswa kelas VIII di SMP Mitra Nusantara. Metode yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif korelasional dengan instrumen berupa angket kecemasan dan tes pilihan ganda pemahaman membaca. Hasil analisis menggunakan korelasi pearson product-moment menunjukkan nilai r = 0,188 dengan signifikansi 0,319 yang berarti terdapat hubungan positif sangat lemah namun tidak signifikan secara statistik antara kecemasan dan pemahaman membaca siswa. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa kecemasan bukan faktor dominan dalam memengaruhi kemampuan membaca siswa, dan bahwa faktor lain mungkin lebih berperan.

Abstract: This study aims to examine the correlation between students' anxiety and reading comprehension among 30 eighth-grade students at SMP Mitra Nusantara. A quantitative correlational design was employed, using an anxiety questionnaire and a multiple-choice reading comprehension test as instruments. The data were analyzed using the Pearson product-moment correlation method. The results revealed a correlation coefficient of r = 0.188 with a significance value of 0.319, indicating a very weak positive but statistically non-significant relationship between students' anxiety and their reading comprehension. These findings suggest that anxiety is not a dominant factor affecting students' reading comprehension and that other variables may play a more influential role.

INTRODUCTION

Student reading levels are declining from year to year. This is evidenced by the survey results from the Organization for Economic CO-Operation and Development (2023) which shows that Indonesian students rank sixth with low levels of reading skills compared to other ASEAN countries.

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that plays a vital role in students' academic success, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. It requires not only decoding and linguistic understanding but also cognitive engagement and psychological readiness. Among various affective factors that influence students' reading performance, anxiety has been identified as one of the most significant emotional variables affecting language learning outcomes (Horwitz et al., 1986; Krashen, 2020).

Anxiety in language learning is often experienced by students when they perceive a threat to their performance, especially in testing or reading situations.

According Zheng and Cheng (2021) and Wang and Wang (2002), anxiety in education can be categorized into: reading anxiety, classroom performance anxiety, and language anxiety can impair cognitive processing, reduce working memory capacity, and hinder overall comprehension.

Despite extensive research on foreign language anxiety and reading comprehension, studies focusing specifically on junior high school students in the Indonesian EFL context remain limited. In many Indonesian classrooms, reading comprehension is emphasized as part of the national curriculum, yet students often struggle with text understanding, which may be exacerbated by affective challenges such as anxiety.

The primary purpose of this research is to investigate the correlation between students' anxiety and their reading comprehension at SMP Mitra Nusantara Bekasi and also to determine whether there is statistically significant relationship between students' anxiety – particular academic and reading related anxiety- and their ability to comprehend written English text.

The findings are expected to provide useful insight for teachers, schools, and policymakers. This result can be used to design how to improve student's reading abilities by also addressing their emotional well-being.

METHOD

The primary purpose of this research is to investigate the correlation between students' anxiety and their reading comprehension at SMP Mitra Nusantara Bekasi and also to determine whether there is statistically significant relationship between students' anxiety – particular academic and reading related anxiety- and their ability to comprehend written English text. Sugiyono (2019) explain correlation is the relationship between two or more variables that are quantitative in nature and expressed in correlation coefficients.

The population of this research was students in the eight-grades at SMP MITRA NUSANTARA, Bekasi. Number of population was 30 students, 15 male and 15 female. Because the number of population was less than 100, then the writer took all of population as respondents.

Two main instruments were used for data collection:

Anxiety Questionnaire: A structured Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). The questionnaire consisted of 20 items measuring various dimensions of students' anxiety such as communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

Reading Comprehension Test: A multiple-choice test comprising 27 questions based on short descriptive text aligned with the Indonesian national English curriculum. The test assessed students' ability to identify main ideas, specific information, vocabulary meaning, and make inferences.

The data were analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between students' anxiety and reading comprehension. A significance level of 0.05 was applied to test the null hypothesis.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Using a quantitative approach allows the writer to gather numerical data through standardized tools such as questionnaires and reading test. These instruments help to measure the level of anxiety and reading comprehension in a reliable way. Once the data is collected, statistical methods specifically correlation analyses are used to determine whether a relationship exists between the two variables. This analysis shows both the strength and direction of the relationship. The study also has clear goals.

First, it seeks to understand how anxious students feel when learning English, especially in the context of reading. Second, it aims to measure their reading comprehension using a valid reliable test. Second, it aims to measure their reading comprehension using a valid reliable test.

Finally, it analyzes whether anxiety has a significant effect on their reading performance. This research design offers a helpful way to examine how psychological factors like anxiety relate to academic performance, particularly in English reading skills.

FINDINGS

The instrument for Students' Anxiety Scores is specifically designed to measure anxiety when reading in foreign language. This questionnaire includes **20** statements, each rated on a 5 point Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The writer using Likert scale 5 because easy to understand, use, and analyze, and offers a midpoint for neutral responses. It also efficient and can reduce the "frustration level" of respondents, thereby improving response quality. Therefore, the maximum score a student could obtain was 100 and the minimum was 20.

Tabel 1. The Level of Anxiety

Score	Level	Number of Students	Percentage
20 – 40	Low	7 Students	23,3 %
41 – 60	Medium	10 Students	33,3%
61 - 100	High	13 Students	43,4%

Meanwhile, Reading comprehension test was assessed using a multiple-choice test based on descriptive texts, containing of **27** multiple choice questions. Each correct answer was scored as 100, then the total of maximum score all correct answers will be divided by 27, so the maximum score is 100.

Tabel 2. The Score of Descriptive Reading Comprehension Test

| Score	Level	Number of Students	Percentage
0 – 59	Low	3 Students	10 %
60 – 79	Medium	6 Students	20 %
80 - 100	High	21 Students	70 %

The Shapiro - Wilk test was used to determine whether the data were normally distributed, the researcher employed the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is appropriate for sample sizes less than 50. This test was applied to both the students' anxiety scores and reading comprehension scores. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test are presented in the table below:

Table 3. The Normality Test

Variable	Shapiro Wilk Sig.Value	Conclusion
Students' Anxiety	7.458	Normality Distributed
Reading Comprehension	3.148	Normality Distributed

Based on the table above, at a significance level of 5%, since the calculated W value (7.458) is greater than the W table value (0.927), it can be concluded that the Anxiety variable comes from a population that is normally distributed. Similarly, for the Reading Comprehension variable, at a 5% significance level, the calculated W value (3.148) is greater than the W table value (0.927), indicating that the Reading Comprehension variable also comes from a normally distributed population.

To visually support the result, histograms along with density (distribution) curves were generated as shown in Figure below:
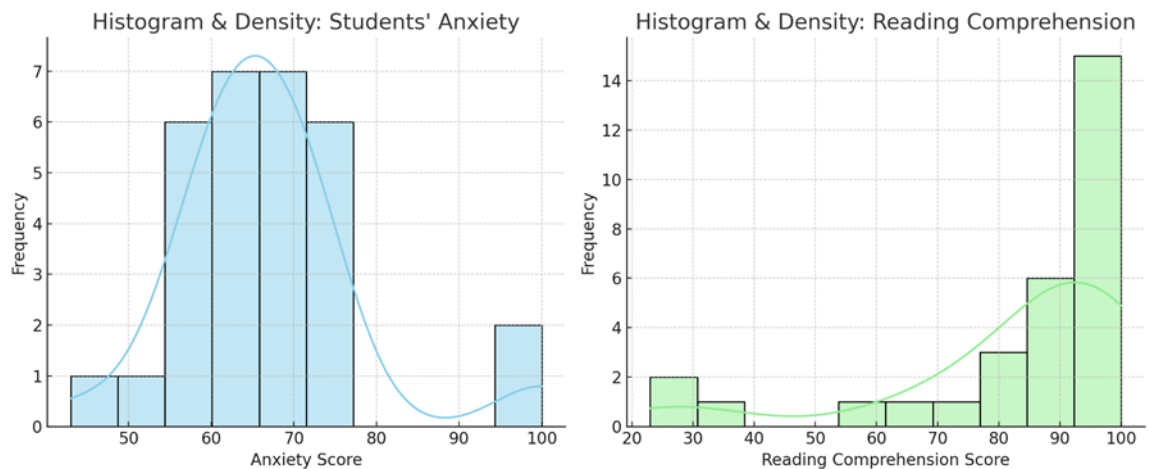
Figure 1. Histogram and Density: Students' Anxiety and Reading Comprehension

Based on the histogram and density curve for the variable 'Students' Anxiety', the distribution appears approximately bell-shaped, indicating that the data is likely normally distributed. The frequency of scores clusters around the center and symmetrically tapers off on both sides.

In contrast, the histogram and density curve for the variable 'Reading Comprehension' shows a skewed distribution. Most of the scores are concentrated in the higher range (above 90), and the curve is not symmetrical. Although the Shapiro-Wilk test may still indicate normality based on the statistical value, visually this data appears to deviate from a perfectly normal distribution.

A linearity test was conducted to ensure the relationship between two variables was linear.

Table 4. The Linearity Test

Sig. Value (Linearty)	Conclusion
0,3193	No Significant Linear Relationship

Interpretation: The significant value is greater than 0.05, which indicating that there is no significant linear relationship between student's anxiety and reading comprehension**.** The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Test.

Table 5. The Correlation Test

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig.(2_tailed)
Anxiety & reading Comprehension	0,188	0,319

Interpretation: The Pearson Correlation is **0.188** indicates very weak positive relationship between students' anxiety and reading comprehension. The Significant (2-tailed) is 0.319 greater than 0.05, which indicates this correlation is not statistically significant.

CONCLUSION

The study found a negligible and statistically insignificant positive correlation (r = 0,188; p = 0,319) between students' anxiety and their reading comprehension. This indicates that while anxiety slightly increased, so did reading comprehension— but the relationship was very weak and not meaningful statistically. As a result, the null hypothesis was accepted, suggesting no significant correlation between the two variables. These findings imply that anxiety may not be a key factor influencing reading comprehension. Other elements, such as vocabulary mastery, motivation, or reading strategies, may play a more critical role. This outcome also presents a contrast to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, possibly due to the moderate anxiety levels experienced by the participants or the indirect role of anxiety in reading performance

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