

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF USING 'MEDIUM' TO PROMOTE READING INTEREST: A CASE STUDY IN THE ENGLISH EDUCATION AT SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

Zalfa Rabila Qatrunnada¹, Tita Ratna Wulan Dari²

English Education, Universitas Sriwijaya, Indonesia

Email : zalfa.rabila18@gmail.com¹, titawulandari@fkip.unsri.ac.id²

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Abstract :

This study aimed to find out students' perceptions of using Medium to promote reading interest in the English education study program at Sriwijaya University. A case study of a qualitative method was applied in this study. The research instruments used in this study were a close-ended questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. A total of 50 participants from 2, 4, 6, and 8 semester in English Education, Sriwijaya University joined the questionnaires and 5 selected participants participated in the interview. The data from questionnaire were analysed using percentage, while the data from interview were analysed using thematical analysis. Methodological triangulation used in this study to analysed both data source, in order to link in the answer from questionnaire and interview. The findings showed that the majority of students (78%) had positive experience regarding their experience in using Medium. They reported Medium help them to promote their reading interest citing its accessibility, diverse content, and ease of use as key advantages.

Keywords : Perception; Medium; Reading Interest

Abstrak :

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji persepsi mahasiswa terhadap penggunaan aplikasi Medium dalam meningkatkan minat baca pada Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Sriwijaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Instrumen yang digunakan meliputi **angket** tertutup dan wawancara semi-terstruktur. Sebanyak 50 mahasiswa dari semester 2, 4, 6, dan 8 berpartisipasi dalam pengisian angket, sementara 5 mahasiswa terpilih mengikuti wawancara mendalam. Data dari angket dianalisis secara deskriptif melalui persentase, sedangkan data dari wawancara dianalisis menggunakan tematik analisis. Penelitian ini menerapkan triangulasi metodologi untuk menghubungkan dan memperkuat temuan dari kedua sumber data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa (78%) memiliki persepsi positif terhadap pengalaman mereka dalam menggunakan Medium. Mereka menyebutkan bahwa Medium mendukung peningkatan minat baca melalui aksesibilitas yang tinggi, keberagaman konten, dan kemudahan penggunaan yang ditawarkan oleh platform tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Persepsi; Medium; Minat Baca

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important skill in students' activity is reading. As (Piyaunkool, 2001), emphasized that the more people read, the more they learn and that reading is the road to knowledge. Reading plays an important role in all aspects of education to gain success in school and life. The significance of reading extends beyond mere academic success; it is foundational for mastering other

skills essential for personal and professional growth. Students with higher reading comprehension skills demonstrated better academic outcomes, particularly in subjects like language arts, social studies, and science (Mihret & Joshi, 2025). For instance, students who engage in regular reading activities tend to perform better in standardized tests, demonstrating the direct impact of reading on overall educational outcomes.

In the context of learning English, the role of reading becomes even more pronounced. Besides improving vocabulary and text comprehension, through reading can also foster critical thinking. It is not merely a hobby but a complex activity that requires concentration and deep understanding of the text. Students can expose themselves to various language structures, idiomatic expressions, and diverse writing styles, which indirectly enrich their language skills. A real-life example can be seen in students who read novels or articles in English; they often find themselves better equipped to express their thoughts and ideas in both writing and speaking, as they can draw upon the linguistic concepts they have encountered in their reading. Consequently, in order to foster a reading culture in society, various initiatives have been implemented by the government such as the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* (Kemdikbud, 2018), *Program Gerakan Indonesia Membaca* (Kemdikbud, 2021) and *Kampung Literasi* which have been held since 2015 (Kemdikbud, 2021). These programs aim to promote reading habits among students and the broader community. For instance, the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* encourages schools to integrate reading activities into their daily routines, fostering an environment where reading is valued and celebrated. Similarly, *Kampung Literasi* initiatives create community spaces where individuals of all ages can access books and participate in reading-related activities, thereby reinforcing the importance of literacy in everyday life.

In contrast to the government's efforts, several studies have shown quite disappointing findings. Based on a study entitled *World's Most Literate Nations Ranking* conducted by Central Connecticut State University in 2016, Indonesia is ranked 60th out of 61 countries. Meanwhile, Finland is ranked at the top with a literacy rate approaching 100%. Data from UNESCO also shows that the reading interest of the Indonesian people is still very concerning, which is only 0.001%. This means that out of 1,000 Indonesians, only one person actively reads (Anisa et al., 2021). In addition, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) organized by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD) concluded that Indonesian students showed lower reading skills than the average student from other OECD member countries (OECD, 2023). The average Indonesian student only scored 359 out of a total scored 600, while the average for all participating countries reached 476. Indonesia is ranked 11th lowest out of 80 participating countries.

Reading interest refers to the emotional engagement or attention that drives individuals to willingly engage with reading materials (Utami & Nur, 2021). When students possess a strong interest in reading, they are more likely to develop consistent reading habits and actively seek out texts that align with their preferences. However, several factors significantly influence the development of this interest Pitoyo (2020) identified three primary elements that affect students' reading interest: literacy level, access to technology, and the availability of supportive library infrastructure.

However, in the context of higher education, many students face challenges in building consistent reading habits. A study by Jumaroh & Aisyah (2021), found that higher medical students spent less than one hour daily reading English literature, highlighting the need to improve students' reading habits. Especially due to the high academic demands and various distractions that come from the development of digital technology. One of the main challenges in improving students' reading habits is low interest in reading. According to Kurniawati et al., (2020), this is influenced by internal factors such as lack of motivation and enjoyment in reading, as well as the absence of reading materials that match students' interests. External factors like distractions from technology and social media, along with busy schedules, also reduce the time and willingness to read. Addressing these issues is essential to foster stronger reading habits among students.

In the current era of globalization and digitalization, the development of information technology has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of education. For instance, the learning process can be easily conducted everywhere and everytime, students can access various information and learning source easily. A study by Raja & Nagasubramani, (2018), found that positive influence of technology in education, it enhances the teaching and learning experience, making it more enjoyable and efficient for both teachers and students instead of books, the use of smartphones can be effective and easy to access medium for obtaining information and knowledge. With various features,

smartphones can replace books as a source of information and knowledge. This is in line with the many books that have been converted into electronic media that can use smartphones to access them (Chadijah et al., 2023). The transition from print media to digital media also affects students' interest in reading. In the past, to be able to read, students had to borrow books from the library or buy books at bookstores. Now, digital media, such as reading applications, the web, and social media offer various advantages that can support and increase the effectiveness of reading because reading materials can be easily accessed on the internet. This technological advancement has driven changes in reading habits, as reading no longer requires extra effort. Nowadays, it is easy to find reading materials through various available applications and websites. One application that is currently widely used as a platform for reading is Medium.

Medium is an online blog platform that contains writings on various topics, such as fiction, poetry, personal experiences, self-development, news and opinions. Medium can be used as a learning tool for students, especially in reading and writing. A study by Garcia et al., (2019) , found that students perceive higher degrees of learning when using blogs in their educational experience. Medium offers a user-friendly interface and widespread use, especially reading enthusiasts. For instance, readers can easily explore and choose articles they want on the homepage. Additionally, Medium users can also publish their writing through the write a story feature.

Medium is certainly different from other platforms, with a minimalist and aesthetically pleasing design, which minimize confusing for new users, besides that the medium is free from ads or elements, unlike Wattpad which is often accompanied by annoying ads, as well as Kompasiana and Wordpress often have a variety of displays depending on the settings of the author and site owner which sometimes makes the reading experience less comfortable than a more uniform and aesthetic medium. Just like social media, using Medium, users can have an audience, clap and follow from other users.

Medium has great potential in supporting students' reading interests and reading skills, especially in the context of English language education. Being a digital blog platform that offers various quality articles from different fields, Medium allows students to find readings according to their interests, hence making reading interesting rather than an academic duty. It uses a personalized algorithm for content recommendations according to user preference, thus

inspiring students toward more active and regular reading. Furthermore, in the flexible and communicative writing format, compared to academic journals, it would be much easier for students to understand complex materials, enriching their vocabulary and reading skills. The different styles of writing stemming from diverse authors at Medium further allow great exposure to diverse grammatical structures and argumentative skills, improving their reading. The "Save to Read Later" feature allows them to go back to this text whenever convenient. Therefore, the student will have continuous reading habit. Medium will give the students a space to write and share their thoughts, which helps in fostering critical and reflective thinking besides being a source of reading. With these advantages, Medium is effective in bringing up a better reading culture among the students for both academic and literacy development. According to Pelangi (2022), Students demonstrated proficiency in writing procedure texts using blog media. It means that Medium has good impact as a learning tool.

In the context reading interest, student must be completely familiar with digital media that offer many reading texts similar to blog. Study by Chawinga (2017), reported that there were over 500 blog transactions, including group posts and comments, showcasing significant student participation in using blogs as a learning tool. It means the use of medium as a reading platform can be an effective medium in increasing students' reading interest. Medium provides various quality articles with various topics, so that it can attract students' attention to read more and more often. As a popular digital platform among professional writers, Medium allows students to access good and relevant reading, which can stimulate their interest in reading activities. In addition, the minimalist appearance and easy-to-use features make students more comfortable in exploring and enjoying content without interruption. With the ease and access to a variety of reading materials available, the use of Medium can be an effective solution in building more consistent reading habits among students.

The use of digital media to foster reading interest has gained increasing attention in language learning. This aligns with this research, which utilizes digital media as a platform to foster reading interest. Furthermore, research by Safitri (2021), stated that social media provides an endless supply of English content, enabling students to continuously practice their English skills. As the Medium application functions similarly to social media by offering unlimited reading content. Moreover, research by Pelangi (2022), highlighted that the use

of Medium in MAN 1 Jakarta yielded positive results, with students showing interest in the platform as both a reading resource and an easy-to-use writing medium. From the above studies it is clear that digital media has positive impact on language learning. In terms of research subject, Medium has never been discussed in university level. While numerous studies have been conducted but none is specifically exploring Medium as a tool to promote students' reading interest. Most existing studies focus on the general use of digital media in education, with limited exploration of Medium's unique potential as a tool to develop reading habits. Thus, there is lack research on the longterm effects of using Medium for both reading and writing practice in improving overall language proficiency. Medium not only as content delivery platform but also as an interactive platform to enhance the reading interest of English Language Education students at Sriwijaya University.

Based on explanation above, this research focused on students' perception of the use of Medium to promote reading interest and the benefits of using Medium. This study aims to fill the existing gap regarding the specific application of Medium in a university context. Additionally, it seeks to provide insights into how this platform can be effectively integrated into English language education to foster reading interest among students. Furthermore, this research aspires to contribute to the educators, the broader discourse on digital literacy and its role in modern language education, paving the way for future studies that explore the use of such platforms on language proficiency.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach to explore students' perceptions of using Medium as a digital platform to promote reading interest. Conducted in the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University, the study targeted 50 students from semesters 2, 4, 6, and 8 who had prior experience using Medium. Participants were selected using saturated sampling, as all eligible students were involved due to the limited population. Data were collected using a close-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire, adapted from previous studies (Satin et al., 2022; Ambarwati et al., 2021), consisted of 5 Likert-scale items covering perception dimension of Attitude. To reduce central tendency bias, a 4-point Likert scale without a neutral option was applied. Five interview participants were selected based on their usage frequency, questionnaire responses, and

academic diversity. The interviews, adapted from Hasan (2023), aimed to explore deeper understanding of experience in using Medium. Both instruments were developed with reference to research objectives, supported by expert validation and a try-out involving 25 non-participant students. Instrument validity was assessed using Pearson Product-Moment, and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.929$). Data analysis combined descriptive and thematic approaches. Questionnaire data were analyzed using percentage formulas to identify general trends, while interview transcripts were analyzed using Braun & Clarke (2006) thematic analysis. The stages included familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. Triangulation of methods and data sources was used to enhance credibility, comparing findings across instruments and aligning them with existing literature. Key themes emerged around user experience, motivation, attitude, and perceived benefits.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter showed the result of the data analysis conducted by a close-ended questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was used to measure perceptions of students on their experience using Medium. The distribution of questionnaire took 2 days to make sure all of the students filled in the questionnaire. The interview took approximately 3 days to gather information, the interviewees chose to be interviewed online using Zoom meeting.

Questionnaire Result

Table 1. Experience in Using Medium

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	I have used Medium regularly to read English texts	1	2%	7	14%	31	62%	11	22%
2	I often read on Medium when looking for English text	2	4%	10	20%	30	60%	8	16%

3	I feel comfortable when reading using Medium	2	4.1%	1	2%	29	59.2%	17	34.7%
4	I read digital texts in Medium than other platforms like Wattpad, Quora or Wordpress more often	5	10%	12	24%	25	50%	8	16%
5	I love searching in Medium for relevant article that match my interest because digital reading emerges positive experience for me	1	2%	11	22%	30	60%	8	16%

The data questionnaire results show students' perceptions on their experience using Medium. Statement number 1 shows that 62% students agreed and 22% strongly agreed that they used Medium regularly to read English text. This indicating that Medium has become their part of their reading routine. Also, statement number 2 shows that 60% agreed and 16% strongly agreed that they often read on Medium when looking for English text. It means Medium is one of their preferred platforms when looking for English text. Similarly, statement number 3 shows that 59.2% agreed and 34.7% strongly agreed that they feel comfortable when using Medium, highlighting the Medium as an accessible platform to use and user-friendly. Furthermore, statement number 4 shows that 50% agreed and 16% strongly agreed that they more often read in Medium than others digital platform. It indicates that Medium has good preference compared

to other digital reading platform. Lastly, statement number 5 shows that 60% agreed and 16% strongly agreed that they love searching in Medium for relevant article because digital reading emerges positive experience. This indicates Medium has a positive and engaging reading experience. Based on the data above, it can be said that most of the students have positive, meaningful and better experience in using Medium. They feel satisfied when using Medium.

Interview Result

Five students participated in the interview via Zoom meeting due to semester break. The result shows the outcomes of 10 questions and responses from 5 English Education Study Program students. The students' identity has been disguised as a name for privacy concerns. Table below displays the schedule of the interview for each student:

Table 2. Interview Schedule

No	Students	Gender	Semester	Date
1.	S1	Male	6	14 June 2025
2.	S2	Male	8	15 June 2025
3.	S3	Female	8	15 June 2025
4.	S4	Female	6	16 June 2025
5.	S5	Female	4	17 June 2025

Before starting the interview, the researcher gave a brief introduction about the background and the research objectives of this study, after that the researcher began and recorded the interview due to transcript. The students gave clear explanations about their perceptions in using Medium and the benefits in using Medium. Furthermore, the results of the interview are presented below:

R: Do you like the Medium application? Why? What do you like the most about it?

"I really like Medium, it designed for those like me who is a really heavy reader seeking some pages to read, and the things I like the most from medium is the variety of topics like the fact life story and all the other stuff it's like a giant book." (S1)

"I quiet like the Medium, mostly I like about it is the ui/ux look, the interface, because It looks clean and comfortable to read on that.... Medium has various topic and article which is good" (S2)

"Yes, I like using the medium application because I enjoy how clean and easy the

interface or setup. I also find articles or stories that match my interest really well because Medium has a lot of topics and articles" (S3)

"I really like using Medium because it provides a lot of articles and motivational quotes. In Medium we can choose article that match our interest" (S4)

"I like Medium because it is simple application and easy to use. there's so many genres or topics there also I can improve my English from read article in Medium itself" (S5)

The following statements by S1-S5 showed that they like Medium application because it served various of topics based on personal interest with clean interface of Medium. S1 stated that Medium like a giant book which means there's a lot of article and topic to explore. Similarly, S2, S3 and S4 stated that Medium has a lot of topic and article to explore, so, the readers can choose what they want to read based on their personal interest. It is clear that Medium with its clean interface served a lot of topics and articles to read, that's the things that attract them

R: How do you use Medium to enhance your reading activities? Why do you think it helps you to enhance your reading activities? What kinds of texts do you usually choose?

"Totally medium helps me, and not just for me, but also perfect for students, because it has everything, it covers things from science, history, and even a tiny bit niche topic. I really into all theatre, opera." (S1)

"I think it's authentic material as well as the authentic language used are enhancing reading skill like vocabulary. I usually choose topic about literature, education, pop and video games" (S2)

"I casually use it when I want to read something that is not really heavy. I can choose the length and the type of the article. I usually read fan fiction and personal essay It helps me keep my reading habit alive" (S3)

"I used Medium regularly to read article based on the topic I want. For the example this day I choose topic about broken heart and tomorrow I choose the topic about mental health It helps me to enhance my reading activities that's why I really love reading in Medium. The language used and word choice of the article is easy to understand" (S4)

"I use Medium in my free time to read English text, it helps me to read more often, because I choose the topic based on my interest and it makes make more curious and want to read more. I usually choose topics about self-growth" (S5)

Some students reported they used Medium regularly to help them enhance their reading habits. They choose topic according to their preference. Furthermore, S2 and S4 mentioned the language used in Medium also help them to enhance their reading activities. However, each student has different kinds of interest. S1 mentioned a strong preference about theatre and opera, while S2 mentioned enjoying literature, education, pop and video games. In contrast, S3 preferred reading fan fiction and personal essays, emphasizing its tendency towards lighter yet meaningful content. S4 stated that she likes to read article depends on her daily mood, which means a more dynamic and emotionally driven selection process. Lastly, S5 mentioned a preference for topics related to self-growth. It is ensured that Medium offers a diverse range of topic that cater to the varied interests of its users, making it a suitable and effective platform for reading activities among students.

R: Have you found the challenges when you used Medium application? What was the most difficult part of using it? Is it beginner friendly?

"Medium is for sure made for beginner friendly and maybe there's this one thing that irritating me, it's about the payroll thing" (S1)

"There are some limits to how much article, how many articles that you can read for free. So that's a little bit a problem from my side but it's not technical problem. So, I definitely think that it's beginner friendly." (S2)

"I think the one challenge that some articles or stories are locked. Sometimes I get overwhelmed by number of choice, so when you open the medium you don't know what to read because the lots of choice that appears can make you overwhelmed. I think it's beginner friendly it's easy to use, even if it's your 1st time using it" (S3)

"The challenges are locked article, we need to pay some articles if we want to read that article, that is the difficult part of using Medium. Medium is beginner friendly because it's easy to use so the new user will not feel confused when they use it" (S4)

"Maybe the challenges come from myself when I read article and the author used a high level of English it makes me difficult to understand it" (S5)

According to the responses, the majority of students reported that locked article was frequently a major challenge for them. When they found a good title of article they should pay to read it completely. Furthermore, S3 stated that the number of choices made her overwhelmed when open Medium, there's a lot of choice appears when she wanted to read and that's make her overwhelmed. In

contrast, S5 reported the challenges come from herself, because the author used a high level of English and it makes her difficult to understand the text. Despite all of those challenges, the students agreed that Medium is beginner friendly.

R: How did you overcome the challenges in Medium application? Did you use any strategy or method to solve it?

"Maybe the challenges come from myself when I read article and the author used a high level of English it makes me difficult to understand it" (S5)

"Keep up articles organized, so I don't lose track or going through a certain website like I've mentioned before or getting link from the author" (S1)

"I think the only solution to that is when the author shares the link for the articles so that you can read it for free Getting the link from the writer themselves" (S2)

"If there's 1 that is blocked behind the Paywall I think I will just look for another one. And to avoid getting overwhelmed like to try to well, to follow a few writers or stories text that I really like." (S3)

"How I overcome this challenge is I am searching for another alternative article" (S4)

"The only strategies I choose is searching for alternative stories or article" (S5)

Some students reported that most common strategy was searching for another alternative article. Moreover, some students also tried to get the link from the author of the article. S3 stated that to avoid getting overwhelmed, she overcome it by follow a few writers that she really like. These strategies demonstrated how students actively try to overcome barriers to access more article in Medium.

DISCUSSIONS

This study aimed to answer research question related to students' perception of using Medium to promote their reading interest. The perception is reflected students' experience. Based on the result of questionnaire, they demonstrated a high number of students' responses in the experience section. It was found out that most of students use Medium regularly to read English articles or stories. They also preferred using Medium to search English text than other digital reading platform and they felt comfortable when using Medium in their daily life. These responses demonstrated that students are not only familiar with Medium but also find it useful, accessible, and suited to their reading interest. This indicated by most of the students responded agree and strongly agree toward their experience in using Medium. This aligns with Technology

Acceptance Model (Wicaksono, 2022), which emphasized that students' adoption of a digital tool is largely driven by their perceived usefulness and ease of use. When students perceive a platform as beneficial and convenient, their engagement is more likely to be sustained. The interview findings strengthened the questionnaire data. Most of students mentioned that they intentionally use Medium when looking for article based on their personal interest. For example, a student mentioned that Medium provided access to variety of topic such as: education, literature, anime and pop culture which are topics that kept them engaged. This example showed that Medium bridges academic and personal reading interest. This finding support Ali et al. (2023), who stated that when students develop a high level of reading interest, they are more likely to engage with text actively. Both responses from questionnaire and interview further confirmed that the platform support student preferences by offering a wide range of topics that cater to the varied personal interest, simple language and ease of access, making it suitable and effective platform for reading activities among students. In contrast, there are some challenges they encounter when used Medium, such as limitation of the article, where students cannot read more if they found any good article. This happened because Medium used a revenue-sharing system where members' subscription fees are distributed to writers based on engagement with their stories. In line with Pelangi (2022) found that one of the disadvantages of Medium is readers depend on how popular the article or story is. The more popular the better the quality. This system encourages writers to create high-quality content that attracts paying members, and it provides a sustainable way for Medium to support writers. Unsubscribed users are limited to read a few free articles per month, after that they are directed to subscribe for unlimited access. However, this challenge can be overcome by looking for another alternative article or getting special link to their articles that allow non-member users to access the articles for free.

These findings hold important implication for both students and the integration of digital platform like Medium in higher education settings. Students' positive perception in using Medium demonstrated that Medium is not only a digital reading platform, but a learning environment that fosters autonomy, engagement and consistent reading habits. To sum up, these insights can help both students and educator optimizing digital reading platform like Medium for promoting reading interest and building reading habits

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that students hold a positive perception toward using Medium as a digital platform to promote reading interest. The majority regularly use Medium to read English texts, citing its accessibility, diverse content, and ease of use as key advantages. This aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model, which highlights perceived usefulness and ease of use as crucial factors in technology adoption. Students favored Medium for both academic and personal reading, demonstrating how the platform effectively bridges these domains and supports varied interests. Interview results further confirmed that students intentionally seek content that resonates with their preferences, reinforcing *Medium*'s role in fostering autonomous and engaged reading behaviors. Although limitations such as paywalled content were noted, students often found ways to navigate these barriers. Overall, Medium is not just seen as a reading tool, but as a flexible learning environment that promotes sustained reading habits, motivation, and autonomy. These findings suggest valuable implications for integrating digital platforms into higher education to support literacy development and cultivate lifelong reading interest.

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