



## Students' Reading Interests during Learning from Home in the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

Learning activities from home impacts changing students' lifestyles, especially reading activities. This study aimed to describe and explain reading interest among undergraduate students of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program (S-1 PBSI) of Universitas Sebelas Maret (UNS) while learning from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study was qualitative research with a descriptive survey method. The sampling technique was designed for S-1 PBSI UNS who are still active in the Academic Year 2021/2022. The data collection technique in this study employed a questionnaire consisting of five categories: 1) attitudes toward reading, 2) reading preferences, 3) reading frequency, 4) reading sources, and 5) types of reading materials during learning from home. The following conclusions are reached as the research results and discussion. First, students still had an enthusiastic attitude towards reading activities while learning from home and reading anything, including books or academic material. Second, students preferred to read online with the fiction reading type in the form of novels rather than literary texts. Third, students' reading frequencies during learning from home were 30 minutes to 1 hour for 3–6 days a week. Students could read for more than one hour for fun, but only 30 minutes to 1 hour to read academic texts. Additionally, they could read 4–6 books in one semester. Fourth, students received online learning resources, mostly websites, and offline learning sources, primarily textbooks. Smartphones were the most commonly used reading media. Fifth, the majority types of student reading were novels.

**Keywords:** *reading interest, learning from home, Covid-19 pandemic*

### INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant changes in various fields, especially education. Since March 2020, many activities have not been carried out face-to-face, but some have been carried out online (on a network) or in distance learning. Although in mid-2021, several colleges implemented limited face-to-face learning with various health protocols, there were still many study programs applied to distance learning. The Undergraduate Study Program in Indonesian Language and Literature Education (S-1 PBSI), Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), Sebelas

Maret University (UNS), had been carrying out distance learning until November of 2021.

Learning activities in higher education refer to the Joint Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture, Minister of Religion, Minister of Health, and Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 03/KB/2021, Number 384 of 2021, Number HK.01.08/MENKES/4242/2021, and Number 440-717 of 2021 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Learning during the Pandemic Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Learning in universities starting in the odd semester of the 2021/2022 academic year is held with limited face-to-face learning. Moreover, they should implement health protocols and/or online learning. In the implementation of knowledge, universities must continue to prioritize the health and safety of campus residents (students, lecturers, education staff) and the surrounding community. Some campuses have implemented face-to-face learning with health protocols, but most colleges are still implementing online learning in the odd semester of the 2021/2022 Academic Year.

Online learning activities impact changing student lifestyles, especially reading activities. Based on research by Nurmala et al. (2020), Harahap et al. (2020), and Hasanah et al. (2020), shows that students experience stress in the moderate category due to online learning. One of the stress triggers is boredom, caused by several factors. Pawicara, R., & Conilie, M (2020) revealed that the boredom was due to the material being less attractive, the number of assignments given, and the less supportive home environment, compared to the classroom environment on campus.

The stress experienced by students during distance learning impacts the selected reading material. In Dalinan's study (2021), the majority of students chose reading materials in the form of novels (36%) as well as in the research of Utami, S., Nur, J (2021), the highest percentage of students read materials during online learning was also novels (26.6%). The study describes that students tend to choose reading materials as entertainment. In addition, the media used has also changed. Research conducted by Samsuddin & Aspura (2021) in Malaysia showed behavioral changes in academics in terms of use, attitudes, and selection of reading materials. The presence of digital media makes more and more people use the web and wireless services to fulfill their information needs.

Research conducted by Fitriyani et al. (2020) stated that student learning motivation was still good even though some difficulties were found. One of the problems that occur due to distance learning, based on research by Fahmy et al. (2021), is declining reading interest. Meanwhile, the study by Adeyemi (2020), Packilakshmi (2021), and Hakim (2021) showed that there was an increase in the duration of student reading in several countries during the pandemic. However, from the various studies that have been mentioned, there has been no research related to reading interest in the S-1 Study Program of Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Sebelas Maret University. It is essential to do and determine the reading interest of PBSI S-1 students as a lecturer reference in improving services to students.

According to Tarigan (2015) and Harianto (2020), reading activity is a process carried out and used by readers to get the message that the author wants to convey through written media. Reading is one of the four basic language skills and a part of written communication. Previously, Santoso (2004) also argued that reading is an activity to understand written language. It involves brain mechanisms, expressed by Wareg (in Florence et al., 2017), who states that reading is an activity-oriented skill.

According to Tarigan (2015), there are two general types of reading: reading aloud and reading silently. In a student's learning activities, the kind of reading is study

reading or academic reading. Study reading is distinguished from reading for entertainment because the aim is to learn, deepen understanding of a scientific discipline, and be carried out based on the needs of the field of science cultivated. Reading for entertainment or leisure is a reading activity to fill spare time, vacation periods, and limited times such as waiting and queuing. The readings usually chosen for this activity are literary works, newspapers, magazines, and popular articles. The type of reading that is embodied in silent reading. It is needed to carry out reading activities, study, and reading for this entertainment. Reading is an independent activity to gain knowledge, not depending on the material presented by the lecturer or discussion with friends. A reader gains more knowledge than a group of non-readers.

The definition of interest in reading is the desire, willingness, and encouragement from within a person. Interest in reading also encourages the person to feel interested and happy in reading activities. In addition, from reading activities, a person will gain extensive knowledge. Interest in reading will grow if there is a will, desire, and encouragement from oneself, namely from students, friends, parents, and lecturers. Students' curiosity will encourage them to read books that interest each individual. Then from these activities, students will get answers to previously thought-out questions (Elendiana, 2020). From various expert opinions related to reading activities and reading interest, the writer can conclude that student reading interest is encouragement in students to obtain messages or information from a text.

Based on the previously mentioned research, there has been no research related to the reading interest of PBSI FKIP UNS undergraduate students during online learning. A similar study was conducted by Boangmanalu (2017) regarding the reading habits of PBSI FKIP UNS undergraduate students. However, the research was conducted before the pandemic, and learning was still conducted face-to-face. In Boangmanalu's study (2017), it shows that the habits of Indonesian Language and Literature Education students have been formed. The factors that support this include campus facilities and infrastructure and the organizations that students participate in on campus. Therefore, this study aimed to describe and explain the reading interest of Indonesian Language and Literature Education students during distance learning during the covid-19 pandemic. So that the research problem was how the reading interests of PBSI students at FKIP UNS while having online knowledge during the Covid-19 pandemic?

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research was a type of qualitative research with a descriptive survey method. The total respondents who filled out the questionnaire were 97 out of 322 active undergraduate students in Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Sebelas Maret University. Not all students filled out the questionnaire because it was done voluntarily. The age range of the respondents was 17-22 years. The sampling technique was aimed at undergraduate Indonesian Language and Literature Education students who are still active in the 2021/2022 Academic Year. The collecting data was a questionnaire (questionnaire) that an expert had validated. The aspects in the questionnaire consisted of 5 categories, namely 1) feelings towards reading, 2) reading preferences, 3) reading frequency, 4) reading sources, and 5) types of reading materials during learning from home. The questionnaire was made using a google form in the first week of November 2021. Then the questionnaire link was distributed through the class leader to be distributed to the student WhatsApp groups. Data were collected for two weeks in the first and second weeks of November 2021. In addition, there were

reminder activities for the respondents. The writers conducted descriptive statistics, frequency calculations, and simple percentages to analyze the collected data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The age of the sample is between 17 to 22 years. It was dominated by 19 years with 34 samples (34.7%). Next, there were 23 samples of 20 years old (23.5%), 20 samples of 21 years old (20.4%), 18 samples of 22 years old (18.4%), and the rest were 17 and 18 years old. Female students dominated the sample. However, based on Rahmawati's (2021) research, there is no gender effect in reading activities.

### *Research result*

The results of this study were presented in the table of presentation and frequency and the form of narration. Data collected were to describe and explain the reading interest of undergraduate students in Indonesian Language and Literature Education during learning from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following is a table of the results of research that has been carried out, which consists of 5 categories, namely 1) feelings towards reading, 2) reading preferences, 3) reading frequency, 4) reading sources, and 5) types of reading materials during learning from home.

**Table 1. Feeling toward Reading**

No.	Statement/Answer/Total of Respondent	
1.	I .... read at home during distance learning.	
	really like	8 (8,2%)
	like	69 (70,4%)
	do not like it much	21 (21,4%)
	do not like	0
2.	I .... read anything while studying from home.	
	really like	7 (7,1%)
	like	71 (72,4%)
	do not like it much	20 (20,4%)
	do not like	0
3.	I .... read academic books/lecture materials given by lecturers during learning from home.	
	really like	2 (2%)
	like	49 (50%)
	do not like it much	44 (44,9%)
	do not like	3 (3,1%)
4.	Reading academic books/college materials is a tedious activity.	
	Yes	9 (9,2%)
	Sometimes	84 (85,7%)
	No	5 (5,1%)
5.	Reading is a challenging activity for me.	
	Yes	2 (2%)
	Sometimes	50 (51%)
	No	46 (46,9%)

**Table 2. Reading Preferences**

No.	Statement/Answer/Total of Respondent	
1.	Do you like reading in your spare time?	
	Yes	43 (43,9%)

	Sometimes No	54 (55,1%) 1 (1%)
<b>2.</b>	What reading do you choose?	
	Fiction Non-fiction	75 (76,5%) 23 (23,5%)
<b>3.</b>	During online learning, what do you prefer to read?	
	Academic Books/Materials from Other Lecturers	7 (7,1%) 91 (92,9%)
<b>4.</b>	Where do you prefer to read from?	
	<i>online</i> <i>offline</i>	60 (61,2%) 38 (38,8%)
<b>5.</b>	What is your favorite reading?	
	Romance/Novel Adventure Comedy Academic Books/Lecture Materials History Science fiction Biography Mystery Horror News	58 (59,2%) 6 (6,1%) 5 (5,1%) 2 (2%) 3 (3,1%) 6 (6,1%) 1 (1%) 5 (5,1%) 2 (2%) 10 (10,2%)

**Table 3. Reading Frequency**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Statement/Answer/Total of Respondent</b>	
<b>1.</b>	How many hours do you read in a day while studying from home?	
	More than 1 hour 30 minutes - 1 hour 15 minutes - 30 minutes I don't read unless I have to Not at all	27 (27,6%) 38 (38,8%) 29 (29,6%) 4 (4,1%) 0
<b>2.</b>	How often do you read in a week in online learning?	
	Every day 5 days - 6 days 3 days - 4 days 1 day - 2 days Never	16 (16,3%) 9 (9,2%) 37 (37,8%) 36 (36,7%) 0
<b>3.</b>	How many hours per day can you read for college assignments?	
	More than 1 hour 30 minutes - 1 hour 15 minutes - 30 minutes Not at all	24 (24,5%) 39 (39,8%) 32 (32,7%) 3 (3,1%)
<b>4.</b>	How many hours per day can you read for pleasure/entertainment?	
	More than 1 hour 30 minutes - 1 hour 15 minutes - 30 minutes Not at all	52 (53,1%) 36 (36,7%) 9 (9,2%) 0
<b>5.</b>	How much reading material (book chapters/ lecture materials/ sections of literature/ etc.) do you read daily?	
	More than 20 pages 11 - 20 pages 1 - 10 pages Not at all	9 (9,2%) 15 (15,3%) 70 (71,4%) 4 (4,1%)

<b>6.</b>	How many books did you read this semester (during online learning, from February 2021 – to July 2021)?	
	More than 10 books	9 (9,2%)
	7 - 9 books	8 (8,2%)
	4 - 6 books	41 (41,8%)
	1 - 3 books	37 (37,8%)
	Not at all	3 (3,1%)

**Table 4. Reading Source**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Statement/Answer/Total of Respondent</b>	
<b>1.</b>	Where do you get your reading material in online learning?	
	<i>Online</i>	29 (29,6%)
	<i>Offline</i>	4 (4,1%)
	<i>Both</i>	65 (66,3%)
<b>2.</b>	If you get your reading material online, from what app do you get your reading? (select all that apply)	
	Facebook	15 (15,3%)
	Instagram	47 (48%)
	Twitter	53 (54,1%)
	Website	66 (67,3%)
	Google Classroom	13 (13,3%)
	WhatsApp	51 (52%)
	Wattpad	47 (48%)
	Line Today	15 (15,3%)
	Others	40 (40,8%)
<b>3.</b>	If you get offline reading material, where do you get reading material from? (select all that apply)	
	Printed book	80 (81,6%)
	Magazine	16 (16,3%)
	Newspaper	27 (27,6%)
	Journal	36 (36,7%)
	Academic books/copy of lecturer materials	49 (50%)
	Other	18 (18,4%)
<b>4.</b>	What reading media do you use most often for reading activities?	
	Printed book	13 (13,3%)
	Tablet	2 (2%)
	Computer	6 (6,1%)
	Smartphone	77 (78,6%)

**Table 5. Types of Reading Materials During Home Learning**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Statement/Answer/Total of Respondent</b>	
<b>1.</b>	What types of reading materials did you read during the study from home this semester? (select all that apply)	
	<i>Manga/Comic/Comedy</i>	26 (26,8%)
	<i>Magazines/Newspapers/Informative News</i>	49 (50,5%)
	<i>Horror/Mystery</i>	19 (19,6%)
	<i>Biography/True Story</i>	22 (22,7%)
	<i>Textbooks/Academic Books/Lecturer Materials</i>	65 (67%)
	<i>Novels/Romance</i>	70 (72,2%)
	<i>Poetry</i>	34 (35,1%)
	<i>Adventure/Action Story</i>	30 (30,9%)
	<i>Sport News</i>	17 (17,5%)

## ***Discussion***

### **Feelings towards Reading**

Based on table 1, related to the first indicator of student interest in reading, feelings towards reading, students still have the enthusiasm to read during learning from home. 70.4% of students like to read in online learning, and 72.4% stated that they want to read anything. Based on the research of Utami, S., Nur, J (2021), the interest of students who enjoy reading means having a pleasant experience when doing reading activities. Although students like reading and any kind of reading activity during learning from home, including reading academic books/lecture materials given by the lecturer, there is a slight difference between students who like reading educational books, namely 50%, and those who don't like 44.9%. In a student's learning activities, the type of study reading or academic reading is also known (Tarigan, 2015). Study reading is distinguished from reading for entertainment because the aim is to learn, deepen understanding of a scientific discipline, and be carried out based on the needs of the field of science cultivated. In point 4 of table 1, as many as 85.7% of students sometimes feel that reading academic books/lecture materials is a tedious activity. Several factors cause this to happen. Utami, S., Nur, J (2021) mentions several reasons, including unsuitable material, too much material, lazy reading, or difficulty understanding some terms in reading. It is also reinforced by 50% of students who think reading is a challenging activity. However, the attitude towards reading plays an essential role in a person's reading interest. Feelings of boredom and sometimes difficulty reading are negative attitudes that affect a person's interest in reading.

### **Reading Preferences**

Table 2 showed that students tend to like reading fiction (76.7%) in the form of novels (59.2%). It is in line with Dalinan's (2021) research that most students choose novel-type reading materials while learning from home. Similar to the research results of Utami, S., Nur, J (2021), during learning from home, students prefer to read fiction because it is more entertaining and exciting, can increase imagination and creativity, and students do not need to think extra when reading fiction. Novel type reading has benefits related to understanding human behavior, increasing empathy, and sharpening the reader's sense. Besides that, the most important thing about reading novels is as a medium of entertainment and release fatigue. It follows the opinion of Tarigan (2015) that reading for entertainment or leisure is a reading activity to fill spare time, fill vacation periods, and limited times such as waiting and queuing. The readings usually chosen for this activity are literary works, newspapers, magazines, and popular articles. Furthermore, table 2 also shows that students prefer to read online. Vyas & Tandel (2020) explained that readers tend to use the web and wireless networks because it is easier for them to access information than when searching through text. Following the research of Parikh et al. (2020) and Ackialakshmi et al. (2021), students' tendency to read digitally during the covid-19 pandemic.

### **Reading Frequency**

Table 3 showed that in one day, 38 students read about 30 minutes – 1 hour during learning from home, 29 students only read 15 – 30 minutes, as many as 27 students read more than 1 hour of reading time in one day, and there are still four students who do not read unless forced to. The reading frequency in a week is dominated by 37 students who read 3-4 days a week, 36 students read 1-2 days a week, 16 students who read every day, and nine students read 5-6 days a week. Table 3 also shows that students prefer reading for pleasure to college assignments. Thirty-nine

students read 30 – 1 hour a day for college assignments, 32 students only read 15 – 30 minutes, there were only 24 students who read more than 1 hour for college assignments, there were even 3 students who did not read at all. These results are very far from the activity of reading for pleasure. A total of 52 students read for more than 1 hour a day for enjoyment, 36 students read for about 30 minutes – 1 hour, 9 students read 15 – 30 minutes, and there were no students who did not read for pleasure. All students take their time every day to read for entertainment. The majority of students (71.4%) read 1 – 10 pages a day. Unfortunately, there are still 4.1% who do not read at all in a day. The number of books read by students mostly read 4-6 books in a period of 6 months (February - July 2021), students who read more than 10 books namely 9 students, and unfortunately there are still 3 students who do not read books at all (3, 1%). The intensity of time spent by someone in reading can indicate whether that person has a high reading interest or not. Someone who takes the time to read every day can be stated that he has a high motivation to learn to add insight and knowledge, while someone who has an unstable reading intensity tends to have less high motivation to read (Hardianto, 2011).

### **Reading Source**

Student reading sources as presented in table 4, most students (66.3%) received online and offline learning materials from home. 29.6% were taken online, and 4.1% were from offline. They got online reading sources from the website (67.3%), followed by the Twitter application (53%), then the WhatsApp application (52%). Some students chose Wattpad, Instagram, Facebook, Line Today, Google Classroom, and others. Most of the offline reading sources (81.6%) chose printed books, academic books/copies of material from lecturers (49%), and journals (36%) and followed by newspapers (27.6%), Others (18.4%), and magazines (16.3%). Interestingly, this data shows that students still prefer printed books to journals. Even in the current era, journals are a source of the latest knowledge in education. Next, regarding reading media, the majority of students (78.6%) choose smartphones to read, followed by printed books (13.3%), computers (6.1%), and tablets (2%). Following the findings of Samsuddin & Aspura (2021) and Packilakshmi (2021), physical books in the digital era based on research at this time are indeed less attractive to students. These results are by the findings of previous study conducted by Tanjung et al. (2017) that students prefer to use gadgets (smartphones) as reading media because they are always connected to the internet and their activities. Changes in reading media with the existence of social media in the virtual world can be used optimally to foster interest, habits, and love of reading in students (Dalilan, 2021)

### **Types of Reading Materials During Home Learning**

The types of reading materials selected by students are based on table 5; as many as 70 students (72.2%) chose novels/romance, followed by textbooks/academic books/materials from lecturers, namely 65 students (67%), magazines/newspapers/informative news selected by 49 students (50.5%). Siswati (2010) also explained that from the reading experience written by the participants, most of them recounted activities while reading storybooks such as novels, comics, and interesting, humorous stories. It makes them dissolved in these activities, only a tiny part of them talk about getting lessons from books he reads, for example, books about motivation. Reading in the form of novels is still the leading choice for students. It has been discussed that students tend to like reading activities as entertainment, especially reading fiction in the form of novels. Therefore, the role of the lecturer here is essential



to foster student interest in academic reading. Similar to the opinion of SuHua Huang, Matthew Capps, Jeff Blacklock & Mary Garza (2014) that the role of lecturers in motivating students' reading habits is still significant. Not only that, Capps & Huang (2015) suggest recommending multicultural and multi-social reading.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion, the following conclusions were obtained. First, students still have an enthusiastic attitude towards reading activities while learning from home, reading anything, including reading books or academic material. Reading books or educational material is considered boring. Second, while online learning, students preferred to read online with the type of fiction reading in the form of novels rather than academic texts. Third, students' reading frequencies during learning from home are 30 minutes – 1 hour for 3 – 6 days a week. Students can read for more than 1 hour for pleasure, but only 30 minutes – 1 hour for reading academic texts, with a page count of 1 – 10 pages. From this frequency, they can complete 4-6 books during one semester. The four students received online learning resources, primarily from websites, and offline, mostly from textbooks. The media they use most often for reading are smartphones/smartphones. The five types of student reading during learning from home varied, but the majority chose reading in the form of novels/romances. Based on these conclusions, the role of lecturers and parents is significant to create positive student interest in reading activities. Lecturers can provide exciting material to students considering the number two source of student reading, namely material from the lecturer. In addition, lecturers must also encourage students to read journals. Parents play a vital role in students' reading interests in online learning. Therefore they should provide reading or remind them of reading activities during learning from home.

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