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TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH READING HABITS AMONG EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT MTS NURUL QODIRI, CENTRAL LAMPUNG

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Abstract

This study aims to explore an English teacher's perceptions of eighth-grade students' English reading habits and identify the factors influencing these habits at MTs Nurul Qodiri, Central Lampung. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through classroom observations, a semi-structured interview with one English teacher, and documentation of students' reading activities. Observations were conducted to examine students' reading practices during English lessons, while the interview explored the teacher's perspectives, evaluations, and expectations regarding students' reading habits. The findings reveal that the English teacher considers English reading habits important for developing students' language skills. However, students' reading habits still need improvement, particularly in terms of their participation in reading activities and their engagement in independent reading. Several factors influencing students' reading habits include limited vocabulary, low reading motivation, insufficient exposure to English reading materials outside the classroom, and limited availability of interesting and age-appropriate reading materials. Furthermore, the teacher reported using several strategies to encourage students to read, including reading aloud, providing short stories, selecting materials related to students' daily lives, and introducing digital reading materials. These findings highlight the importance of appropriate instructional strategies and a supportive reading environment involving teachers, schools, and parents in developing students' English reading habits.

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the international languages that plays an important role in education and global communication. English proficiency is an essential skill for students to access information, broaden their knowledge, and keep up with developments in science and technology (Karima & Ramadhani, 2020). English language proficiency encompasses four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, reading plays a significant role in helping students

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expand their vocabulary, understand sentence structures, and improve their ability to comprehend various types of texts. Reading activities also expose learners to a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures that support their language development (Aisyiyah & Hakim, 2020). Therefore, developing English reading habits from an early age is essential, particularly at the junior secondary school level.

Reading habits are an important aspect of the foreign language learning process. Reading activities are not merely intended to obtain information but also serve as a means of developing students' overall language abilities. Through regular reading activities, students can improve their vocabulary, understand grammatical structures, and develop their reading comprehension skills. However, having a positive attitude toward reading does not necessarily mean that students have developed consistent reading habits. Aisyiyah and Hakim (2020) found that although most English student teachers demonstrated positive attitudes toward reading, they spent relatively little time on independent reading and tended to prefer reading materials in their first language rather than English. Similarly, Aprilia (2024) examined the reading habits of eleventh-grade students, highlighting the importance of understanding students' actual reading practices. These findings indicate that positive attitudes toward reading do not automatically lead to consistent English reading habits.

However, in practice, the development of English reading habits among students still faces several challenges. Low reading interest, limited availability of English reading materials, and insufficient support and motivation from the family and school environments are among the factors that may hinder the development of a literacy culture. Aprilia (2024) examined students' English reading habits and provided insights into the reading practices of senior high school students. Furthermore, Nai (2022) identified several challenges related to teachers' reading habits and perceptions of EFL reading, particularly in relation to students' literacy development. These conditions indicate that reading habits cannot be developed solely through classroom instruction but also require consistent practice and support from students' surrounding environments.

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In addressing these challenges, teachers play an important role in developing and fostering students' reading habits. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering instructional materials but also serve as facilitators and motivators who encourage students to develop their reading interest (Putri et al., 2026). An English teacher's perception of students' reading habits is important because it may influence the selection of teaching methods, the assignment of learning activities, and the creation of a classroom atmosphere that supports literacy development. Nai (2022) found that teachers' reading habits and perceptions of EFL reading are important aspects of students' literacy development. The findings also emphasize that teachers need to develop their own reading habits to become effective reading role models for students. In addition, Nugroho et al. (2018) highlighted the importance of teachers' perceptions and instructional strategies in motivating students to engage in reading activities. Therefore, examining an English teacher's perception is important for understanding how English reading habits develop within the school environment.

Previous studies have examined various aspects of English reading habits, students' reading motivation, teachers' perceptions, and instructional strategies in EFL learning contexts. Aisyiyah and Hakim (2020) investigated English student teachers' reading habits and preferences, focusing on reading frequency, attitudes toward reading, and preferred reading materials. Meanwhile, Nai (2022) examined the relationship between teachers' reading habits, their perceptions of EFL reading, and students' literacy development. Bingham (2023) discussed a systematic process of qualitative data analysis, providing methodological insights for organizing and interpreting qualitative findings. Furthermore, Nugroho et al. (2018) discussed teachers' perceptions of reading comprehension strategies and their role in motivating students. Although these studies provide valuable insights into English reading practices and teachers' roles in literacy development, they do not specifically explain how an English teacher perceives eighth-grade students' reading habits through classroom experiences, including students' reading difficulties, reading engagement, factors influencing their reading practices, and instructional efforts to encourage reading activities.

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MTs Nurul Qodiri, Central Lampung, as an Islamic junior secondary educational institution, provides a relevant context for examining students' English reading habits from the teacher's perspective. The development of English reading habits among students remains an important aspect that requires attention (Hasan, 2024). Limited reading materials, students' low interest in English reading, and insufficient support from their surrounding environments are several issues that need to be considered. In this context, the English teacher's perspectives and experiences provide an opportunity to understand students' reading habits, identify the factors that influence them, and explore the efforts made to improve students' reading engagement. In particular, the teacher's classroom experiences can provide information about students' participation in reading activities, their difficulties in understanding English texts, and the strategies used to encourage reading practices.

Based on the discussion above, this study aims to describe an English teacher's perception of English reading habits among eighth-grade students at MTs Nurul Qodiri, Central Lampung. In addition, this study seeks to identify the factors influencing students' English reading habits and explore the teacher's efforts to encourage students to develop better reading practices within the school environment. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, a semi-structured interview, and documentation. The findings are expected to provide a contextual understanding of students' English reading habits from the teacher's perspective and contribute to the development of appropriate English teaching strategies and literacy activities in Islamic junior secondary schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English Reading Habits

Reading habits refer to the regular practices and behaviours individuals develop when engaging in reading activities. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, reading habits can be understood through several dimensions, including reading frequency, reading duration, reading consistency, and reading purposes. Reading frequency refers to how often students engage in reading

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activities, while reading duration concerns the amount of time spent reading. Reading consistency refers to the regularity of reading practices over time, and reading purposes relate to students' reasons for reading English texts, such as completing academic assignments, obtaining information, or reading for personal enjoyment. These dimensions provide a framework for understanding students' reading practices from the teacher's perspective. Regular exposure to English reading materials can help students become more familiar with vocabulary, sentence structures, and different types of written texts. Reading habits also contribute to the development of reading comprehension and overall language proficiency.

Iftanti (2012), in a study entitled *A Survey of the English Reading Habits of EFL Students in Indonesia*, investigated the English reading habits of 546 Indonesian university students. The findings revealed that most students had not developed good English reading habits, despite having studied English since elementary school. Only a small number of students regularly spent time reading various English texts for pleasure. The study also found that students were more likely to read English materials to complete academic assignments than to satisfy their personal interests. These findings suggest that positive attitudes toward reading do not automatically lead to consistent English reading habits.

Sum et al. (2023) examined EFL students' perceptions of English reading habits in an academic context. Their qualitative study highlighted students' experiences and perceptions of reading practices, including the challenges associated with academic reading. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding students' reading experiences and the factors that influence their engagement with English reading activities. Therefore, English reading habits should be understood not only in terms of reading frequency but also through students' experiences, interests, and purposes for reading.

Reading Interest, Reading Motivation, and Factors Influencing English Reading Habits

Reading interest and motivation are important factors in developing consistent reading habits. However, reading interest, reading motivation, and

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reading habits are related concepts with different meanings. Reading interest refers to students' attention, curiosity, and enjoyment toward reading materials. Reading motivation refers to the internal and external factors that encourage students to engage in reading activities. Meanwhile, reading habits refer to repeated reading behaviors that develop through regular and consistent practice.

Reading interest and motivation may influence the development of reading habits because students who enjoy reading and have sufficient motivation are more likely to participate in reading activities. However, having an interest in reading does not necessarily mean that students have established consistent reading habits. Students may express an interest in English reading but still spend limited time reading or only read when they receive assignments from their teachers. Therefore, these three concepts need to be distinguished when examining students' English reading practices.

Reading motivation is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include personal interest, reading enjoyment, confidence, and individual learning goals. Meanwhile, external factors include family support, classroom environments, teachers' instructional practices, and the availability of appropriate reading materials. These factors may influence students' willingness to engage in English reading activities.

Furthermore, Iftanti (2012) demonstrated that students' positive beliefs about reading were not necessarily reflected in their actual reading practices. Students tended to read English materials because of academic requirements rather than personal enjoyment. This finding indicates that reading interest needs to be supported through activities and learning environments that encourage students to read voluntarily and consistently.

In addition, the availability of interesting and accessible reading materials is an important consideration in developing students' reading habits. Materials that are appropriate to students' language proficiency and interests can encourage greater participation in reading activities. Support from parents and teachers is also important in establishing a positive reading environment at school and at home.

Teachers' Perceptions of Students' English Reading Habits

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An English teacher's perception refers to the way the teacher understands, interprets, and evaluates students' learning behaviours and abilities. In the context of English reading, the teacher's perception involves views regarding students' reading interests, reading frequency, reading difficulties, motivation, and participation in reading activities. Through classroom interactions and teaching experiences, the teacher can identify students' reading practices and the factors that may influence their engagement with English reading materials.

The teacher's perception is important because the teacher interacts directly with students during the teaching and learning process. Classroom observations and teaching experiences provide valuable information about students' reading behaviors and the challenges they encounter. The teacher can identify whether students regularly engage in reading activities, demonstrate interest in English texts, or experience difficulties in understanding reading materials.

Nai (2022), in the study entitled *The Role of Teachers' Reading Habits and Perception about EFL Reading Towards Students' Literacy*, investigated the relationship between teachers' reading habits, their perceptions of EFL reading, and students' literacy. The findings indicated that teachers had limited daily reading habits, while students demonstrated low literacy levels. The researchers emphasized that teachers play an important role in developing students' literacy and that teachers' own reading habits can influence the reading environment they create for students. This study demonstrates the importance of considering teachers' experiences and perceptions when examining the development of English reading habits in schools.

Teachers' perceptions may also influence how they respond to students' reading difficulties. When teachers recognize that students have limited reading interest or face difficulties understanding English texts, they can provide additional guidance, select more appropriate reading materials, and create activities that encourage participation. Therefore, understanding the teacher's perception is essential for identifying students' reading conditions and determining appropriate approaches to improving their reading habits.

The Role of Teachers in Developing English Reading Habits

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Teachers have an important responsibility in creating a learning environment that encourages students to develop positive reading habits. Their role extends beyond explaining reading materials to providing motivation, guidance, and opportunities for students to engage in meaningful reading activities.

Nai (2022) emphasized that teachers should develop their own reading habits to become positive role models for students. Teachers who demonstrate an interest in reading can encourage students to recognize reading as an important part of the learning process. The findings also highlight the need for teachers to provide more opportunities for students to engage in extensive reading and access various reading resources.

Furthermore, Li et al. (2022), in their study entitled *The Impact of Reading Strategy Instruction on Reading Comprehension, Strategy Use, Motivation, and Self-Efficacy in Chinese University EFL Students*, found that explicit reading strategy instruction significantly improved students' reading comprehension. Although the intervention did not produce significant changes in reading motivation and self-efficacy, students expressed positive attitudes toward the instruction. These findings suggest that teachers' instructional approaches can support students' reading development, although improvements in reading motivation may require additional support and consistent practice.

In classroom practice, teachers can develop students' English reading habits through several activities, including providing interesting reading materials, assigning regular reading tasks, organizing reading discussions, establishing classroom reading corners, and encouraging students to share information from the texts they have read. Such activities can help create a supportive environment in which students become more familiar with English reading and gradually develop consistent reading habits.

Several previous studies have examined English reading habits, reading motivation, teachers' perceptions, and instructional strategies in EFL learning contexts. Aisyiyah and Hakim (2020) investigated English student teachers' reading habits and found that positive attitudes toward reading did not necessarily lead to consistent reading practices. Aprilia (2024) examined the reading habits of

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eleventh-grade students, providing insights into students' English reading practices at the senior secondary school level. Meanwhile, Nai (2022) examined teachers' reading habits and perceptions of EFL reading in relation to students' literacy development.

Sum et al. (2023) explored EFL students' perceptions of English academic reading habits, while Li et al. (2022) investigated the effects of reading strategy instruction on reading comprehension, motivation, and self-efficacy among Chinese university EFL students. Collectively, these studies provide valuable insights into the development of reading habits, students' reading experiences, and the role of teachers in supporting English literacy.

However, the previous studies primarily focused on students' reading habits, reading motivation, teachers' reading practices, or the implementation of reading strategies. Less attention has been given to how an English teacher interprets students' actual reading behaviors through classroom experiences, particularly their participation in reading activities, difficulties in understanding English texts, engagement in independent reading, and the factors influencing their reading practices. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand these aspects from the perspective of an English teacher who directly interacts with students during the teaching and learning process.

Therefore, the present study focuses on an English teacher's perception of English reading habits among eighth-grade students at MTs Nurul Qodiri, Central Lampung. By examining the teacher's perspective, the study seeks to provide a contextual understanding of students' English reading habits, the factors influencing them, and the efforts made by the teacher to encourage the development of consistent reading practices in the school environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to investigate the English teacher's perception of English reading habits among eighth-grade students at MTs Nurul Qodiri, Central Lampung. This research design was selected because the study aimed to describe the teacher's perception, identify the factors

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influencing students' English reading habits, and explore the teacher's strategies for encouraging students to develop better reading habits. According to Busetto et al. (2020), qualitative research is appropriate for understanding phenomena in their natural contexts and exploring experiences, perspectives, and behaviors through descriptive data.

This study was conducted at MTs Nurul Qodiri, Central Lampung, in March [insert research year], involving one English teacher who taught eighth-grade students as the research participant. The teacher was selected because of their direct involvement in teaching English and their understanding of students' reading habits, interests, difficulties, and learning activities.

Data were collected through three techniques: observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to examine students' English reading activities in the school environment, particularly their participation during English lessons. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the English teacher to obtain detailed information about the teacher's perceptions, factors affecting students' reading habits, and strategies used to improve students' interest in reading English. Meanwhile, documentation was used to support the observation and interview findings through relevant literacy activity records, English reading materials, and other documents related to students' reading activities.

The classroom observation was conducted [insert the actual number of observations] times during English lessons in March. Each observation lasted approximately [insert actual duration]. The observation focused on students' participation in English reading activities, their responses to reading assignments, their engagement with English texts, and the difficulties they encountered during reading activities.

The semi-structured interview was conducted once with the English teacher and lasted approximately [insert actual interview duration]. The interview questions were developed based on the research objectives and the literature on English reading habits. The interview focused on the teacher's perceptions of students' reading practices, students' reading difficulties, factors influencing reading habits,

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and strategies used to encourage reading activities. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to ask additional questions when further clarification was needed.

The documentation consisted of [insert the actual documents collected, such as English reading materials, photographs of reading activities, literacy activity records, or other relevant school documents]. These documents were used to support the information obtained from classroom observations and the teacher interview. The use of observation, interviews, and document analysis is supported by Busetto et al. (2020), who explain that these techniques are commonly used to collect qualitative data and obtain a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon.

The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The first stage, data reduction, involved selecting, simplifying, and organizing the information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. At this stage, the researcher focused on relevant information related to the teacher's perceptions, students' English reading habits, factors influencing those habits, and strategies used to encourage students to read. Irrelevant information was excluded to make the data more focused and organized.

The second stage, data display, involved presenting the reduced data in descriptive narrative form and grouping the information according to the research focus. This process helped the researcher organize and understand the findings from each data collection technique. The third stage, conclusion drawing and verification, involved interpreting the displayed data to identify important patterns and relationships related to the research objectives. The conclusions were then examined and compared with the collected evidence to ensure that the findings accurately represented the information obtained during the research process. This analytical process is consistent with Bingham (2023), who emphasizes that qualitative data analysis should be systematic, organized, and transparent to help researchers develop meaningful findings and maintain trustworthiness.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings, this

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study employed methodological triangulation by comparing information obtained through classroom observations, interviews, and documentation. The observation data were used to identify students' actual participation in English reading activities, while the interview data provided the teacher's explanations and perceptions regarding students' reading practices and difficulties. Documentation was examined to identify supporting evidence related to reading activities and the materials used in the classroom.

The findings from these three techniques were compared to determine whether the information showed consistency. For example, the teacher's explanation about students' participation in reading activities was compared with the students' actual behavior during classroom observations and the available documentation related to reading activities. Any similarities and differences between the sources were considered during the interpretation process. According to Schlunegger et al. (2024), triangulation involves combining and comparing information from different data collection methods or sources to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon. Therefore, the application of triangulation in this study was expected to strengthen the credibility of the research findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the English teacher at MTs Nurul Qodiri, Central Lampung, considers reading an important skill in English language learning. Reading helps students develop their vocabulary, understand sentence structures, and gain information from English texts. However, the teacher perceived that the reading habits of eighth-grade students still need improvement. Some students showed interest in reading English texts, while others experienced difficulties and were less motivated to participate in reading activities. This situation suggests that students' reading habits are influenced not only by their ability to understand English texts but also by their interest and motivation. This finding is in line with (Nai, 2022), who emphasized the importance of teachers' perceptions and reading habits in supporting students' literacy development.

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One of the main factors influencing students' English reading habits is their limited vocabulary. Students who do not understand many English words may find it difficult to comprehend the meaning of a text. As a result, they may lose interest and become less confident when reading English materials. In addition, students' exposure to English reading outside the classroom is still limited. They tend to read English texts when the teacher gives assignments rather than developing independent reading habits. Motivation also plays an important role because students who are not interested in reading may be less willing to spend time reading English materials. These findings are related to (Neno et al., 2022), who explain that reading engagement involves several aspects, including motivation, interest, attitudes, emotions, and self-regulation. Their study also indicates that students' engagement in reading still needs improvement.

Another factor identified by the teacher is the limited availability of interesting and age-appropriate English reading materials. Reading materials that are too difficult or unrelated to students' daily lives may reduce their interest in reading. Therefore, the availability of various reading materials is important to encourage students to develop positive reading habits. The teacher's perspective is consistent with the findings of (Neno et al., 2022), who highlight the importance of teachers' roles and the availability of opportunities for students to develop their literacy. Their research also discusses how students' reading development can be influenced by factors such as family background and changes in reading media due to technology.

To address these difficulties, the English teacher applies several strategies to encourage students to read English texts. These strategies include reading aloud, providing short stories, and selecting reading materials related to students' daily lives. Reading aloud can help students become more familiar with English pronunciation and vocabulary. Meanwhile, short stories and familiar topics can make reading activities more interesting and easier to understand. The teacher also encourages students to access English reading materials through digital media, such as short articles and song lyrics. These activities provide students with opportunities to encounter English texts beyond classroom learning. Similar findings were

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reported by (Evi Puspitasari, n.d.), who found that English teachers used various strategies to address students' reading difficulties, particularly those related to vocabulary, pronunciation, and motivation.

Furthermore, the teacher believes that improving students' English reading habits requires support from the school and parents. The school can provide a more supportive reading environment by making various English reading materials available, while parents can encourage children to develop reading activities at home. Cooperation between teachers, schools, and parents is therefore important in creating consistent reading habits. This perspective is supported by (Neno et al., 2022), who explain that students' literacy development is also related to the support and opportunities available in their learning environments.

Overall, the findings show that the English teacher perceives students' reading habits as an important aspect of English language learning that still needs continuous improvement. Limited vocabulary, low motivation, insufficient reading activities outside the classroom, and limited reading materials are considered challenges in developing students' reading habits. The teacher addresses these challenges through reading aloud, short stories, and reading materials related to students' interests and daily experiences. These findings highlight the importance of appropriate teaching strategies and a supportive learning environment in encouraging students to develop positive English reading habits.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the English teacher at MTs Nurul Qodiri, Central Lampung, perceives English reading habits as an important aspect of eighth-grade students' English language learning. Reading activities help students develop their vocabulary, understand sentence structures, and improve their reading comprehension. However, students' English reading habits still need to be improved because not all students demonstrate consistent participation in reading activities.

Based on the teacher's perceptions, several factors influence students' English reading habits, including limited vocabulary, low reading motivation, insufficient independent reading activities outside the classroom, and limited availability of

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interesting English reading materials. These factors may make students less interested in reading and cause difficulties in understanding English texts. Therefore, developing students' reading habits requires appropriate learning activities and a supportive reading environment.

The study also highlights the teacher's efforts to encourage students' engagement in English reading through several strategies, such as reading aloud, providing short stories, and selecting reading materials related to students' daily lives. The teacher also reported encouraging students to access English reading materials through digital media. In addition, support from the school and parents is considered important in creating an environment that encourages students to develop regular reading practices.

In conclusion, the development of English reading habits among eighth-grade students requires continuous encouragement, appropriate teaching strategies, and adequate reading resources. The English teacher's perception provides valuable information about students' reading conditions, the challenges they face, and the efforts that can be made to improve their reading habits. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more effective English reading activities and literacy programs, particularly in Islamic junior secondary schools.

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