

EFL Students' Perception of Utilizing the Wattpad Application as Learning Media in Reading

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Abstract

This study aims to determine how students' perspectives of utilizing the wattpad application as learning media in reading. Ten EFL students from Indonesia majoring in English education participated in this study. This study gathered both quantitative and qualitative data through the use of semi-structured interviews, as well as open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires. The open-ended questionnaire delved into the advantages and disadvantages of using the Wattpad application, while the closed-ended questions gauged the frequency of students' use of the Wattpad application. Simultaneously, the semi-structured interview questions were crafted based on participants' responses to the questionnaires. Most participants found the Wattpad app valuable and user-friendly. They consider the Wattpad app as a valuable tool for language learning, inspiring independent study. The findings indicate that novice learners can derive greater benefits from mobile apps compared to experts. The research results show that students had positive views on using Wattpad as a reading application to enhance their skills. The study also outlines both the advantages and drawbacks of utilizing the Wattpad program. Students identified key benefits of extensive reading on Wattpad, such as user-friendliness, convenience, flexibility, and cost savings. These factors not only motivate increased reading but also inadvertently enhance students' writing abilities.

Keywords: EFL students, Mobile learning application, Perception, Wattpad.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the language abilities necessary to comprehend the meaning of what is being read and the knowledge possessed by readers to obtain information and comprehend the message to be given by the author. According to Hodgson (in Tarigan, 2008), reading is a process that the reader uses to understand the message intended to be communicated by the author through the medium of words/written language. Reading is a process the reader uses to comprehend the message the writer is attempting to express via words and written language. By Reading, one can find out the information at hand. Therefore, it is essential for every human who wants to learn a language learning. Students should have been taught from the elementary school level early. However, there are many problems faced in applying the pleasure of Reading. Students often feel bored and bored during the letter recognition process, so it becomes an obstacle to improving their reading skills.

According to van der Weel and Mangen (2022), guidance is needed to help children become better readers since Reading is a talent learned in school. To enhance kids' early learning and knowledge development. According to Sezgin (2022), this talent is also known as the capacity to think in a way that alters one's conception of thought. People who enjoy reading and those who do not will, for instance, be able to tell who is more knowledgeable and who is less knowledgeable. Reading is described as expressing symbols in writing to convey messages and help the reader grasp the Reading, according to Støle, Mangen, and Schwippert (2020). Imagination, creativity, and reading comprehension are a few aspects of Reading. Today the development of learning media and technology information and communication is unstoppable. Every day comes innovation and updates about technology that aim to help human life throughout the world, including in the education sector. Starting with the discovery of personal computers, mobile phones, notebooks, and the internet, internet technology is the starting point of the rapid development of current technology. The development of the internet has an impact on the flow of information around the world, both in terms of economic, socio-cultural, and education. According to Reeves (1998), media and technology are thought to have a favorable influence on the teaching and learning process. The media can have a beneficial impact on children and make studying enjoyable. It was also said by Chen (2012) that language learners achieve best when learning is a pleasurable, easygoing activity.

Utilizing mobile learning is one of the learning media that can help learning and communication to be more effective. One of the most recent advances in learning is mobile learning. A concept known as "mobile learning" was developed with the use of media mobile-based learning, including smartphones and the internet. M-learning, according to Abachi and Muhammad (2014), is a special type of education since it allows students to access course materials, instructions, and learning-related applications whenever and wherever they want. These platforms can include websites, mobile apps, or software programs that offer a range of language learning tools, such as grammar lessons, vocabulary exercises, and interactive language games. Many language learning platforms are available for learning, especially reading, and they differ in terms of the languages they offer, the types of lessons and exercises provided, and the teaching methods used. Some famous examples include Edmodo, Rosetta Stone, Wattpad, Babble, Webtoon, etc. Given the many language learning platforms available, evaluating their effectiveness in helping students achieve their language learning goals is essential.

Wattpad is a website originating from a smartphone application service in the capital city of Canada; Wattpad was launched in 2006 by Allen Lau and Ivan Yuen. Wattpad can even be used as a medium to train the talents of writers and people to write their own stories. Galik (1999) explains why Reading is necessary, especially for lectures for university-level children: "Reading can be a foundation for a person's content, not just in school, but for life. The Commission notes that despite not having the power to scan properly, Opportunities for personal fulfillment and work success can inevitably be lost." Wattpad is a reading app that features stories, novels, comics, and more. We can also create stories or articles on Wattpad to publish in the app so that we can read them and simultaneously write our own story or someone else's" (Fadillah & Amin, 2022). Researchers are looking for Wattpad apps designed to help students better understand the text of the stories they are

reading and the Wattpad app. Providing an exciting story and lesson can increase students' interest in Reading. Wattpad can enrich their education and help them memorize it. In this case, Wattpad can help students memorize what they have written and improve their ability to read stories on Wattpad. Students may feel the same way about the story if the creator can explain or describe the situation during this time (Anggitasari et al., 2020).

Wattpad has a built-in search engine, so users may decide what kind of Reading they want to access. One of the most significant Read short tales is works of literature on the Wattpad app. On the Wattpad app, the more people who enjoy a poem, the more votes and comments that story receives. The author's poem is rated more highly the more votes and comments it receives. Being well-liked by readers increases the probability that the work will be printed and published by the publisher. Interesting works have not only been published but have also been filmed. Readers use Wattpad for excitement, primarily to study fanfiction or grow creators, and they follow the wants set by Teen Fiction, the most popular genre on the platform, which has a serial distribution architecture that affects readers' and writers' practice automatically (Rebora & Pianzola, 2018).



Figure 1. Wattpad logo

However, it is well known that Indonesians, even students, need to read more for their interests (Rahman, 2018). As a result, it can provide information about how they learn and comprehend the topic, particularly in classes that include transactions. Cain, Oakhill, & Bryant (2004) claims that a poor reader needs help grasping the text and is terrible at concluding. Indonesian EFL students' enthusiasm for Reading was discovered to be at level 1 (Schleicher, 2019), meaning that they had a lesser level above it. Additionally, students must be motivated to read (Rahman & Weda, 2018). According to Guthrie, Wigfield, and VonSecker (2000), reading motivation includes a purpose, value, and attitudes about the subject, process, and outcomes of Reading.

The same topic has been the subject of prior relevant research. However, research has yet to examine how students feel about extensive Reading, mainly while using the Wattpad platform, and the advantages of participating in activities there. The thesis on "Student Perceptions of the Impact of Extensive Reading Learning" was done by Lindawati (2021). the study examined learners' feelings about a rigorous reading course at one of Indonesia's governmental universities. Based on research findings, the extensive reading strategy enhanced pupils' interest in Reading.

Additionally, it increases students' awareness of reading well in and out of the classroom until it becomes a habit for them to read more and advance their reading level (Day & Robb, 2015). Learning aims to discover the benefits of extensive online Reading carried out independently by Indonesian students and their challenges. The findings of this study indicate that reading extensively online helps them in terms of reading activities and improves their English proficiency in vocabulary and grammatical knowledge (Anindita, 2020), conducted a study entitled "EFL Students' Perception Towards Extensive Reading Practice at the College Level." This research aims to investigate students' perceptions of extensive reading subjects, the material they like, and its benefits for their English skills. Results from this study show that students have a good perception of extensive reading practice. In addition, extensive Reading also enhanced students' knowledge and English skills, such as Reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary mastery, and grammar.

In previous studies, the researchers said Wattpad was suitable for teaching reading in English classes because readers could access many literary works. English today can be an asset to face the global environment for both students, and the most important thing is to have English classes that utilize technology so that students and lecturers are motivated to read by utilizing the technology that has been provided, especially technology applications that can support reading skills. The learning atmosphere of Indonesian EFL students was purposefully chosen as the subject of this research because of related development. Therefore, this research study aims to determine how Indonesian students feel about using the Wattpad application as a learning media in reading.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized a mixed-method approach with both quantitative and qualitative data collected, with close-ended and open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews employed as the research instruments. Gephart (2013) stated that qualitative research deals with data expressed in words instead of numbers and statistics. The data gathered are the experiences and perspectives of the subjects; qualitative study seeks to produce a more accurate depiction of the individuals, things, events, places, conversations, and so forth. Since the author analyzed the questionnaire results and interviews with students, the type of methodology used in this study was content analysis. According to Krippendorff (2018), content analysis is acquiring and examining the text's document. The content includes any message that words, meaning, images, symbols, concepts, or themes can convey.

Ten EFL students from Indonesia majoring in English education participated in this study. The research used close-ended and open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as the instruments. The researcher created the questionnaire by adapting ideas from previous studies and modifying them to meet the objectives of this study. The questionnaires were prepared well to ensure the standard and quality of the questions. The open-ended questionnaire consists of 10 questions related to the frequent use of the Wattpad App and five questions for the close-ended questionnaire about the advantages and disadvantages of the Wattpad application. At the same time, the main questions for the semi-structured interview were developed based on the participant's responses to the online questionnaire.

The interview was done by recording the audio to evaluate the information and then saved in Microsoft Word.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data in this research was obtained from students' responses to online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Since the research objectives aim to investigate EFL students' perception of utilizing the wattpad application to aid reading skills., the questionnaire items are related to utilizing Wattpad Application.

Close-ended Questionnaire

The close-ended questions focused on the frequent use of the Wattpad App; there are ten questions, and ten the questionnaire provided options adapted from the Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Some times, O= Often, VO= Very often)

The data presented in this study were obtained from EFL students majoring in English education. The students were instructed to choose the answers that were closest to their own.

Table 1. The Percentage of Frequent-used of Wattpad Apps

Questionnaire	Percentage						
	N	R	S	O	VO	X	Y
1. I use the Wattpad application to improve my reading skill.	0	4	8	46	42	100	88
2. I use Wattpad once or several times a day.	8	4	13	27	48	92	75
3. I use the Wattpad app once or twice a week.	10	12	16	26	36	90	62
4. I spend 5 to 15 minutes using Wattpad	16	16	16	24	28	84	52
5. I spend more than 30 minutes using Wattpad Word in the context of the phrase	10	20	25	30	15	90	45
6. I provide corrections/feedback for other Wattpad users	36	16	24	16	8	64	24
7. I share writing exercises with Wattpad users.	40	28	12	12	18	60	30
8. I share some essays with other users.	25	20	40	0	15	75	15
9. I found the automatic feedback in Wattpad to be great	0	0	36	50	14	100	64
10. I like all the features on Wattpad including comics, short stories, news, etc with the thriller and mystery genres	0	14	3	46	37	100	83

Note: X= Have used GT (R+S+O+VO), Y= Frequent use (O+VO).

Based on the close-ended questionnaire results shown in Table 1 it can be concluded that Based on the results of the student responses above, most of them

spend up to 30 minutes a day reading on the Wattpad application. They read stories on the Wattpad application to get rid of boredom and find entertainment. and some of them also feel the benefits and positive impact of these stories. They said that practicing reading skills using the Wattpad media application really helped them that they become familiar with English sentences, and they also experience improvement master new vocabulary. Wattpad exposes students to various genres. In that case, Wattpad provides many examples of literary works currently trending in various genres, so readers only need to choose which genre they want.

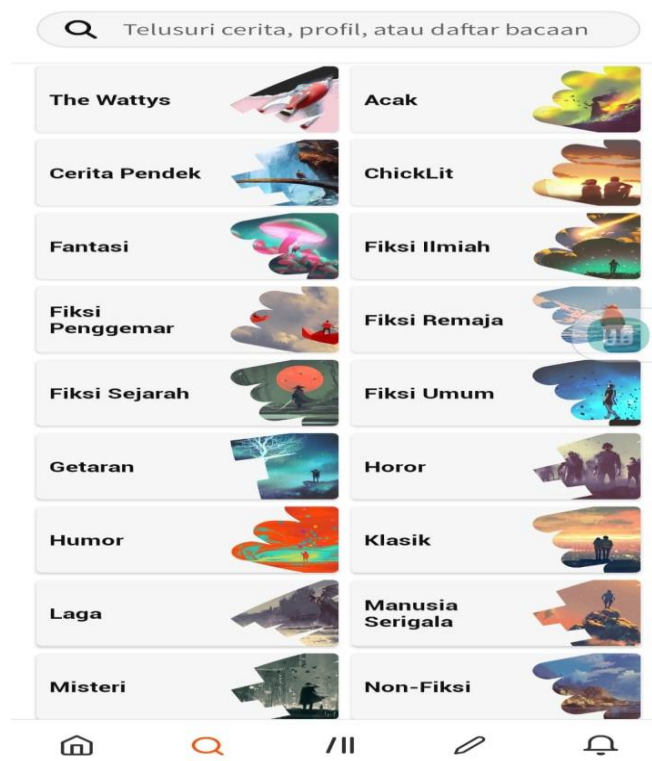


Figure 2. Image capture data from the comments feature on the Wattpad application

Open-ended Questionnaire

The open-ended questionnaire is intended to elicit a complete, meaningful response from the subjects based on their knowledge and feelings. It is the opposite of a closed-ended questionnaire, which encourages a brief or single-word response. In addition, open-ended questionnaires are more objective and less leading than closed-ended questions. In this open-ended questionnaire, students can express their thoughts on Wattpad in more detail. This open-ended questionnaire focused on the student's perception of the advantages and disadvantages utilizing the wattpad application as learning media in reading. The open-ended questionnaire results are presented in Table 2.

The results of the open-ended questionnaire indicate that the Wattpad App is helpful because it is easy to use (user-friendly), and students can read widely anywhere and anytime. Generally, most students like and are comfortable reading independently in a Wattpad application. Permatasari, Wijayanto, and Kristina (2020) support that Wattpad offers a vast and diverse selection of reading materials,

making reading extensively easier for students. The platform's ample resources contribute to an engaging reading experience for students.

Table 2. The Advantages and Disadvantages of utilizing the wappad application as learning media in reading

Participant	Advantages
1	Wattpad is Easy to use. It can be used offline; use email or a Google account.
2	Wattpad provides many genres of literary works that are easy to understand.
3	Wattpad is flexible, I can read everywhere and every time (more practical)
4	Wattpad application is an excellent place to express my ideas, experiences, creations, and more in written form.
5	In Wattpad I can get friends with other users
6	It's fun if you enjoy reading not-so-serious books (which the majority of books on a Wattpad are)
7	In Wattpad I can get feedback from other writers
8	I can save more money, since I found Wattpad apps is free (Money saving)
9	Wattpad give me a better reading Habit
10	by reading extensively on this platform,my English skills are improved unconsciously
Participant	Disadvantages
1	Sometimes the word order in Wattpad story is unstructured well
2	The structure of Wattpad story is bad
3	Some versions of Wattpad have very annoying ads
4	Several articles are plagiarized from other people. There is no copyright for the writing done here. So, anyone can copy other people's work as they please.
5	I seeks many users bully writers whose content is messy. Either from comments, ratings, or private messages to the author.
6	Wattpad
7	Many writings that are not original in Wattpad
8	Even though this is a free application, some versions of Wattpad have a lot of ads and are very annoying
9	Wattpad grammatical and spelling errors
10	Most story Wattpad is adult stories

The Wattpad feature that allows users to choose books independently based on their reading level and interests boosts their motivation and interest in reading. Wijaya's (2020) research suggests that offering a flexible selection of texts is crucial to maintaining students' high reading motivation and positive perception of reading. Also İlter (2015) found that the Wattpad application provides many genres of stories and novels, making participants happy with the Wattpad application, plus the use of internet access, which is helpful if used well. Therefore, Wattpad's service to its users is also good and quite friendly towards readers. For this reason, it can be a consideration to use the Wattpad application as a learning medium, which can

be combined with learning styles that might be a discovery for students at all levels of education

Wattpad users found that their vocabulary expanded through extensive reading. Exposure to various genres and writing styles allowed them to encounter new words and phrases, contributing to a richer linguistic repertoire. They reported that their writing skills improved after extensive reading on Wattpad. Engaging with a diverse range of stories and narratives on the platform has influenced their ability to express themselves effectively in writing.

Apart from its advantages, the Wattpad App also has some disadvantages. Students' perceptions about the shortcomings of the Wattpad App are that it is an application that can be accessed by anyone aged 18- or 18+; Wattpad has a feature that limits adult content. It's just that many users can get away with processing personal data. Even though certain content has warnings about age restrictions, users can enter quickly. And then, though Wattpad is a free application, you have to be willing with its ads. Some versions of Wattpad have many annoying ads. It is clear from the previous explanation that the Wattpad app offers both advantages and disadvantages.

Semi-Structured Interview

This study employed a semi-structured interview to obtain deeper information from participants. This part provides the students' answers to the interview section that was developed based on their responses in questionnaires. The interview was conducted to get deeper information about the students' perception of using of utilizing the wattpad application as learning media in reading. In this research, 5 students were involved in the interview section as the representative of all participants. The followings are the students' answers to the interview.

Participant 1:

"This application is easy to use. I found my reading ability improved after I used Wattpad. I can also find ideas or inspiration in this application by reading on Wattpad. I am very enjoy reading in this application. Wattpad has a large and creative collection; hundreds of readings come from different stories, author characters, and backgrounds. We can also choose categories such as fiction and non-fiction for us. It is more practical than using printed-books. And then in this app, there are too many adult 18+ ads and stories, and I don't like it"

Participant 2:

Currently, we can use many alternative ways to improve English skills through sharing media such as games, songs, and other online applications. Wattpad is an application that helps me improve my reading and writing skills. I enjoy reading English stories in this application. But sometimes, I also experience problems using Wattpad because of issues during the login process. There are ads."

Based on the results of the interviews above show that Wattpad is a reading platform that can help students increase their reading skills. Like in reviews research Apriani (2020) and Bold (2018) " Then the results of the study are said to

have a significant relationship between the use of the Wattpad application and students' reading interest.

Participant 3:

"For discourse, I can't believe and adopt in Wattpad app. because, For discourse, I cannot fully trust and adopt the Wattpad application. Because English-speaking story writers are not entirely native speakers, so sometimes I also come across writings whose grammatical arrangements are still ambiguous. and I'm not too interested in having to watch the ad first before continuing to read the next page."

In addition to positive feelings when reading on Wattpad, The third participants said things made activities on the platform less enjoyable. Not all stories on Wattpad were written well because everyone, even non-native writers, could write on the platform. Many have grammar and word structure errors. Therefore, it is not always effortless to find reading material on the platform.

Participant 4:

"I am very interested in using this application on my phone; I reduce my habit of playing games. I read English novels. Reading the words makes me more interested even though I don't know the full meaning. In terms of cognition, I get many things after using the Wattpad application, such as training my imagination and frame of mind, finding story ideas from the genre of stories I read, and increasing my vocabulary and knowledge. This can help me in writing short story."

The existence of this reading application is one way to improve students' abilities, especially in reading. Be it reading books, novels, short stories, or others genre. Meanwhile, writing is a way of expressing all the ideas stored in the mind. In this case, the Wattpad application can increase students' motivation in reading and writing. Wattpad provides an easy menu for writing and publishing articles on Wattpad (se Figure 3). These studies suggest that Wattpad can be a useful tool for educators and students to enhance reading and writing skills. The platform provides an easy menu for writing and publishing articles, which can help students develop their imagination, learn new vocabulary, and improve their writing abilities.

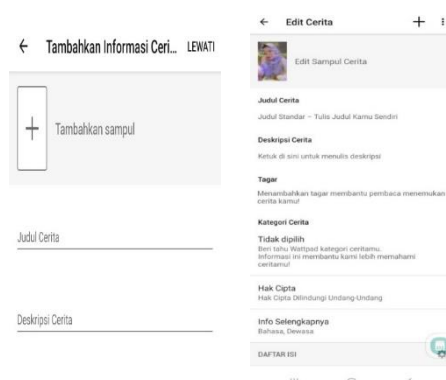


Figure 3. Image capture data from the menu for writing and publishing articles on Wattpad

Participant 5:

"I have been using the Wattpad app for quite a long time. The Wattpad app helps me because I Can publish a novel of my work by reading Wattpad. I can access so many choices of novels from famous authors. It can be accessed offline, and the last time I got new friends from this application.

Based on the results of the interviews, most students shared positive perceptions about the overall benefits of utilizing the wattpad application as learning media in reading, such as a beautiful appearance, helping students increase their reading interest independently, helping to build their imagination and frame of mind, and saving costs because many features are free, and flexible because the Wattpad application can be used Anytime and anywhere. Besides its benefits, students see that the Wattpad App has some drawbacks. They revealed that the Wattpad App has advertisements even in the offline service. I can't access all reading material without upgrading. So that the material that we get for free needs to be completed. The price for upgrading is also quite good, divided into two, free and premium.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, this research seeks to explore the perceptions of EFL language learners about the Wattpad language application. The results show that the application can increase the independence of EFL students in accessing reading materials and provide them with a valuable resource available for reading and writing anytime and anywhere. The findings also reveal that, according to EFL learners, Wattpad is an easy and valuable learning tool they want to use in their learning journey. However, research shows that language apps may be more helpful in beginning EFL learners. In addition, positive student perceptions show that the Wattpad App is an easy-to-use and fun student reading platform, which can increase students' motivation to continue reading. This platform provides comfort for them and in the learning environment of their choice. As such, the findings of this study demonstrate that the Wattpad app can be a valuable and effective tool for all ages and levels.

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