

The Correlation between Reading Fanfiction and Reading Interest among Senior High School Students

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Abstract

Reading interest remains a significant challenge for EFL learners in Indonesia, particularly at the senior high school level. This study aimed to examine the relationship between reading fanfiction and students' reading interest within an EFL context. Utilizing a quantitative correlational Research design, the study involved 348 students from grades X and XI at a public vocational high school in East Kalimantan. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to assess students' engagement with fanfiction and their overall reading interest. The instrument demonstrated acceptable validity and reliability. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, normality testing using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, and Pearson Product–moment correlation analysis. The results indicated a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between overall engagement in reading fanfiction and reading interest ($r = 0.792, p < 0.01$). Furthermore, a significant positive relationship was observed between the frequency of fanfiction reading and reading interest ($r = 0.620, p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that students who engage frequently and meaningfully with fanfiction tend to demonstrate higher levels of reading interest. Unlike previous studies that have primarily focused on qualitative perspectives or examined the effects of fanfiction on reading comprehension and language skills among university students, this study provides quantitative evidence of the relationship between fanfiction reading and reading interest among senior high school EFL learners in the Indonesian context. The findings suggest that fanfiction can serve as an effective interest-based digital reading resource to promote voluntary reading behaviors and foster positive attitudes toward reading English texts.

Keywords: digital literacy, EFL students, fanfiction, reading interest

INTRODUCTION

Reading plays a crucial role in academic success, particularly for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as it provides essential exposure to the target language in contexts where input is limited (Ali et al., 2022). Despite its importance, many Indonesian senior high school students demonstrate low interest in reading English texts. This issue is often attributed to unengaging instructional practices that emphasize grammar drills and traditional exercises, which reduce students' motivation to read (Hidayat & Devi, 2024). Indonesia's low reading interest is reflected in international assessments, such as PISA 2018, in which Indonesian students obtained an average reading score of 371, significantly below the OECD average and that of neighboring countries (Sari & Setiawan, 2023). Similarly, UNESCO reported that only about 0.001% of Indonesians have a regular reading habit, and a 2020 survey by Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) showed that only 10% of Indonesians read books regularly (Syam et al., 2024). These data indicate that low interest in reading remains a significant challenge, particularly in English language education. Meanwhile, among senior high school students in a non-native

country, such as in a city of Indonesia, members of the Zillennial generation have low levels of English literacy, as they report the absence of dedicated time for English literacy practice beyond teacher-directed activities (Rahmawati et al., 2024).

In the digital age, adolescents' reading habits have shifted from printed texts to online platforms. Many students now engage with digital narratives like fanfiction, stories written by fans that expand or reinterpret existing fictional worlds. Fanfiction allows readers to experience familiar characters and settings in new, creative ways, providing a sense of connection and enjoyment that traditional reading materials may lack. As Black and Thomas (as cited in Swaggerty & Bahoric, 2015) explain, Fanfiction writers don't just retell original stories; they creatively expand the fictional universe through alternative plots, character development, and new perspectives. Online platforms such as Archive of Our Own (AO3), Wattpad, and FanFiction.net host thousands of English-language stories that cater to young readers' interests, exposing them to authentic and engaging language use. These platforms have become a key part of youth literacy practices, offering informal, interest-based opportunities to read and write in English (Shutaleva et al., 2023; Vadde & So, 2024).

Prior research indicates that reading fanfiction supports language development and learner engagement. Fauriza (2024) found that students who engaged with fanfiction demonstrated improved reading performance, while Abdulrahman and Cahyati (2020) reported enhancements in vocabulary development, reading confidence, and motivation. Collectively, these findings suggest that fanfiction functions as an effective interest-based resource for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Despite these findings, most existing studies have concentrated on learning outcomes such as reading skills, vocabulary acquisition, or writing performance, frequently employing qualitative or experimental designs with small or university-level samples. Consequently, limited attention has been devoted to reading interest as a measurable construct, particularly among senior high school EFL learners in Indonesia. This gap is significant because reading interest is essential for sustaining voluntary reading habits and promoting long-term literacy development. In the absence of empirical evidence connecting interest-driven digital reading practices to reading interest, educators may lack effective strategies to address low reading motivation among secondary school students.

To address this gap, the present study quantitatively examines reading fanfiction as a multidimensional engagement practice, encompassing reading frequency, enjoyment, motivation, autonomy, and perceived benefits, and analyzes its relationship with students' reading interest. In contrast to previous research that primarily emphasized skill improvement, this study positions reading interest as a central motivational variable indicative of sustained engagement with English texts. The study utilizes a correlational design with a large sample of senior high school students to provide robust statistical evidence within the EFL context.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) Is there a significant correlation between reading fanfiction and reading interest among senior high school students?, (2) Is there a significant correlation between the frequency of reading fanfiction and students' reading interest?

The findings are expected to contribute theoretically and pedagogically by highlighting the role of interest-based digital reading practices in fostering reading motivation and supporting literacy development in EFL contexts.

Reading in EFL Contexts

Reading is widely recognized as one of the most essential skills in language learning, particularly in academic and professional contexts (Dash, 2013). It involves an active process of constructing meaning through interaction between the reader and the text (Par, 2020). Through reading, learners can obtain information, expand knowledge, and

understand ideas and emotions conveyed by the author (Aulia & Agustina, 2024; Abdulrahman & Cahyati, 2020).

Reading should serve as a meaningful and habitual activity for students. Cultivating an interest in reading facilitates ongoing knowledge acquisition and is essential for academic achievement, particularly in reading comprehension. Dewi et al. (2020) found that students with greater reading interest exhibit superior comprehension and generate more creative responses to texts, underscoring the strong relationship between reading interest and reading outcomes. Within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, reading constitutes a complex cognitive process involving decoding, constructing meaning, and integrating prior knowledge with new information. Reading fulfills two main functions: supporting academic comprehension and supplying linguistic input for language development (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). Research demonstrates that both the frequency and quality of reading engagement, especially when driven by interest and undertaken voluntarily, significantly affect vocabulary acquisition, comprehension strategies, motivation, and overall language proficiency (Tabata-sandom, 2023)

Despite its benefits, EFL reading instruction frequently emphasizes intensive reading using graded texts and grammar-oriented activities. Although this method may enhance accuracy, it often restricts opportunities for extensive, pleasure-based reading that fosters incidental language acquisition and intrinsic motivation (Rahma et al., 2025). Consequently, students may read solely to fulfill academic obligations rather than for personal enjoyment. Therefore, reading development in EFL contexts is influenced not only by linguistic competence but also by motivation and willingness to engage with English texts (Janah et al., 2021). When students perceive reading materials as relevant and engaging, they are more likely to participate in sustained and voluntary reading practices (Cahyani et al., 2025). Fanfiction represents one form of interest-driven reading, providing familiar narratives, personal relevance, and learner autonomy, all of which are closely linked to enhanced reading motivation in EFL learning environments.

Reading Interest

Reading interest refers to an individual's willingness and enjoyment in engaging in reading activities voluntarily, driven by internal motivation rather than external pressure (RNM & Rachmani, 2022). It is reflected in positive attitudes toward reading, such as enjoyment, sustained attention, emotional engagement, reading frequency, and the effort to continue reading (Shahrani & Rohmiyati, 2019). Thus, reading interest encompasses not only the desire to read but also habitual and affective engagement with reading activities.

A strong interest in reading plays a vital role in personal and academic development. Through voluntary reading, individuals can broaden their knowledge, enhance cognitive capacity, and improve educational outcomes (Olasehinde et al., 2015). However, despite its importance, Indonesian students continue to demonstrate low reading motivation and engagement. The PISA 2018 results revealed that Indonesian students' reading performance was significantly below the OECD average, indicating weak reading habits and limited voluntary reading practices. This condition underscores the urgent need for alternative, interest-driven reading activities to foster students' motivation to read in English. In this study, fanfiction is treated as an informal digital reading activity that may influence students' reading interests. Its voluntary nature, accessibility, and familiarity with popular characters make fanfiction a relevant context for examining reading interest among EFL learners.

Fanfiction as a Literacy and Cultural Practice

Fanfiction refers to stories created by fans that use characters, settings, or plot elements from existing media texts, allowing readers and writers to reimagine and expand fictional

worlds (Thomas, 2011). As a form of participatory culture, fanfiction reflects emotional engagement and critical interpretation of original works (Barnes, 2015). In the digital era, fanfiction is widely distributed through online platforms such as Archive of Our Own (AO3), Wattpad, and FanFiction.net, where readers and writers interact through comments and feedback (Fauriza, 2024).

Although fanfiction has gained recognition as a literacy practice in many educational contexts, its pedagogical use in Indonesia remains limited. Nevertheless, previous studies suggest that fanfiction has strong potential as an instructional resource because it aligns with students' interests and familiar media experiences, thereby encouraging active and meaningful reading engagement (Wulandari, 2021).

Educational and Motivational Potential of Fanfiction

A growing body of Research highlights fanfiction as a meaningful literacy practice with strong educational and motivational potential, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Studies consistently show that reading and writing fanfiction support learners' vocabulary development, reading fluency, comprehension, and writing skills by exposing them to authentic, interest-based language input (Dariva, 2021; Åström, 2024; Fauriza, 2024). Fanfiction texts often revolve around well-known characters, settings, and story worlds, offering understandable and engaging content that promotes continued reading. This aligns with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which asserts that language learning is most successful when learners receive comprehensible and engaging input.

From a pedagogical perspective, fanfiction has been shown to increase voluntary reading time and facilitate incidental language learning. Dariva (2021) found that repeated lexical encounters in fanfiction texts enable learners to acquire new vocabulary naturally, without explicit instruction. Similarly Åström (2024) reported that engagement with fanfiction supports the development of writing skills, particularly in dialogue construction, characterization, and narrative coherence. In the Indonesian EFL context, Fauriza (2024) demonstrated that integrating fanfiction from Archive of Our Own (AO3) into reading activities significantly enhanced students' understanding of narrative texts. These findings indicate that fanfiction creates a rich contextual environment where language learning occurs through immersion, familiarity, and genuine interest.

Beyond its linguistic benefits, fanfiction plays a crucial role in fostering reading motivation. Reading fanfiction often fulfills key psychological needs that drive intrinsic motivation. First, it addresses relevance and identity, as fanfiction typically features characters or fictional universes that readers already admire, leading to strong emotional involvement. Second, social reinforcement is present through online fan communities, where readers and writers receive feedback, comments, and recognition that encourage continued participation. Third, autonomy and choice are central, as readers can select stories based on preferred genres, themes, and reading levels, enhancing their sense of control and competence. Finally, the familiarity of the source material lowers learners' affective filters, promoting fluent, pleasure-based reading (Krashen, 1982).

These motivational mechanisms align closely with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential conditions for sustained motivation. When students are allowed to engage with reading materials that reflect their interests and social identities, their intrinsic motivation to read is more likely to increase. As a result, fanfiction serves not only as an informal literacy tool but also as a platform for learners to build confidence, express creativity, and engage with English in meaningful ways.

Empirical studies further support the motivational and literacy-related benefits of fanfiction. Swaggerty and Bahoric (2015) argue that fanfiction represents a form of 21st-century literacy that bridges in-school and out-of-school learning by transforming

familiar narratives into personalized and creative texts. In classroom contexts, this adaptability enables fanfiction to function as an engaging instructional resource. Similarly, Wulandari (2021) found that tenth-grade students who used fanfiction as reading material achieved higher reading performance and demonstrated greater enthusiasm and active participation compared to those using conventional texts. Students showed increased curiosity, sustained attention, and more active engagement during reading activities.

The motivational dimension of fanfiction has also been highlighted in studies focusing on learners' personal interests. Abdulrahman and Cahyati (2020) reported that although students initially read fanfiction due to their interest in idols or fictional characters, the activity incidentally supported language learning by expanding vocabulary, increasing reading confidence, and improving comprehension. In the Indonesian context, Rahayu et al. (2024) found that motivation to read fanfiction among adolescent readers was strongly influenced by emotional attachment and personal interest. Their study revealed that 78% of readers were motivated by favorite idols appearing as characters, 92% by regularly updated stories, and 89% by preferred genres. Moreover, more than 80% of respondents reported improvements in vocabulary, punctuation, and overall reading engagement, indicating that fanfiction supports both literacy and digital literacy development.

In this study, motivation is treated as a theoretical mechanism that explains how engagement with fanfiction may influence students' reading interest, rather than as a separate variable to be measured. Despite these positive findings, most existing studies rely on qualitative or small-scale designs and primarily involve university students. Quantitative Research examining the relationship between fanfiction reading and reading interest among senior high school EFL learners remains limited, particularly in the Indonesian context. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by investigating whether engagement with fanfiction, especially reading frequency, is significantly associated with students' reading interest.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to examine the relationship between reading fanfiction and students' interest in reading English. A correlational design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to determine the magnitude and direction of relationships between variables without manipulating or controlling them. Specifically, the study examined whether students' engagement with fanfiction, measured by reading frequency, enjoyment, motivation, and perceived benefits, was significantly associated with their overall reading interest. This design aligns with the research questions, which focus on identifying statistical correlations rather than establishing causal relationships.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using statistical techniques to assess the strength and significance of relationships among variables. By employing a correlational approach, the study provides empirical evidence on how informal, interest-driven reading practices relate to students' reading interest in an EFL context.

Population and Sample

The study was conducted at a public vocational high school in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. The population of this study consisted of students in grades X and XI who had experience reading English fanfiction. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation from each grade level. Each grade served as a stratum, and students were randomly selected from each group to obtain a balanced

and representative sample. In total, 348 students participated in this study. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents were informed about the purpose of the Research and assured that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire designed to collect quantitative data on students' engagement in reading fanfiction and their reading interests. The questionnaire was adapted from Rahayu et al. (2024) and Nornoi (2022) and modified to suit the context of senior high school EFL learners. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items grouped into five indicators: (1) Reading Frequency and Habit, (2) Enjoyment and Emotional Engagement, (3) Motivation and Purpose in Reading, (4) Autonomy and Reading Preference, and (5) Perceived Benefits of Reading. All items were rated using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree) and were presented bilingually in English and Indonesian to minimize misunderstanding.

Because the questionnaire was adapted for a different population and Research context, a pilot study was conducted prior to the main data collection to revalidate the instrument. The pilot participants shared characteristics with the target population but were drawn from a different group and were not included in the main sample, thereby ensuring independence between the pilot and main data. Item validity was examined using corrected item–total correlation analysis, and only items meeting the acceptable criteria were retained. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate internal consistency, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable. The pilot study results confirmed that the adapted questionnaire demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability for use in the present study.

Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to elicit quantitative information on students' engagement with reading fanfiction and their interest in reading in English. The questionnaire was administered to senior high school students in grades X and XI at a public vocational high school in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. Before administering the questionnaire, participants were provided with a brief explanation of fanfiction, including its definition, commonly used platforms (e.g., Wattpad and Archive of Our Own), and general examples, to ensure a shared understanding of the concept. The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms to facilitate accessibility and efficiency. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's purpose. They were assured that all responses would remain anonymous and confidential and would be used solely for research purposes. No identifying personal information was collected.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using quantitative statistical procedures to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the findings. The analysis consisted of four main stages. First, descriptive statistics were used to summarize students' responses to both variables, Reading Fanfiction (X) and Reading Interest (Y). This analysis included calculating means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores to provide an overview of the data distribution. Second, a Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was conducted to assess whether the data met the assumption of normality. The result of this test served as the basis for selecting the appropriate correlation analysis method. Third, instrument testing was conducted to assess the quality of the questionnaire. Item validity was assessed using corrected item–total correlation, with items considered valid if their correlation coefficients exceeded the *r*-table value. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher indicating acceptable internal

consistency. Finally, inferential statistics were used to examine the relationship between Reading Fanfiction (X) and Reading Interest (Y). Since the data were normally distributed, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. The significance level was set at 0.05, and a p-value below this threshold indicated a statistically significant correlation.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were employed to provide an overview of students' responses to the two main variables: Reading Fanfiction (X) and Reading Interest (Y).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Fanfiction and Reading Interest

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Reading Fanfiction	348	15	60	41.93	8.25
Reading Interest	348	5	20	14.65	3.12

As shown in Table 1, students demonstrated a moderate to high level of engagement in reading fanfiction (M = 41.93, SD = 8.25). Given the questionnaire's possible score range, this result indicates that many students frequently read fanfiction and show positive attitudes toward this activity, including reading frequency, enjoyment, motivation, and autonomy in selecting reading materials. The relatively high mean score suggests that fanfiction is not merely an occasional activity but has become a meaningful part of students' reading practices.

In addition, the mean reading interest score (M = 14.65, SD = 3.12) indicates that students generally have a moderately high level of reading interest. This suggests that most students are willing to engage in reading activities, demonstrate positive attitudes toward reading, and allocate time to reading. However, the standard deviations for both variables indicate that individual differences persist, suggesting that although many students report high engagement and interest, some exhibit lower levels of involvement and motivation.

Instrument Testing

Instrument testing was conducted to assess the questionnaire's validity and reliability prior to further analysis.

Validity Test

Table 2. Validity Test Results of Questionnaire Items

NO	Questionnaire	Corrected Item–Total Correlation	Sig. (p)	Interpretation
1	I access and read fanfiction through online applications such as Wattpad, Fanfiction.net, or other blogs.	0.751	0.000	Valid
2	I spend 1-2 hours or more a day reading fanfiction stories when I have free time.	0.823	0.000	Valid
3	When I have free time, I prefer reading fanfiction over other types of reading material (such as textbooks or news).	0.702	0.000	Valid

*The Correlation between Reading Fanfiction and Reading Interest
among Senior High School Students*

4	If I have free time, I will continue reading the fanfiction until the story is finished.	0.791	0.000	Valid
5	I am very excited to read the continuation of the fanfiction I follow immediately after the author uploads a new chapter.	0.725	0.000	Valid
6	I'm not afraid to read fanfiction in English if I like the story.	0.828	0.000	Valid
7	When I find interesting fanfiction, I feel very eager to finish it immediately, even though English is not my first language.	0.822	0.000	Valid
8	I am motivated to read fanfiction because the main character is an idol or a character I like.	0.762	0.000	Valid
9	I read fanfiction of my own free will and personal impulse.	0.739	0.000	Valid
10	I prefer to learn English through reading activities (including fanfiction).	0.719	0.000	Valid
11	I remember and try to apply the new words I learn from fanfiction to my daily life.	0.764	0.000	Valid
12	I only read fanfiction that has a storyline that really interests me	0.783	0.000	Valid
13	I select fanfiction from genres I like, and I ensure the stories are appropriate for my age.	0.725	0.000	Valid
14	Even if the main character is an idol or a character I like, I will stop reading if the story does not suit my taste.	0.665	0.000	Valid
15	I look up the meaning of unfamiliar words or idioms on social media or in a dictionary when reading fanfiction.	0.734	0.000	Valid
16	I feel that reading fanfiction helps me improve my creativity and imagination.	0.801	0.000	Valid
17	I believe reading fanfiction helps me improve my English, particularly my reading skills.	0.773	0.000	Valid
18	I believe reading fanfiction helps me get to know myself or my reading style (e.g., the types of stories or the language styles I prefer).	0.777	0.000	Valid
19	I believe reading fanfiction gives me the feeling that I am gaining new knowledge.	0.761	0.000	Valid
20	I feel that fanfiction has increased my interest in reading.	0.787	0.000	Valid

The validity of the questionnaire items was examined using corrected item–total correlation. The results indicated that all 20 items demonstrated satisfactory validity. As shown in Table 2, the corrected item–total correlation coefficients ranged from 0.665 to

0.828, all exceeding the minimum acceptable threshold. In addition, all items showed statistically significant correlations ($p = 0.000$; $p < 0.05$).

Items measuring reading frequency and habit (Q1–Q4) yielded correlation coefficients ranging from 0.702 to 0.823, indicating that these items effectively captured students' engagement and consistency in reading fanfiction. Items related to enjoyment and emotional engagement (Q5–Q7) also showed strong correlations ranging from 0.725 to 0.828, confirming that emotional involvement contributed meaningfully to the construct.

Furthermore, items assessing motivation and purpose in reading (Q8–Q11) yielded coefficients ranging from 0.719 to 0.764, indicating that motivational aspects were adequately captured. Items related to autonomy and reading preferences (Q12–Q15) showed correlation coefficients ranging from 0.665 to 0.783, indicating that students' self-directed reading choices were valid indicators of fanfiction engagement. Finally, items measuring perceived benefits of reading (Q16–Q20) produced coefficients ranging from 0.761 to 0.801, confirming that students' perceptions of linguistic, cognitive, and personal gains were strongly associated with the overall construct.

Overall, the results confirm that all questionnaire items were valid and suitable for further statistical analysis, as each item demonstrated a significant, positive relationship with its respective construct's total score.

Reliability Test

Table 3. Reliability Statistics of the Questionnaire

Indicator	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Reading Frequency and Habit	4	0.805
Enjoyment and Emotional Engagement	3	0.823
Motivation and Purpose in Reading	4	0.797
Autonomy and Reading Preference	4	0.789
Perceived Benefits of Reading	5	0.801

The questionnaire's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate the internal consistency of the indicators. The results indicate that all indicators demonstrated acceptable to good reliability, as all Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70. The indicator Reading Frequency and Habit, consisting of 4 items, yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.805, indicating good internal consistency in measuring students' habitual engagement with fanfiction. The Enjoyment and Emotional Engagement indicator, comprising three items, yielded the highest reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.823$), indicating strong consistency in capturing students' emotional involvement and enjoyment during reading activities.

The Motivation and Purpose in Reading indicator, comprising four items, yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.797, indicating good reliability for measuring students' reading motivation and underlying purposes. Similarly, the Autonomy and Reading Preference indicator, with four items, demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.789$), reflecting consistency in students' self-directed reading choices and preferences.

Finally, the Perceived Benefits of Reading indicator, comprising five items, yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.801, indicating good reliability for measuring students' perceptions of the cognitive, linguistic, and personal benefits derived from reading fanfiction. Overall, these results confirm that all indicators were reliable and that the

*The Correlation between Reading Fanfiction and Reading Interest
among Senior High School Students*

instrument demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, making it suitable for further statistical analysis.

Normality Test

Table 4. Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test)

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
Unstandardized Residual		
N	348	
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	1,90631777
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,066
	Positive	,040
	Negative	-,066
Test Statistic	,066	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,001 ^c	
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	,094	
Point Probability	,000	

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

A one-sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was conducted to examine whether the data met the assumption of normality. As presented in Table 4, the Exact Sig. (2-tailed) The p-value was 0.094, which exceeded the 0.05 significance level. This result indicates that the unstandardized residuals were normally distributed. Although the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) The value was 0.001; this value may be affected by the large sample size (N = 348), which can lead to overly sensitive results. Therefore, the Exact Sig. The value was considered more appropriate for interpretation. Since the Exact Sig. When the value exceeded 0.05, the null hypothesis of normality was accepted. Consequently, the data met the normality assumption, allowing the use of parametric statistical analysis, specifically the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation between Reading Fanfiction and Reading Interest

Table 5. Pearson Correlation between Reading Fanfiction and Reading Interest

Variables	Reading Fanfiction	Reading Interest
Reading Fanfiction	1	0.792**
Reading Interest	0.792**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	—	0.000

N	348	348
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Note. $p < 0.01$

The Pearson Product–Moment Correlation analysis indicated a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between overall engagement in reading fanfiction and students' reading interest. As shown in Table 5, the correlation coefficient between Reading Fanfiction and Reading Interest was $r = 0.792$ with a significance value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.01$). This result suggests that students who showed higher levels of engagement with fanfiction, including enjoyment, motivation, autonomy, and perceived benefits, tended to have higher overall interest in reading. The strength of the correlation indicates that reading fanfiction as a comprehensive reading activity is closely associated with students' reading interest.

Correlation between Fanfiction Reading Frequency and Reading Interest

Table 6. Fanfiction Reading Frequency

Variables	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Fanfiction Reading Frequency – Reading Interest	0.620**	0.000	348

Note. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A separate correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between fanfiction reading frequency and reading interest. As presented in Table 6, the Pearson correlation coefficient between fanfiction reading frequency and reading interest was $r = 0.620$ with a significance value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.01$). This result indicates a strong, positive relationship, though weaker than the overall fanfiction engagement correlation. The findings suggest that students who read fanfiction more frequently tend to demonstrate higher reading interest. However, the lower correlation coefficient relative to overall fanfiction engagement suggests that reading interest is influenced not only by how often students read fanfiction but also by qualitative aspects such as emotional engagement, motivation, and autonomy in reading.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that reading fanfiction is significantly and positively associated with students' reading interest in an EFL context. The correlation analysis revealed a strong relationship between overall engagement in reading fanfiction and reading interest ($r = 0.792$, $p < 0.01$), as well as a substantial relationship between the frequency of reading fanfiction and reading interest ($r = 0.620$, $p < 0.01$). These results indicate that students who read fanfiction more frequently and engage more deeply with fanfiction texts tend to exhibit higher levels of interest, enjoyment, and willingness to read English materials. Thus, the findings support the study's initial hypothesis, which posited a positive correlation between reading fanfiction and reading interest among senior high school EFL learners.

Importantly, the stronger correlation between overall fanfiction engagement and reading interest, compared with reading frequency alone, suggests that reading interest is influenced not only by reading frequency but also by qualitative dimensions of reading engagement. These dimensions include emotional involvement, perceived relevance, autonomy in text selection, and perceived benefits of reading. Students in this study reported enjoyment, excitement, and emotional attachment to fanfiction stories, particularly because the narratives featured familiar characters, preferred genres, and personally meaningful storylines. This finding supports Wulandari (2021), who argued that personal relevance and emotional connection to reading materials enhance students'

motivation and persistence in reading. When reading materials resonate with students' interests, reading shifts from an academic obligation to a voluntary and meaningful activity.

This finding is consistent with Prasetyaningrum and Ruminar (2020), who reported that students' reading interest in EFL contexts increases when reading materials are perceived as relevant, enjoyable, and aligned with personal preferences. They emphasized that reading interest is not solely determined by instructional exposure but is strongly influenced by emotional engagement and the perceived value of the reading activity. In line with this perspective, the present study demonstrates that fanfiction, as an interest-driven digital text, creates conditions that foster voluntary reading and sustained interest among senior high school students.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research highlighting the educational value of fanfiction in EFL contexts. Fauriza (2024) found that students who engaged with fanfiction on Archive of Our Own (AO3) demonstrated higher reading engagement and improved comprehension of narrative texts. Fauriza emphasized that the familiar story worlds and accessible language in fanfiction reduce cognitive burden, allowing learners to focus on meaning construction rather than linguistic difficulty. The present study extends this finding by providing quantitative evidence that such engagement not only supports reading performance but also contributes to a broader and more sustained interest in reading English texts.

Similarly, Abdulrahman and Cahyati (2020) reported that students were motivated to read English fanfiction because it combined entertainment with language learning. Participants perceived reading fanfiction as beneficial for vocabulary development, reading confidence, and exam preparation. Consistent with these findings, students in the present study who frequently accessed fanfiction platforms such as Wattpad and FanFiction.net demonstrated higher reading interest scores. This pattern suggests that repeated exposure to enjoyable English texts strengthens students' willingness to read independently and voluntarily, which is essential for long-term reading development.

Furthermore, the results align with Permadi (2019), who found that students' reading engagement in EFL contexts is closely related to intrinsic motivation and opportunities for autonomous reading. He argued that when learners have the freedom to select texts that match their interests, they are more likely to develop positive reading attitudes and sustained reading habits. This perspective supports the current findings, indicating that fanfiction reading, characterized by autonomy, familiarity, and enjoyment, plays a significant role in strengthening students' reading interest rather than solely improving isolated reading skills.

The findings are also reinforced by Rahayu et al. (2024), who reported that Indonesian adolescents' motivation to read fanfiction was strongly influenced by emotional attachment to characters, genre preference, and regular story updates. Frequent updates were found to encourage sustained reading behavior, supporting the development of consistent reading habits. A similar pattern was observed in the present study, where many students reported continuing to read fanfiction until the story was completed and actively following newly updated chapters. This sustained engagement indicates that fanfiction supports habitual reading practices, which are essential for maintaining reading interest over time.

From a theoretical perspective, the results can be explained through Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key drivers of intrinsic motivation. Reading fanfiction allows students to choose texts based on their personal interests (autonomy), engage with texts at a self-selected level of difficulty (competence), and connect emotionally with characters and online fan communities (relatedness). These conditions create a supportive reading environment that

lowers affective barriers and promotes pleasure-based reading, aligning with Krashen's (1982) Concept of a low affective filter in language acquisition. As a result, students are more likely to read voluntarily, more frequently, and with greater enthusiasm.

The positive relationship identified in this study can also be attributed to the inherent characteristics of fanfiction as a digital reading practice. Fanfiction is emotionally engaging, freely accessible through online platforms, personalized to readers' interests, and continuously updated through episodic narratives. These features distinguish fanfiction from conventional instructional texts and foster a reading environment that encourages self-motivated and sustained reading. This finding supports Sinaga et al. (2024), who argued that learning environments that acknowledge learners' personal interests and promote intrinsic motivation lead to higher engagement and more sustainable literacy practices.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings indicate that fanfiction can serve as a supplementary reading resource in EFL classrooms, particularly for engaging reluctant readers. Interest-based digital texts such as fanfiction may effectively bridge students' out-of-school literacy practices and formal academic reading. Previous studies have demonstrated that fanfiction supports narrative comprehension, critical thinking, and reader engagement (Stanko & Kolegaeva, 2024). Additionally, reading fanfiction provides a low-anxiety environment for practicing English reading, which is especially beneficial for EFL learners who may experience apprehension when encountering traditional academic texts (Zhai et al., 2021).

However, alternative interpretations of the findings should be considered. It is possible that students with higher levels of reading interest are more likely to seek out fanfiction, rather than that fanfiction alone increases reading interest. Thus, the relationship between fanfiction reading and reading interest may be reciprocal. Additionally, factors such as general English proficiency, digital literacy, and prior exposure to English-language media may contribute to both fanfiction engagement and reading interest. These considerations underscore the correlational nature of the present study and indicate the need for future Research using longitudinal or experimental designs to examine causal relationships.

Despite these limitations, this study makes a meaningful contribution to EFL literacy Research by providing quantitative evidence of the relationship between fanfiction reading and reading interest among senior high school students in the Indonesian context. While previous studies have largely relied on qualitative insights or focused on university-level learners, this study extends the literature by examining how informal digital reading practices relate to reading interest among secondary school learners. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing students' digital and interest-driven reading activities as valuable resources for fostering reading engagement and supporting literacy development in EFL contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between reading fanfiction and reading interest among senior high school students using a quantitative correlational design. The findings show that reading fanfiction is significantly and positively associated with students' reading interest. Correlation analysis revealed a strong relationship between overall engagement in reading fanfiction and reading interest ($r = 0.792$, $p < 0.01$) and a substantial positive correlation between fanfiction reading frequency and reading interest ($r = 0.620$, $p < 0.01$). These results indicate that students who frequently and meaningfully engage with fanfiction tend to show higher interest in reading.

Descriptive results further indicate that students typically demonstrate moderate to high engagement with reading fanfiction and report relatively strong reading interest. These findings imply that fanfiction serves as a meaningful reading practice, contributing

to students' motivation, enjoyment, autonomy, and sustained engagement with English texts. The stronger correlation observed for overall fanfiction engagement, compared to reading frequency alone, underscores the importance of qualitative factors such as emotional involvement, personal relevance, and perceived benefits in fostering reading interest.

In summary, the findings indicate that fanfiction serves as an effective interest-based reading resource that supports the development of students' reading interest in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. By providing accessible, emotionally engaging, and self-selected reading materials, fanfiction promotes voluntary reading and sustained engagement with literacy. Consequently, integrating digital, interest-driven reading materials, such as fanfiction, may be a valuable strategy for fostering positive reading attitudes and enhancing reading motivation among senior high school EFL learners.

Despite these contributions, several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the correlational design precludes causal conclusions about the effect of reading fanfiction on students' reading interest. It remains possible that students with higher initial interest in reading are more likely to engage with fanfiction, suggesting a reciprocal relationship. Second, the reliance on self-reported questionnaires introduces the possibility of response bias. Third, the sample was drawn from a single vocational high school, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Future research is encouraged to employ longitudinal or experimental designs to examine causal relationships, include larger and more diverse samples, and investigate the impact of fanfiction reading on additional language skills such as reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and critical literacy. Qualitative approaches may also provide deeper insights into students' experiences and motivations in engaging with fanfiction as an EFL reading practice.

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*The Correlation between Reading Fanfiction and Reading Interest
among Senior High School Students*

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