



Final Semester Students' Reading Interests: Descriptive Studies as a Basis for Thesis Preparation Readiness

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the reading interest of final-year undergraduate students in preparation for thesis writing. The research employed a quantitative descriptive design involving 37 final-year students selected through total sampling. Data were collected using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire measuring four key indicators: reading preferences and attitudes, reading habits and intensity, reading comprehension ability, and motivation and external support for reading. The findings reveal that students generally exhibit positive reading preferences and attitudes, indicating an awareness of the importance of reading in academic contexts. However, this positive disposition has not yet been fully translated into consistent reading practices. Reading habits and intensity are predominantly categorized as moderate, suggesting that reading activities are still situational and largely driven by immediate academic demands rather than sustained habits. In contrast, students demonstrate relatively strong reading comprehension abilities, indicating adequate cognitive capacity to understand academic texts and engage in research-related activities. Despite this, motivation and external support for reading are found to be relatively low, reflecting limited intrinsic motivation and insufficient environmental encouragement to support continuous reading engagement. Overall, the results highlight a discrepancy between students' reading competence and their actual reading behavior. While students possess the ability to comprehend academic materials, their engagement in reading remains inconsistent and insufficiently supported by motivational factors. These findings underscore the importance of developing comprehensive academic strategies to enhance students' reading interest, including the integration of literacy-based curricula, the provision of supportive learning environments, and the strengthening of instructional guidance. Such efforts are essential to foster sustainable reading practices and to improve the quality of undergraduate thesis writing and overall academic achievement.

Keywords: reading interest, undergraduate students, reading habits, reading comprehension, academic motivation, writing thesis, higher education

INTRODUCTION

Reading interest among final-year undergraduate students represents a critical component in determining the quality of thesis preparation. At this stage, students are expected not only to comprehend theoretical frameworks but also to engage critically with scholarly literature as the foundation of their research. Empirical evidence



suggests that students' reading interest is often not inherently developed but is largely shaped by academic demands and curricular structures. Institutional policies that mandate engagement with journal articles have been shown to encourage active interaction with research literature and foster greater involvement in scholarly activities (Netra et al., 2023; Widianana et al., 2023).

The relationship between curriculum design and reading engagement is further evident in the implementation of research article-based assessments prior to the final year. Such approaches enhance students' analytical competencies, including the ability to identify research gaps, formulate research objectives, and avoid redundancy in topic selection. Early habituation to academic reading therefore serves as a crucial foundation for building students' readiness for thesis writing (Chithiraikannu & Dhivya, 2021).

Despite these benefits, students frequently encounter significant challenges when engaging with academic texts. The complexity of scientific language, the extensive length of articles, and the use of technical terminology often reduce motivation and hinder comprehension. These difficulties are compounded by insufficient prior training in interpreting scholarly literature, leading to diminished confidence in navigating academic sources (Emelyanova, 2020; MacMillan & MacKenzie, 2012).

In terms of reading behavior, students tend to approach academic literature in a utilitarian manner rather than out of intrinsic interest. Reading activities are often driven by immediate academic requirements, such as completing assignments or strengthening arguments in written work. This functional orientation is consistent with findings indicating that library usage among students is predominantly motivated by research needs rather than a genuine interest in reading (Darwis et al., 2024; Nasaruddin et al., 2024).

To address these challenges, several strategies have been proposed to enhance students' reading interest. Early exposure to scholarly literature during the initial years of study is considered an effective approach, as it allows students to gradually develop academic literacy skills and reduces the cognitive burden encountered in the final year (Hou et al., 2023). Additionally, structured interventions such as workshops, guided reading sessions, and literature-based instruction have been shown to improve both comprehension and confidence in engaging with academic texts (Emelyanova, 2020).

Another influential factor is the alignment between research topics and students' personal interests. When students are given autonomy in selecting research topics within a structured framework, their motivation to explore relevant literature tends to increase. Student-driven research models demonstrate that active participation in determining research direction can strengthen academic engagement and enhance learning outcomes (Bopegedera, 2021; Knight & Botting, 2016).

Institutional support systems also play a pivotal role in fostering a reading culture among students. Access to academic resources, including library services, digital literacy training, and mentorship, helps bridge skill gaps and supports students in developing effective research practices. The availability of technological and informational resources further contributes to improving the efficiency and quality of students' reading and research processes (Eyitayo, 2011).



Improved reading practices yield significant academic benefits. Students who engage in systematic reading of scholarly literature tend to demonstrate stronger analytical abilities, deeper subject comprehension, and higher levels of confidence in conducting research. Moreover, positive experiences with academic reading and research can inspire students to pursue advanced studies and contribute to their long-term academic and professional development (Grossman & Naidoo, 2009; Kozeracki et al., 2006).

Although numerous studies have examined students' reading interest within general learning contexts, research that specifically focuses on final-year undergraduate students in the phase leading up to thesis preparation remains limited. This stage represents a critical transition period that significantly influences students' success in completing their studies. At this point, engagement with academic literature is no longer merely a routine academic activity but becomes a fundamental requirement for formulating research problems, constructing theoretical frameworks, and developing sound scholarly arguments. A low level of reading interest at this stage may result in poor thesis quality, including weak theoretical grounding, limited analytical depth, and a higher risk of research redundancy.

Furthermore, the prevalence of instrumental reading behavior, where students read primarily to fulfill academic requirements, reflects a gap between academic expectations and students' literacy readiness. This condition suggests that many students have not yet developed sustainable and self-motivated reading habits. Without a comprehensive understanding of this issue, it may negatively impact the overall quality of graduates, particularly in terms of critical thinking, analytical skills, and evidence-based reasoning.

This study is therefore essential as it seeks to provide an empirical description of the level and characteristics of reading interest among final-year students preparing for their undergraduate thesis. The findings are expected to serve as a basis for designing academic interventions, including literacy-oriented curriculum development, structured training programs for academic reading, and enhanced supervisory practices in guiding students to access and interpret scholarly literature. In this way, the study contributes not only to the advancement of academic literacy research but also offers practical implications for improving the quality of higher education. Based on the background outlined, the objectives of this study are to describe the level of reading interest among final-year students in preparation for thesis writing.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive design, which aims to describe the level of reading interest of final year students in facing the preparation of thesis. This approach was chosen because the research does not focus on the relationship between variables, but on mapping the empirical conditions that occur in the field. The population in this study is final year students who are or will prepare a thesis with a total of 74 people. The technique of taking simple random sampling by selecting 50% of respondents so that the number of respondents was 37 students.



Data was collected using a Likert scale-based questionnaire with a score range of 1–5 (never-always), which reflects the level of approval of respondents to the statements given. This instrument is used to measure the level of students' reading interest based on several indicators that have been set.

The variables of reading interest in this study were operationalized into four main indicators that reflect the affective, behavioral, cognitive, and motivational aspects of students in reading activities. Each indicator is measured through several statement items that are compiled based on the reading habits and experiences of final year students.

1. Preferences and attitudes towards reading

This indicator describes students' tendency to choose the type of reading and their attitude towards reading activities. Reading preferences are an important basis in seeing whether students have an intrinsic interest in academic reading that is relevant to the preparation of the thesis.

2. Reading habits and intensity

This indicator shows the real behavior of students in doing reading activities, especially related to the frequency, duration, and use of time.

3. Reading ability and comprehension

This indicator is related to students' cognitive ability to understand the content of reading, which is an important aspect in academic activities, especially in the preparation of thesis.

4. Motivation and support in reading

This indicator describes the driving factors that affect students' reading activities, both from within (intrinsic) and from the environment (extrinsic).

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean value, percentage and frequency distribution. The results of the analysis were then interpreted to describe the level of students' reading interest in the categories of very low, low, medium, high, and very high).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of research that aims to describe the empirical condition of reading interest of final year students. The presentation of data is carried out descriptively by grouping the results based on four main indicators, so as to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the tendencies of students' attitudes, habits, abilities, and motivation to read in the context of thesis preparation.

1. Preferences and Attitudes to Reading

The results of the analysis on the indicators of preferences and attitudes towards reading showed that most students were in the high and medium categories. In detail, as many as 19 students are in the high level category and 16 students are in the moderate level category. Meanwhile, only 1 student is in the very high level category and 1 student in the low level category, and there are no students in the very low level category.

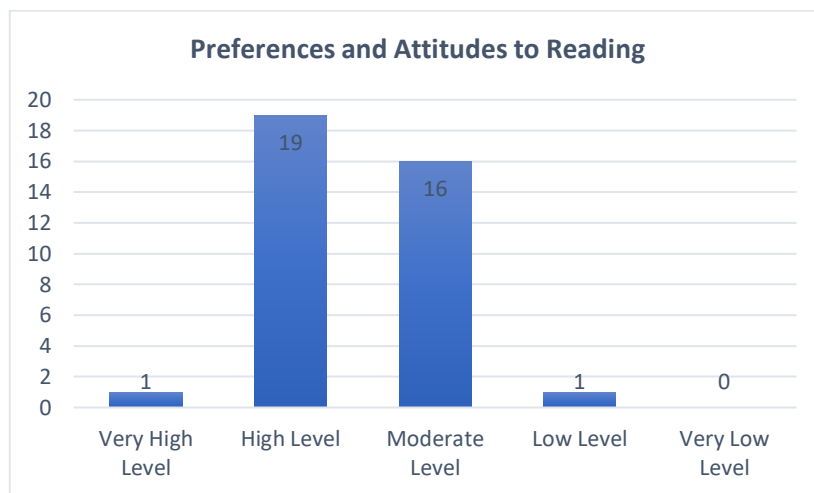


Figure 1: Overview of Reading Preferences and Attitudes

Source: Data processing, 2026

This distribution shows that the tendency of students' attitudes towards reading activities is relatively positive, although it has not reached a very optimal level. The dominance in the high-level category indicates that most students have a fairly good preference for reading activities, both in terms of the selection of the type of reading and openness to various sources of information. However, the existence of students in the moderate level category also shows that there are still groups that have not completely made reading a main need, especially in the academic context.

These findings suggest that although attitudes towards reading have been formed in most students, strengthening the aspect of reading preferences based on academic needs needs to be done, especially to encourage an increase from the medium category to the high and very high category.

These results are consistent with the study conducted by Gorzycki et al. (2020), which found that although students acknowledge the importance of reading for academic success, their actual reading behaviors often do not reflect this belief. This discrepancy highlights a gap between students' attitudes toward reading and their real engagement in reading activities.

Furthermore, students' reading preferences are strongly influenced by the perceived relevance of the material to their academic needs. Research by Pecorari et al. (2012) demonstrates that students are more likely to engage with reading materials that align with their learning objectives. This finding supports the current study, where students show relatively positive attitudes toward academic reading, albeit not consistently.

In terms of reading formats, prior studies indicate that students generally prefer printed materials over digital formats, as print is perceived to enhance concentration and comprehension (Mizrachi, 2015). However, digital resources remain widely used due to their accessibility and convenience. This suggests that reading attitudes are shaped not only by interest but also by practical considerations related to resource availability.

Moreover, the findings reveal that students exhibit openness toward various reading sources, although reading has not yet become a primary academic habit. This

aligns with the study by Cekiso (2025), which emphasizes that students’ engagement in reading is closely linked to personal interest and perceived usefulness of the material. The more relevant and engaging the content, the higher the likelihood of student participation in reading activities.

2. Reading Habits and Intensity

The results of the analysis on the indicators of reading habits and intensity showed that most students were in the medium category. This is shown by 59% in the moderate level category. Furthermore, 30% of students are in the high-level category, while the other 11% are in the low-level category. There are no students who are in the very high level or very low-level categories.

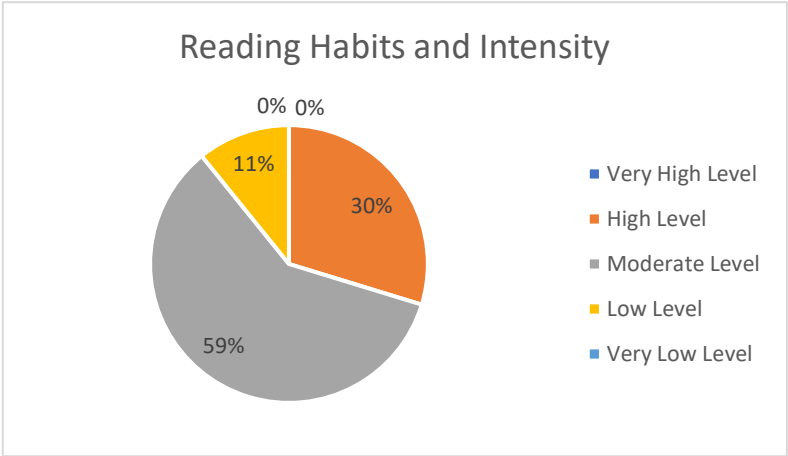


Figure 2: Overview of Reading Habits and Intensity
Source: Data processing, 2026

This distribution shows that students' reading habits tend to be inconsistent and have not become a strong routine in daily life. The dominance in the medium category indicates that reading activities are still carried out situationally, especially when there are certain academic needs, such as completing assignments or preparing for thesis preparation.

Although there are some students who have shown high reading intensity, the proportion is still smaller than the medium category group. Meanwhile, the existence of students in the low category shows that there are still groups that have limitations in allocating time to read. These findings suggest the need for efforts to improve the consistency and duration of student reading so that reading activities can become a sustainable habit, especially in supporting the academic process.

These results indicate that students’ reading practices tend to be conditional rather than internalized as a sustained academic necessity. Within higher education contexts, reading is expected to function not merely as a response to academic tasks but as an integral component of independent learning. However, the findings suggest that most students still engage in reading primarily when required, such as for completing assignments or preparing for specific academic tasks.

This condition aligns with previous research indicating that students’ reading habits are closely associated with time management and prioritization of activities (Baba &

Affendi, 2020; Nicolosi & Reiter, 2024). Students who effectively manage their time are more likely to demonstrate higher reading intensity, whereas those with less structured time management tend to exhibit inconsistent reading patterns. This suggests that reading intensity is influenced not only by time availability but also by individuals' ability to regulate their academic responsibilities.

Moreover, lower levels of reading intensity among some students can be linked to distractions arising from non-academic activities. The rapid growth of digital technology, particularly social media usage, has significantly reshaped students' information consumption patterns, often diverting attention away from academic reading. This highlights that reading habits are shaped not only by internal motivation but also by environmental and lifestyle factors.

The predominance of moderate-level reading behavior in this study reflects a gap between students' awareness of the importance of reading and their actual reading practices. While students generally recognize reading as essential for academic success, this awareness has not yet translated into consistent reading behavior. Therefore, more systematic efforts are required to foster sustainable reading habits.

Such efforts may include strengthening academic culture, providing supportive learning environments, and implementing instructional strategies that actively engage students in reading activities. Through these approaches, reading can evolve from a situational activity into an embedded academic practice that supports students' success in thesis preparation.

3. Reading Ability and Comprehension

The results of the analysis on the indicators of reading ability and comprehension showed that most students were in the medium and high categories. A total of 18 students were in the moderate level category, followed by 17 students in the high level category, and 2 students in the very high level category. Meanwhile, there are no students in the low level or very low level categories.

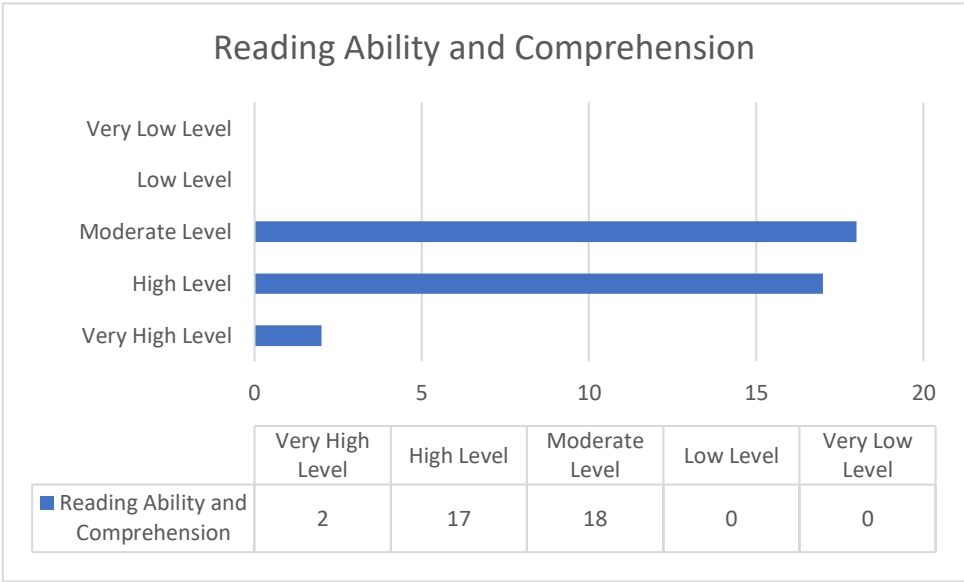


Figure 3: Overview of Reading Ability and Comprehension



Source: Data processing, 2026

This distribution shows that students' ability to understand the content of reading is quite good. The dominance in the medium and high categories indicates that most students have been able to capture information from reading adequately, even though they have not fully reached the optimal level of comprehension. The existence of students in the very high category, although the number is relatively small, shows the existence of a group that already has excellent academic literacy skills.

The absence of students in the low and very low categories is a positive indicator that in general students do not experience significant difficulties in understanding reading. This gives an idea that from the cognitive side, students have sufficient readiness to support the thesis preparation process. However, improvements are still needed so that more students can reach the high to very high category in the ability to understand the scientific literature.

Reading comprehension in higher education extends beyond literal understanding and involves interpretative and analytical processing of information. Students are expected to identify main ideas, understand conceptual relationships, and integrate information from multiple sources to construct coherent academic arguments. This perspective aligns with the view that reading comprehension forms the foundation for developing critical and analytical thinking skills in academic contexts (Urrutia et al., 2024).

These findings are further supported by previous studies indicating that reading comprehension is influenced by cognitive and linguistic factors, particularly vocabulary knowledge. Students with stronger vocabulary skills tend to demonstrate higher levels of comprehension, as they are better able to interpret complex academic texts (Wang & Pellicer-Sánchez, 2022). In addition, the use of effective reading strategies plays a crucial role in enhancing comprehension, especially when dealing with texts that contain specialized structures and terminology (Othman, 2010).

At the same time, the complexity of academic texts presents significant challenges for students. Dense structures, technical language, and formal writing styles require advanced analytical skills. Students who lack familiarity with academic text structures often struggle to identify key ideas and interpret the author's purpose. This suggests that reading comprehension is shaped not only by individual ability but also by experience and exposure to academic reading practices.

Nevertheless, the absence of students in the low comprehension category indicates that students have generally adapted to the demands of academic literacy. This condition may be attributed to continuous exposure to scholarly materials throughout their academic experience, including assignments, discussions, and research activities. Sustained engagement with academic literature has been shown to enhance both comprehension skills and students' confidence in interacting with scholarly texts (Hou et al., 2023).

Furthermore, reading comprehension is closely associated with critical thinking abilities. Students who demonstrate strong comprehension skills are more capable of engaging in analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information, which are essential competencies in thesis writing (Caldoza et al., 2024). Thus, reading comprehension

functions not only as a means of acquiring information but also as a foundation for developing higher-order academic competencies.

However, the predominance of moderate-level comprehension observed in this study indicates that there is still room for improvement. Therefore, more systematic efforts are required to enhance students’ reading comprehension skills, including the implementation of critical reading strategies, literature-based learning approaches, and guided support in interpreting academic texts. Such efforts are essential to ensure that students are not only able to read but also capable of deeply understanding and effectively utilizing information in academic research contexts.

4. Motivation and Support in Reading

The results of the analysis on the indicators of motivation and support in reading showed that most students were in the medium and low categories. A total of 21 students were in the moderate level category, followed by 14 students in the low level category. Meanwhile, only 1 student was in the very high level category and 1 student in the very low level category, and there were no students in the high level category.

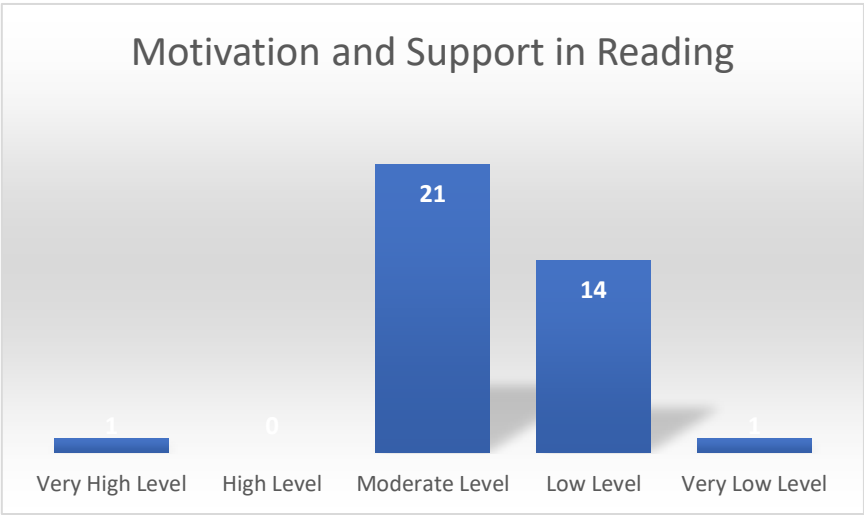


Figure 4: Overview of Reading Ability and Comprehension
Source: Data processing, 2026

This distribution shows that students' reading motivation levels tend to be not strong and are still influenced by external factors. Dominance in the medium category indicates that students have an urge to read, but it is not consistent or has not fully come from intrinsic awareness. The existence of a large proportion in the low category also shows that some students still have limitations in terms of motivation and support, both from the environment and from within themselves.

The absence of students in the high category reinforces the indication that reading motivation has not developed optimally. This condition shows that even though students have a fairly good reading comprehension ability, the encouragement to actively and consistently do reading activities still needs to be increased. Therefore, more systematic efforts are needed in providing academic support and a conducive



environment so that students' reading motivation can develop in a more positive direction.

Reading motivation is a critical factor influencing students' engagement in academic activities. In higher education contexts, motivation is derived not only from academic requirements but also from intrinsic factors such as personal interest, career aspirations, and self-belief. Previous research indicates that students with strong intrinsic motivation tend to engage more actively and consistently in reading, as they perceive it as part of their personal and intellectual development (Dammert et al., 2025). In contrast, when motivation is primarily extrinsic, such as fulfilling assignments or meeting academic demands, reading engagement tends to be temporary and less sustainable.

The findings of this study can also be explained through the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to accomplish academic tasks. Students with higher self-efficacy are more confident in dealing with complex academic texts and are more likely to engage in reading activities. Conversely, low self-efficacy may lead students to avoid challenging reading materials, thereby reducing their reading engagement (Gunobgunob-Mirasol, 2019; Jafarian & Kramer, 2025).

In addition to internal factors, external support plays a significant role in shaping students' reading motivation. Positive teacher-student relationships and constructive feedback have been shown to enhance students' engagement in academic tasks. Supportive learning environments, including access to resources and academic facilities, also contribute to fostering reading motivation (Li & Xue, 2023).

Technological advancements further introduce both opportunities and challenges in enhancing reading motivation. The integration of interactive learning tools and digital platforms can increase student engagement by offering more adaptive and engaging learning experiences. However, without proper management, technology may also serve as a source of distraction that reduces students' focus on academic reading (Jafarian & Kramer, 2025).

The predominance of moderate and low motivation levels observed in this study indicates that reading has not yet become an internally driven academic habit. Instead, it is often perceived as an obligation rather than an intellectual necessity. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that low perceived task relevance and unclear learning objectives can diminish students' motivation and engagement in reading (Vo & Ho, 2024).

Therefore, more comprehensive efforts are required to enhance students' reading motivation, addressing both internal and external dimensions. Strategies such as increasing the relevance of reading materials, providing sustained academic support, and creating a collaborative and supportive learning environment are essential. These efforts are expected to foster stronger and more sustainable reading motivation, ultimately supporting students' success in thesis writing.



CONCLUSION

This study aimed to describe the reading interest of final-year undergraduate students in preparation for writing a thesis based on four main indicators: reading preferences and attitudes, reading habits and intensity, reading comprehension ability, and motivation and external support for reading. The findings indicate that students' reading interest varies across these indicators.

In terms of preferences and attitudes, students generally demonstrate a positive disposition toward reading, although it has not yet reached an optimal level. Regarding reading habits and intensity, most students fall into the moderate category, indicating that reading has not yet become a consistent habit. Meanwhile, students exhibit relatively strong reading comprehension abilities, which serve as an important foundation for academic activities. However, motivation and external support for reading remain relatively low, suggesting that students' engagement in reading is not yet strongly driven by internal or external factors.

Overall, the findings suggest that although students possess adequate reading abilities, reading interest has not been fully internalized as a sustainable academic habit. The gap between ability, habit, and motivation highlights that improving reading interest requires not only cognitive development but also reinforcement of affective and environmental aspects.

Therefore, more systematic and sustained efforts are needed to enhance students' reading interest, including strengthening literacy-based curricula, providing supportive learning environments, and increasing academic support from lecturers and institutions. Such efforts are expected to transform reading from a situational activity into a sustained academic culture that supports the quality of thesis writing and students' academic success.

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