EXPLORING INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' READING INTEREST

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Article Info	Abstract
	Reading motivation plays a crucial role in students' academic success, yet the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors in shaping reading interest among college students remains underexplored. This qualitative study investigates how intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors influence the reading interest of English language education students at STKIP Paracendekia NW Sumbawa, Indonesia, and identifies the dominant motivational type. Data were collected from five sixth-semester undergraduate students using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and member checking, and were analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that intrinsic motivation particularly curiosity, enjoyment, emotional engagement, and self-efficacy significantly enhanced students' reading interest. In contrast, extrinsic motivators such as grades, recognition, and academic obligations played a secondary and often short-term role. The study highlights that intrinsic motivation fosters sustained and voluntary reading engagement, aligning with students' autonomy and emotional connection to texts. These results support Self-Determination Theory and Expectancy-Value Theory, suggesting the need for instructional practices that cultivate internal motivation. The findings inform strategies for fostering intrinsic motivation in EFL reading instruction.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental academic skill and a gateway to cognitive development, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. In higher education, where students are expected to comprehend complex academic texts, a strong interest in reading becomes essential for success. Reading interest influences not only how often students read but also how deeply they engage with texts (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000). However, recent studies highlight a concerning decline in students' reading interest, partly due to digital distractions and shifts in leisure preferences toward audiovisual media

(Turel & Toraman, 2015). These trends pose a challenge for educators to identify and nurture the motivational factors that sustain reading engagement.

Motivation plays a central role in shaping students' learning behaviors, including reading habits. It is commonly categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic forms (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation arises from internal satisfaction, such as curiosity, enjoyment, or personal growth, while extrinsic motivation stems from external rewards like grades, recognition, or parental expectations. Although both are important, intrinsic motivation tends to be more strongly associated with sustained reading interest and deeper comprehension (Schaffner et al., 2013).

Much of the existing research has focused on quantitative methods, emphasizing statistical relationships without capturing the personal experiences and emotional dimensions involved in reading motivation. Additionally, relatively few studies have explored how these motivational factors influence reading interest among non-native English-speaking students in higher education. These learners often face unique challenges in academic reading, including limited access to English texts and lower reading confidence.

To address these gaps, this qualitative study explores how intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors influence students' reading interest, with particular attention to which type of motivation is more dominant. By focusing on the lived experiences of English language education students at STKIP Paracendekia NW Sumbawa, Indonesia, the research seeks to provide in-depth insights into motivational mechanisms in a context where English is both a subject and a medium of instruction.

The study is grounded in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key components of effective motivation. It also draws on Expectancy-Value Theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), which posits that motivation is shaped by learners' expectations of success and the value they place on tasks. Together, these frameworks support an understanding of how both intrinsic and extrinsic factors interact to influence reading interest.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions. (1) How do intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors influence students' reading interest? (2) Which type of motivation—intrinsic or extrinsic—is more dominant in fostering students' reading interest?

By answering these questions, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of motivation in EFL reading contexts and offers practical insights for fostering student-centered reading environments in higher education.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundations of Motivation and Reading Interest

Motivation is a central factor in determining students' academic engagement, particularly in reading. In education, it refers to the internal or external drive that prompts individuals to initiate and sustain goal-oriented behavior (Schunk et al., 2014). A key distinction is made between intrinsic motivation, which stems from internal satisfaction such as curiosity or enjoyment, and extrinsic motivation**,** which arises from external pressures or rewards, such as grades or social expectations (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposes that optimal motivation arises when three psychological needs autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When these needs are met, learners are more likely to engage in reading voluntarily and meaningfully. Complementing SDT**,** Expectancy-Value Theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) asserts that students' motivation is influenced by their belief in their ability to succeed (expectancy) and the value they place on a task (value). These theories provide a comprehensive lens to understand the factors that influence reading interest in educational contexts.

Reading interest, closely tied to motivation, is defined as a psychological state marked by focused attention and positive affect toward reading activities (Schiefele et al., 2012). Students with high reading interest are more likely to engage frequently, persist longer, and demonstrate better comprehension. Therefore, examining the motivational underpinnings of reading interest is essential for fostering academic literacy.

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have investigated the relationship between motivation and reading engagement. Troyer et al. (2019**)** found that intrinsic motivation especially curiosity, involvement, and self-efficacy was a strong predictor of reading volume and comprehension, while extrinsic motivation had little or even negative impact on long-term outcomes. Similarly, Liu (2017) reported that learners' participation in an English reading contest was more strongly driven by intrinsic enjoyment than by rewards or competition.

Kanonire et al. (2022) examined the impact of motivation on elementary students' reading performance. Their study confirmed that intrinsic motivation supported better reading achievement, whereas extrinsic motivation only had a partial and conditional effect. These findings collectively reinforce the theoretical claim that intrinsic factors are more effective in promoting sustained reading engagement.

However, most of these studies were conducted in Western or elementary school contexts using quantitative methods. There is a noticeable lack of qualitative research exploring how non-native English-speaking students in higher education perceive and experience motivational factors in relation to reading. This gap limits our understanding of how cultural, linguistic, and academic contexts influence students' internal and external drivers of reading interest.

Literature Gap and Justification

While existing literature emphasizes the importance of motivation in reading, few studies have addressed the nuanced interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors from the perspectives of EFL students in higher education. Furthermore, past research often overlooks the role of emotional engagement, self-efficacy, and autonomy core aspects of SDT in shaping reading interest in multilingual academic settings.

This study fills that gap by providing a qualitative exploration of how English language education students in Indonesia experience motivational influences on their reading interest. By focusing on lived experiences, the research seeks to enrich the current literature and inform educators about how to foster sustainable reading engagement through motivational strategies tailored to learners' contexts.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative exploratory case study design to examine how intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors influence students' reading interest. A qualitative approach was chosen to capture students' personal experiences, motivations, and emotional responses toward reading. This design is consistent with Creswell's (2017) emphasis on understanding complex human behavior in natural contexts.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at STKIP Paracendekia NW Sumbawa, Indonesia, involving five sixth-semester students from the English Education Program. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, based on criteria such as academic performance in reading-related subjects and varying levels of reading interest. All participants were non-native English speakers with different motivational backgrounds.

Data Collection Techniques

This study used four data collection techniques namely: documentation, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and member checking.

Documentation

Documentation: Academic Records and Reading LogsThe term "documentation" in this study refers to, Academic records: Students' grades in previous reading courses, accessed from the institution's portal. These documents were used to contextualize and support the interview and questionnaire findings.

Questionnaire

A reading motivation questionnaire was distributed to all participants. This instrument consisted of Likert-scale items adapted from established instruments (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997; Schiefele & Schaffner, 2016), which measured intrinsic (curiosity, enjoyment, self-efficacy) and extrinsic (value, praise, external pressure) motivation constructs. The data helped identify patterns and guided the development of interview questions.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore students' motivation in depth. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and consisted of 11 open-ended questions. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian for clarity, recorded with consent, and then transcribed and translated into English for analysis. These interviews served as the primary data source.

Member Checking

To enhance the credibility of the data, participants reviewed summaries of their responses and interpretations after the initial analysis. They were given the opportunity to verify, clarify, or revise their input, which helped ensure the accuracy and credibility of the results (Hallett, 2013).

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted using **Miles and Huberman's (1994)** interactive model, involving:

- **Data Reduction**: Coding and condensing transcripts and responses into thematic categories such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.
- **Data Display**: Constructing tables and charts to represent themes and relationships visually.
- **Conclusion Drawing and Verification**: Synthesizing findings, checking consistency across sources, and validating themes through member feedback.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure **trustworthiness**, this study applied four qualitative criteria:

- **Credibility**: Established through triangulation and member checking.
- **Transferability**: Enhanced by rich descriptions of participants and context.
- **Dependability**: Achieved through systematic documentation of research procedures.
- **Confirmability**: Ensured by using participant quotations and minimizing researcher bias.

All participants signed informed consent forms. Ethical clearance was granted by the English Education Department of STKIP Paracendekia NW Sumbawa.

RESULTS

This section presents findings addressing the two research questions:

1. How do intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors influence students' reading interest?
2. Which type of motivation intrinsic or extrinsic is more dominant in fostering students' reading interest?

Data were collected through dokumentation, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and member checking involving five English education students. Thematic analysis revealed key categories under both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. These are presented below with supporting participant quotations and standardized tables.

Influence of Intrinsic Motivation on Reading Interest

Four major intrinsic factors were identified: curiosity, enjoyment, emotional involvement, and self-efficacy. These dimensions emerged as central to sustained and voluntary reading engagement.

"If the topic feels intriguing and sparks my curiosity, I become instantly enthusiastic." MS
"When I read something not assigned, I feel very happy." MT
"It feels like living in their world." NK

Table 1 Participant Responses on Intrinsic Motivation Dimensions

Participant	Curiosity	Enjoyment	Emotional Involvement	Self-Efficacy	Summary
MS	✔	✔	✔	–	Highly curious and emotionally involved
IAF	✔	–	–	–	Driven mainly by curiosity
MT	✔	✔	–	✔	Balanced intrinsic traits
EN	–	✔	✔	–	Emotionally immersed
NK	✔	✔	✔	–	Enjoys reading stories deeply

Influence of Extrinsic Motivation on Reading Interest

Extrinsic motivation was acknowledged by participants but described as short-term and context-dependent. Four themes emerged, academic obligations, recognition, grades, and fear of failure.

"I read because there's an exam or assignment waiting." IAF
"Recognition from my parents gives me encouragement." EN
"The most motivating reward is grades." EN

Table 2 Participant Responses on Extrinsic Motivation Dimensions

Participant	Academic Obligations	Recognition	Grades	Fear of Failure	Notes
MS	–	–	–	–	Primarily intrinsically motivated
IAF	✔	–	–	–	Reads when required
MT	✔	–	✔	✔	Grades and fear influence motivation
EN	–	✔	✔	–	External praise helpful but not central
NK	–	✔	–	–	Encouraged by recognition

Dominant Motivational Factor

All participants consistently reported intrinsic motivation as the dominant force driving their reading interest, even when extrinsic motivators initially triggered engagement.

"Even if there's no assignment, I still read if the content interests me." IAF
"Reading gives me personal satisfaction."MT
"Enjoyment is what keeps me reading." NK

Table 3 Dominant Motivational Factor per Participant

Participant	Dominant Motivation	Supporting Quote
MS	Intrinsic	"Reading is an internal journey."
IAF	Intrinsic	"I still read even if it's not for a task."
MT	Intrinsic	"Reading gives me personal satisfaction."
EN	Intrinsic	"I read out of curiosity first."
NK	Intrinsic	"Enjoyment is what keeps me reading."

Table 4 Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Semester	GPA Range	Notable Traits
MS	22	6th	3.70	Strong curiosity, emotional reader
IAF	22	6th	3.25	Task-oriented, motivated by interest
MT	21	6th	4.00	Self-driven, high reading confidence

EN	21	6th	3.50	Responsive to praise
NK	20	6th	4.00	Strong emotional reader

DISCUSSION

This study set out to explore how intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors influence students' reading interest, and to determine which type of motivation is more dominant. The findings offer several important insights that both confirm and extend existing motivational theories, particularly Self-Determination Theory (SDT) **and** Expectancy-Value Theory**.**

Intrinsic Motivation as the Primary Driver

The most prominent finding was the consistent dominance of intrinsic motivation specifically curiosity, enjoyment, emotional engagement, and self-efficacy in fostering sustained reading interest. Rather than re-stating individual quotes, the data collectively showed that participants were more likely to engage in reading when they perceived it as enjoyable, meaningful, and connected to their personal goals or interests. This aligns closely with Troyer et al. (2019), who emphasized the role of curiosity and involvement as core components of intrinsic reading motivation. Similarly, Putwain and Symes (2014) argue that learners who are intrinsically motivated show greater persistence and deeper cognitive engagement, which was also evident in this study.

This supports Self-Determination Theory's notion that autonomy and perceived competence enhance internalized motivation. Students who felt confident in their reading skills (self-efficacy) and had the freedom to choose reading topics demonstrated more consistent interest and deeper emotional involvement with texts.

Extrinsic Motivation: Contextually Relevant but Short-Term

Although extrinsic motivators such as grades, recognition, or fear of failure were acknowledged by students, their effects were often described as temporary or superficial. Students read to meet assignment requirements or avoid poor grades, but these triggers did not translate into long-term interest or voluntary reading habits. This observation mirrors findings from Schaffner et al. (2013) and Liu (2017), which suggest that while extrinsic rewards may initiate behavior, they do not sustain it unless internalized.

However, extrinsic motivation is not inherently negative. According to Ryan and Deci (2020), extrinsic regulation can evolve into more autonomous forms (identified or integrated regulation) when it aligns with learners' values and goals. Some participants in this study began reading due to external demands but later developed intrinsic interest in particular topics an encouraging sign that motivation can shift and mature over time.

Cultural Context and Educational Environment

The cultural and educational context of Indonesian learners also plays a role in shaping motivational tendencies. In collectivist societies like Indonesia, external validation from parents

and teachers often carries significant weight. This may explain why recognition and praise though not dominant still had a notable influence on some students' motivation. Furthermore, academic pressure and institutional emphasis on grades can amplify extrinsic motivation in formal education settings. These sociocultural factors underscore the importance of designing interventions that promote autonomy and intrinsic engagement while remaining sensitive to cultural expectations.

Additionally, English is a foreign language in Indonesia, which adds another layer of complexity. Students often struggle with confidence, access to authentic reading materials, and limited exposure outside the classroom. Despite these challenges, the emergence of intrinsic motivation among participants suggests that interest can still thrive when emotional and cognitive needs are met.

Implications for Practice

The findings support the need for student-centered reading instruction that nurtures autonomy, curiosity, and emotional engagement. Teachers should provide choices in reading materials, create opportunities for reflection, and frame reading as a personally rewarding activity not merely an academic task. At the same time, educators can use extrinsic motivators strategically to initiate engagement, while gradually helping students internalize the value of reading.

Synthesis

In sum, this study reinforces prior research while offering context-rich insights into the motivational mechanisms of EFL students in Indonesia. It confirms that intrinsic motivation is more effective for cultivating sustained reading interest and provides evidence that extrinsic motivation, while present, plays a more limited role unless it transitions into internalized forms. Importantly, the study adds a cultural dimension to the literature, highlighting how motivation is shaped by both individual psychology and sociocultural context.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors on the reading interest of English language education students at STKIP Paracendekia NW Sumbawa. The findings revealed that intrinsic motivation particularly curiosity, enjoyment, emotional involvement, and self-efficacy plays a dominant role in fostering sustained and voluntary reading engagement. While extrinsic motivation such as grades, recognition, and academic obligations can initiate reading behaviors, it tends to be short-lived and less effective without internal reinforcement.

The study supports the core principles of Self-Determination Theory and Expectancy-Value Theory, confirming that autonomy, competence, and perceived task value are central to developing

meaningful reading motivation. These findings also emphasize the importance of recognizing cultural and contextual factors in shaping how students respond to different motivational triggers.

Implications

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in EFL and higher education settings:

1. **Promote autonomy in reading activities**
   Allow students to select reading materials based on their interests to foster curiosity and personal relevance.
2. **Integrate reflective and emotional engagement strategies**
   Use reading journals, discussions, or creative responses to help students connect emotionally and cognitively with texts.
3. **Balance extrinsic motivators strategically**
   Use grades, recognition, or structured rewards to initiate reading behaviors, but transition toward promoting intrinsic value over time.
4. **Develop students' self-efficacy in reading**
   Provide scaffolding, feedback, and varied levels of reading materials to help students build confidence in their reading ability.
5. **Consider sociocultural values in instructional design**
   Acknowledge the influence of family, institutional expectations, and societal norms when implementing motivation-based reading programs.
6. **Provide access to diverse and engaging reading materials**
   Enrich the learning environment with a wide range of texts fiction and nonfiction that reflect students' backgrounds and interests.

Final Statement

By shedding light on the motivational dynamics of EFL learners in an Indonesian higher education context, this study contributes to both theoretical development in language learning motivation and practical approaches to curriculum design. Encouraging intrinsic reading motivation is not only essential for academic success but also for cultivating lifelong readers who engage with texts for personal growth, not just performance.

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