

**The Correlation between Self-Motivation and Self-Efficacy in Reading  
Comprehension of the Eighth Graders of MTS Hidayatul Mubtadiin - Balak  
in Academic Year 2025/2026**

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the correlation between self-motivation, self-efficacy, and reading comprehension ability of eighth-grade students at MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin – Balak in the 2025/2026 academic year. Using a quantitative correlational design, data were obtained through questionnaires on self-motivation and self-efficacy based on Guthrie & Wigfield and Bandura's theories, along with a reading comprehension test on narrative texts guided by Snow's framework. The results revealed that most students demonstrated high self-motivation and self-efficacy, with 71.43% categorized in the high group and none in the low group. However, their reading comprehension performance was relatively weak, as 71.43% of students were in the poor to very poor category, with an average score of 34.52 out of 100. Statistical analysis using multiple linear regression indicated a moderate positive correlation ( $R = 0.437$ ) between self-motivation, self-efficacy, and reading comprehension, yet the relationship was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.149 > 0.05$ ). These findings suggest that while motivation and efficacy may contribute to reading ability, they are insufficient alone to drive significant improvement. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach is required, incorporating effective reading strategies, supportive instruction, and conducive learning environments to enhance students' reading comprehension.

**Keywords:** *Self-Motivation; Self-Efficacy; Reading Comprehension.*

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### A. Introduction

As an international language, mastery of English opens wide access for pupils and students to obtain knowledge and information from various sources throughout the world. Much academic literature, scientific journals and major reference books are available in English, enabling students to gain global insight and perspective in their studies. Apart from that, English is also an important requirement for participating in student exchange programs, international scholarships, and academic conferences, all of which contribute to improving the quality of education and students' self-development (Qamariah & Yuliani, 2024). In many countries, educational curricula are starting to include early

learning of English, recognizing the importance of this language for students' futures in an increasingly connected world. In mastering English, students are also required to understand all elements of English, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

One of the most important skills in language learning is reading skill. In the context of general education, reading skills are essential because they enable students to understand various types of academic materials such as textbooks, scientific articles, assignment instructions, and exam questions, which are commonly presented in written form. Without sufficient reading ability, students may struggle to grasp the core of their learning materials and thus face difficulties in achieving academic success. Inadequate reading skills hinder comprehension, causing students to misread or skip unfamiliar words, which hinders their understanding of the text (Bushey & Bushey, 2017). Moreover, through reading, a person is introduced to the scientific and cultural achievements of humanity, as well as the art, traditions, and way of life of different communities around the world (Kizi & Ivanovna, 2023). This shows that reading not only serves as an academic requirement but also functions as a gateway to broaden knowledge and perspectives. In addition, individuals who are unable to read well will encounter significant obstacles in exploring educational activities across all subjects, since almost every discipline requires comprehension of written information (Ovavia & Sukma, 2020). This underlines the importance of reading as a foundational skill that supports the learning of other academic areas. Specifically in English education, reading skill plays a central role, as it allows learners to expand their vocabulary, improve grammar understanding, and enhance critical thinking skills through exposure to diverse texts (Vasylyovich, 2025). Therefore, reading skill can be considered not only as a component of language proficiency but also as a key element that determines students' overall success in education.

However, based on preliminary observation conducted at MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin Balak, many eighth-grade students still experience difficulties in comprehending English texts, especially narrative texts. Several students tend to struggle in identifying main ideas, understanding unfamiliar vocabulary, making inferences, and answering comprehension questions correctly. Students tend to struggle in identifying main ideas, understanding unfamiliar vocabulary, making inferences, and answering

comprehension questions correctly, which are recognized as essential aspects of reading comprehension (Lin et al., 2021). During classroom activities, some students also show low participation in reading lessons and often rely heavily on the teacher's explanation rather than reading the text independently. In addition, the students' reading scores were still below the expected standard, indicating that their reading comprehension ability needs improvement. Interestingly, although some students appeared enthusiastic and confident during English lessons, their actual reading performance remained unsatisfactory. This phenomenon indicates a possible inconsistency between students' psychological factors and their academic achievement in reading comprehension. Therefore, it is important to investigate whether self-motivation and self-efficacy are significantly related to students' reading comprehension ability at MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin Balak.

Previous studies have reported inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between self-motivation, self-efficacy, and reading comprehension ability. Several researchers found that students with high motivation and strong self-efficacy tend to achieve better reading comprehension performance because they are more persistent and confident in dealing with reading tasks. Psychological factors such as self-motivation and self-efficacy may influence students' engagement and achievement in reading activities (Locher et al., 2021). However, other studies revealed that high motivation and self-efficacy do not always lead to significant improvement in reading achievement, as students' comprehension is also influenced by other factors such as vocabulary mastery, reading strategies, learning environment, and instructional methods. These inconsistent findings indicate an empirical gap that still needs further investigation, particularly in the context of Islamic junior high schools such as MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin Balak. Therefore, this study aims to examine the correlation between self-motivation, self-efficacy, and reading comprehension ability among eighth-grade students in this school.

There are various factors that influence success in the process of learning English, especially in learning reading skill. For the example, internal factors and external factors. Internal factors can be investigated through learners' individual difference, intelligence, motivation, self-esteem, and learning style (Adolph, 2016). On the other hand, external factors include the learning environment, the role of teachers, learning

methods, available facilities, and support from parents and peers (Hochweber & Vieluf, 2016). Humans have several abilities that can be developed via experience. This experience occurs due to human interaction with the environment, both the physical environment and the human social environment efficiently and effectively, which is what is called education (Nainggolan, 2024).

In addition to psychological factors, reading comprehension is closely related to students' cognitive processes and their ability to apply effective reading strategies. Reading is not merely the process of recognizing written symbols, but it involves complex mental activities such as interpreting meaning, connecting prior knowledge with new information, and making inferences from the text. Reading comprehension is widely understood as a process of constructing meaning through the interaction between the reader, the text, and the reading activity itself (Mulder et al., 2021). When students are able to apply strategies such as predicting, summarizing, and questioning while reading, they are more likely to identify the main ideas and supporting details of a text. Therefore, the development of reading comprehension should not only focus on linguistic competence but also on students' ability to actively engage with texts and employ effective comprehension strategies (Castles et al., 2021)

Furthermore, motivation plays an essential role in language learning and significantly influences students' engagement in reading activities. Motivation determines the level of effort, persistence, and interest that learners demonstrate during the learning process (Feng & Papi, 2020). Students who are highly motivated tend to spend more time reading, explore different types of texts, and use more effective comprehension strategies. Conversely, students with low motivation often perceive reading as a difficult or uninteresting activity, which limits their exposure to written texts and reduces opportunities to develop their literacy skills. Recent studies have shown that motivated learners are more likely to develop stronger reading comprehension abilities because they actively seek meaning and remain persistent when encountering difficulties in texts (Wigfield et al., 2021).

Another important psychological factor that influences students' academic performance is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to perform specific tasks and achieve desired goals (Wang et al., 2021). In the

context of language learning, students with high self-efficacy tend to approach reading tasks with greater confidence and persistence, even when the material is challenging. They are more willing to apply various learning strategies and are less likely to give up when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary or complex sentence structures. On the other hand, students with low self-efficacy may avoid reading tasks because they doubt their own abilities. Consequently, strengthening students' self-efficacy is considered an important step in improving their academic engagement and learning outcomes, particularly in reading comprehension (Usher & Schunk, 2021)

There are self-motivation and self-efficacy that related to reading skill. Self-motivation is one of the internal elements that affects English language learning performance. The primary driving force behind human action is self-motivation. A person's actions will undoubtedly be in vain if they are taken without any motivation (Denarti & Damayanti, 2023). A person's motivation has a crucial role in their behaviors and decision-making. Particularly for students, self-motivation is essential to learning English. In addition to self-motivation, self-efficacy has an impact on English language acquisition. Self-efficacy is the belief or confidence a person has had since they were a young child that they can plan, complete a task, accomplish a goal, create something, and take action to develop particular skills (Descipulo Manipol et al., 2024). Self-efficacy is the measure of a person's confidence in their ability to complete the learning process and attain the best possible learning results. Despite obstacles, students who have a high level of self-efficacy think they can learn English. This conviction motivates people to put in more effort, seek out efficient learning techniques, and keep practicing until they reach the required level of proficiency. Additionally, those who have self-efficacy are more resilient to failure, they view challenges as chances to improve rather than insurmountable barriers (Gumanti & Kaniadewi, 2020). Students with poor self-efficacy, on the other hand, may become discouraged easily and avoid situations where they must use English. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation can be influenced by high self-efficacy, which raises the caliber and volume of work put into learning English.

By understanding how these two factors, self-motivation and self-efficacy relate to reading skills, it is expected that more effective strategies can be identified to enhance students' reading abilities. This research holds particular importance within the

Indonesian educational context, where the improvement of English proficiency remains one of the national priorities. Strengthening students' reading comprehension not only supports their success in English subjects but also contributes to their overall academic achievement across disciplines. Furthermore, the findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for teachers in designing classroom strategies that foster motivation and confidence, for schools in developing supportive learning environments, and for policymakers in formulating targeted intervention programs that address students' specific needs. In this way, the research is not only academically significant but also practically meaningful, offering concrete contributions to the broader effort of advancing English education and equipping Indonesian students with essential skills for global communication and lifelong learning.

Based on the background above, this research focuses on three main variables, namely self-motivation, self-efficacy, and reading skills. Self-motivation refers to the internal drive that encourages students to actively engage in learning activities, while self-efficacy relates to the confidence students have in their ability to successfully accomplish tasks. Reading skills, on the other hand, are one of the essential components of language learning that determine students' ability to comprehend and interpret written texts. The aim of this research is to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between self-motivation, self-efficacy, and students' reading skills, as well as to explore how these two psychological factors may contribute to the improvement of students' reading comprehension performance.

## **B. Research Method**

This research used a quantitative research method with a correlational model that identifies the relationship or correlation between three main variables, namely self-motivation, self-efficacy and reading comprehension. To support the analysis of the data, quantitative research methods included collecting, analyzing, and presenting data using numerical values, tables, graphs, charts, pictures, and other tools are used for visualization. The correlational research method aimed to determine the relationship between self-motivation and self-efficacy on reading comprehension.

This research was conducted at MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin Balak, Songgon, Banyuwangi, focusing on the eighth-grade students in the academic year 2025/2026, with

a total of 21 respondents (14 males and 7 females) selected using total sampling. Data was collected through questionnaires and tests. The questionnaires, adapted from previous studies, consist of self-motivation and self-efficacy instruments measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with score intervals categorized as low, medium, and high. The test, in the form of a reading comprehension assessment, is designed based on Snow's (2002) theory to measure decoding, fluency, vocabulary mastery, prior knowledge, and motivational purpose. All data were scored, tabulated, and analyzed quantitatively using SPSS. A normality test (Shapiro-Wilk for fewer than 50 respondents) first was applied to determine data distribution. If normally distributed, multiple linear regression was used to analyze the relationship between self-motivation, self-efficacy, and reading comprehension; otherwise, Spearman Rank Correlation will be applied. The criterion for significance follows Pallant (2020), stating that a significance value (Sig.)  $< 0.05$  indicates a significant relationship, while a value  $> 0.05$  shows no significant relationship.

### **C. Research Finding and Discussion**

This presents the research findings in detail, covering several key components such as the description of respondents, the analysis of students' self-motivation, self-efficacy, and reading comprehension, as well as the results of the normality test and correlation analysis. Each part is explained systematically to provide a clear picture of the data collected and how these variables are related to one another.

This research was carried out at MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin - Balak in the academic year 2025/2026. The respondents of the study were 21 eighth-grade students who voluntarily participated by completing the self-motivation and self-efficacy questionnaires and taking the reading comprehension test. The respondents were a mix of male and female students with varying levels of academic ability, which reflects the natural diversity of the classroom. The total number of 21 respondents ensured the data represented the population sufficiently for analysis.

- **Students' Self-Motivation in Reading Comprehension**

The data collected on self-motivation showed that the students demonstrated varying levels of motivation in reading comprehension, which were categorized into high, moderate, and low. Out of 21 students, 15 students, or 71.43%, were classified as having

high self-motivation. Meanwhile, 6 students, or 28.57%, fell into the moderate category, and none were classified as having low self-motivation. These findings indicate that the majority of students already possess a strong willingness, interest, and initiative to engage in reading comprehension tasks, which can serve as a positive foundation for their learning process. However, the presence of students in the moderate category suggests that not all learners are equally motivated, and some still require additional encouragement and support to strengthen their self-motivation in reading activities.

*Table 1. Students' Self-Motivation Data*

Category	Frequency	Percentage
High	15	71,43%
Moderate	6	28,57%
Low	-	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

These findings are further supported by the mean score of 64.14 with a standard deviation of 10.51, indicating that the overall level of self-motivation among the students was moderate.

*Table 2. Self-Motivation Data Analysis*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Motivation	21	64.14	10.51

- **Students' Self-Efficacy in Reading Comprehension**

The data collected on students' self-efficacy also showed a distribution across the three categories of high, medium, and low. Most students, 15 students or 71.43%, fell into the high category, indicating that the majority had a strong belief in their ability to complete reading comprehension tasks successfully. Meanwhile, 6 students, or 28.57%, were in the moderate category, suggesting that they possessed only an average level of confidence and might still face some uncertainty when dealing with more challenging reading tasks. Interestingly, no student was classified into the low category, which means that none of the respondents showed a lack of confidence or a tendency to consistently doubt their reading abilities. These results imply that, overall, the students demonstrated positive self-perceptions regarding their reading skills, although there remains a need to further strengthen the confidence of those in the moderate category.

*Table 3. Students' Self-Efficacy Data*

Category	Frequency	Percentage
High	15	71.43%
Moderate	6	28.57%
Low	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

The mean score of 63.57 with a standard deviation of 9.09 further supports the conclusion that most students were in the moderate category for self-efficacy.

*Table 4. Self-Efficacy Data Analysis*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Efficacy	21	63.57	9.09

- **Students' Reading Comprehension**

In the reading comprehension test, students also demonstrated varied levels of achievement. None of the students were able to reach the “very good” category, which shows that the highest level of reading proficiency was not attained by the respondents. Only 1 student (4.76%) managed to fall into the “good” category, reflecting a relatively small proportion of students who were able to perform above average. Meanwhile, 5 students (23.81%) were categorized as “average,” indicating that a limited number of students had reached a moderate level of comprehension. The majority of students, however, showed weaker performance, with 10 students (47.62%) classified as “poor” and another 5 students (23.81%) placed in the “very poor” category. These findings reveal that despite having generally high levels of self-motivation and self-efficacy, students' actual reading comprehension skills remain low overall, suggesting a gap between psychological readiness and academic performance.

*Table 5. Student' Reading Comprehension Score*

No	Score Interval	Frequency	Category	Percentage
1	81-100	-	Very good	0%
2	61-80	1	Good	4.76%
3	41-60	5	Average	23.81%
4	21-40	10	Poor	47.62%
5	0-20	5	Very poor	23.81%

The average reading comprehension score was 34.52, with a standard deviation of 14.74, which also indicates that the general level of students' reading comprehension was moderate.

*Table 1. Reading Comprehension Analysis*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading Comprehension	21	34.52	14.74

- **Data Normality Test**

Before conducting correlation analysis, the normality of the data was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test because there are less than 50 respondents. The significance values for self-motivation, self-efficacy, and reading comprehension were 0.589, 0.405, and 0.070, respectively, all of which are greater than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data were normally distributed, and parametric statistical analysis was appropriate for this study.

*Table 7. The Normality Test Results*

### Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
readingcomprehension	.154	21	.200*	.915	21	.070
selfmotivation	.144	21	.200*	.954	21	.405
selfefficacy	.135	21	.200*	.964	21	.589

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

- **Correlation Analysis**

To determine the relationship between self-motivation and self-efficacy with students' reading comprehension, a multiple regression analysis was performed. The analysis produced a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.437, suggesting a moderate positive relationship between the two independent variables and reading comprehension.

*Table 8. Correlation Analysis*

Correlation value	Correlation level
0,00-0,199	Very weak
0,20-0,399	Weak
0,40-0,599	Moderate
0,60-0,799	Strong
0,80-1,00	Very strong

However, the significance level of 0.149, which is higher than 0.05, indicates that this relationship was not statistically significant.

*Table 9. Correlation Coefficient Results*

Model	R	R Square	Sig. F Change
Self-Motivation & Self-Efficacy → Reading Comprehension	0.437	0.191	0.149

Although not significant, the moderate correlation suggests that both self-motivation and self-efficacy still contribute meaningfully to students' reading comprehension performance.

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the majority of eighth-grade students at MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin Balak have high levels of self-motivation and self-efficacy in comprehending English reading. A total of 71.43% of students fall into the high category for both variables, while the remainder are in the medium category, and none fall into the low category. These results indicate that students generally display strong interest and willingness to engage in the reading process, coupled with confidence in their own ability to accomplish reading comprehension tasks. Such positive psychological traits suggest that, from a motivational and self-belief standpoint, students are adequately prepared to face challenges in learning English reading.

However, when looking at the results of the reading comprehension test, the students' actual academic achievement does not fully reflect their high levels of self-motivation and self-efficacy. Only one student (4.76%) is categorized as "good," while the majority are classified as "poor" (47.62%) and "very poor" (23.81%). These findings reveal a significant gap between students' psychological readiness and their real

performance in understanding English texts. In other words, even though students possess strong motivation and confidence, these factors have not yet translated into satisfactory outcomes in reading comprehension. This condition may indicate the need for more effective teaching strategies, improved learning resources, or increased practice in reading activities to help students bridge this gap.

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis further clarify this condition. The analysis showed a moderate positive correlation ( $R = 0.437$ ) between self-motivation and self-efficacy on reading comprehension, suggesting that these psychological factors do have some influence on students' achievement. However, the significance value ( $p = 0.149 > 0.05$ ) indicates that this relationship is not statistically significant. In other words, although motivation and self-efficacy appear to contribute positively to reading comprehension, the influence is not strong enough to meaningfully improve students' overall performance. This finding implies that other factors beyond motivation and self-efficacy, such as vocabulary mastery, reading strategies, or instructional methods may play a more decisive role in shaping students' reading outcomes.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Based on the research results, this research concludes that although most the eighth graders of MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin Balak possess high levels of self-motivation and self-efficacy in reading comprehension, their actual reading achievement remains low. The statistical analysis shows a moderate but not significant correlation between self-motivation and self-efficacy with reading comprehension ( $R = 0.437$ ,  $p = 0.149$ ). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is rejected, and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted, indicating no significant relationship between the two independent variables and students' reading comprehension. These results imply that motivation and self-belief alone are not sufficient to improve reading outcomes without support from other instructional and environmental factors.

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