



# Proceeding of International Conference on Islamic Education and Science Development (4<sup>th</sup> ICONSIDE)

Vol. 4 No. 1 (2026) 167 – 176 | E-ISSN: 3064-2310

Mataram, 10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026

## Printed books versus e-books: a comparative analysis of efl students' reading motivation

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**Abstract.** *In the digital age, the increasing use of digital reading materials alongside printed books has raised questions about their influence on students' reading motivation. This study aims to compare the reading motivation of EFL students who prefer printed books with those who prefer e-books. The study was conducted at the Department of English Education, UIN Mataram, involving third-semester students as the participants. A quantitative approach with an ex post facto comparative design was employed to examine whether there was a significant difference in reading motivation between the two groups based on their preferred reading format. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) and the Motivation for Online Reading Questionnaire (MORQ). A total of 67 students participated in this study, consisting of 32 students who preferred printed books and 35 students who preferred e-books. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, assumption tests, and hypothesis testing. Since the data were not normally distributed, the Mann-Whitney U test was applied. The results indicate that both groups demonstrate a high level of reading motivation. Furthermore, the Mann-Whitney U test shows no significant difference in reading motivation between students who prefer printed books and those who prefer e-books ( $p > 0.05$ ). These findings suggest that reading format preference does not significantly affect EFL students' reading motivation.*

**Keywords:** Reading Motivation; Printed Books; E-books; EFL Students; Digital Age.

### INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language that plays an important role in education, science, business, and communication. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) and is a compulsory subject at various levels of education, including higher education. To succeed in learning English, students need not only linguistic competence but also supporting factors such as motivation, learning strategies, and appropriate learning resources. Among the four language skills, reading is considered a basic skill that supports the development of other skills, especially in an academic context. Nan (2018) states that reading helps learners develop vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and discourse awareness, which are essential for language mastery. In the context of EFL, where exposure to English is limited, reading becomes one of the main sources of language input.

However, the success of reading activities does not only depend on the availability of reading materials. Joderic C. (2019) emphasizes that students' motivation to read plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of reading instruction. Reading motivation affects students' level of engagement, frequency of reading, and comprehension. Hoddinott (2022) explains that motivated readers tend to read more actively and choose texts that support their learning, while low motivation can lead to avoidance of reading and poor comprehension (Ahmadi & Shahid, 2017). Rahmat & Fauzi (2022) also highlight that motivation is one of the key factors that determine students' success in learning English.

Reading motivation can be classified into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to reading for pleasure, curiosity, or personal satisfaction, while extrinsic

motivation is driven by external rewards such as grades or academic requirements. Komiyama & McMorris (2017) found that students with strong intrinsic motivation were more engaged in reading activities and demonstrated better comprehension. Theoretical perspectives such as Self-Determination Theory further explain that autonomy, competence, and relevance are essential in developing intrinsic motivation (Nyuhuan, 2024), while Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs describes motivation as an evolutionary process from basic requirements to self-actualization (Huang, 2024).

In the digital era, the format of reading materials has become an important factor that can influence students' reading motivation. The rapid growth of digital technology has shifted reading practices from printed books to digital formats such as e-books and online texts. Rahmat & Jaelani (2024) argue that digital literacy has become essential in modern education, as students increasingly rely on digital resources. Some studies show that printed books support better concentration and memory (Bradshaw, 2017), while others report that e-books increase motivation due to their flexibility, accessibility, and interactive features. Khusniyah (2021) also found that many students prefer digital reading materials, reflecting a shift towards digital literacy.

Despite these findings, previous studies have produced mixed results regarding the effectiveness of printed and e-books in supporting reading motivation. Daha (2023) reported that students tend to feel more confident when using printed materials, while Indrayadi (2021) found that EFL students' reading motivation is often influenced by extrinsic factors such as academic pressure. Joderic C. (2019) further emphasized that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation should be considered when choosing reading media. However, studies comparing reading motivation between printed and e-book users in the same EFL context are still limited, particularly at Islamic universities in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study aims to compare the reading motivation of EFL students who prefer printed books and those who prefer e-books in the English Language Education Department, UIN Mataram. By examining whether there are significant differences between the two groups, this study seeks to fill this research gap and provide empirical evidence on the relationship between reading formats and reading motivation in EFL learning.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading motivation is a key factor influencing student engagement and achievement in EFL reading contexts. It refers to learners' internal and external drives to read English texts for academic, informational, or personal purposes. Wigfield and Guthrie emphasize that highly motivated readers tend to read more frequently, employ effective strategies, and achieve better comprehension, which is particularly important in EFL contexts where linguistic challenges often hinder reading engagement (Paris & Stahl, 2005). Several validated instruments have been developed to assess reading motivation. The Reading Motivation Questionnaire (MRQ) has been widely used to measure various dimensions of reading motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and reading engagement, particularly in print reading contexts (Wigfield, 1996). However, the increasing use of digital texts has raised concerns about the adequacy of traditional instruments in capturing motivation in online environments. In response, Forzani et al., (2020) developed the Motivation for Reading Online Questionnaire (MORQ) to specifically measure motivation related to digital and online reading, emphasizing aspects such as online engagement and navigation. Combining the MRQ and MORQ allows for a more comprehensive assessment of reading motivation across print and digital formats.

Previous studies have reported mixed findings regarding the effectiveness of print and e-books in supporting reading motivation. Pardede (2019) through a review of over 30 studies, found inconsistent results, with some studies favoring print texts and others showing no significant difference. Similarly, Daha (2023) reported that students generally preferred print materials for academic and long-form texts, while digital reading was more often associated with entertainment and lower concentration. Conversely, Amada & Jarina (2021) found that the use of e-books significantly increased students' reading motivation due to their flexibility and accessibility. These contrasting findings demonstrate the ongoing debate regarding the role of reading formats in motivating students.

Other studies have focused on motivational tendencies rather than format comparisons. Indrayadi (2021) using the MRQ, found that EFL students generally exhibit moderate to high reading motivation, dominated by extrinsic factors. Meanwhile, Joderic C. (2019) emphasized

the importance of intrinsic motivation in increasing reading engagement and highlighted the potential of digital reading materials in the digital age. Together, these studies suggest that reading motivation is influenced not only by reading format but also by motivational orientation and learning context. Despite extensive research on reading motivation and reading format, studies directly comparing reading motivation between students who prefer printed books and those who prefer e-books, particularly in the context of EFL higher education in Indonesia, are still limited.

## **METHOD**

### **Approach and Type of Research**

This study employs a quantitative approach. This approach was chosen since the study's goal was to objectively measure students' reading motivation levels and analyze the differences between the two groups using numerical data gathered from questionnaires, rather than focusing on detailed interpretation. According to Hyer & Balani (2024), the quantitative approach is appropriate for researchers who seek to evaluate the relationship or differences between variables using statistically measurable data.

Besides, it adopts an *ex post facto*, as the research investigates existing differences in students' reading motivation based on their prior experiences with printed books and e-books, without manipulating or controlling the variables directly. *Ex post facto* itself as stated by Wahyu et al. (2021), is non-experimental quantitative research which conducted after event or variable occurs, without manipulation from the researcher.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of this study consisted of third-semester students majoring in English Education at UIN Mataram in the 2025/2026 academic year. This population was selected because students at this level had been exposed to various courses requiring regular reading activities, such as Interpretive Reading and Introductory English Literature, which involved both printed and digital reading materials. In addition, third-semester students had passed the initial transition period of university life and had begun to develop more stable academic habits. As stated by Hayes & Williams (2016), academic literacy development increases significantly during the early undergraduate years. Therefore, these students had sufficient reading experience to evaluate their reading motivation across different reading formats.

The population consist of 210 in total of the third-semester students which distributed across six classes. Referring to Suharsimi Arikunto's guideline, which suggests that 10% to 25% of a large population may be taken as the sample, the researcher selected approximately 30% of the population (Abubakar., 2021). As a result, 67 students were involved as the research sample, which was considered adequate to represent the population.

A purposive sampling technique was employed in this study. According to Andrade, purposive sampling refers to the deliberate selection of participants based on specific characteristics or experiences. The criteria applied were third-semester students of the English Language Education Department who had experience using both printed books and e-books and were willing to participate in the study. This technique was chosen to ensure that the selected participants were relevant to the purpose of comparing reading motivation across different reading formats.

### **Research Design**

This study used an *ex post facto* comparative design, specifically a two-group causal-comparative design, to examine differences in reading motivation between EFL students who prefer printed books and those who prefer e-books. According to Darmawan, *ex post facto* research aims to identify causal relationships between variables without experimental manipulation, because the independent variable has already occurred and cannot be controlled.

### **Research Instruments**

The data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire to measure students' reading motivation in printed and digital reading contexts. A Likert-scale questionnaire was used because it measures respondents' opinions, attitudes, and levels of agreement or disagreement toward given statements (Willits et al., 2016). The questionnaire was adopted from the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) developed by Wigfield & Guthrie (1996) and the Motivation for

Online Reading Questionnaire (MORQ) developed by Forzani et al., (2020). The MRQ was used to measure motivation in printed reading, while the MORQ was used to capture motivation related to e-book or online reading.

The questionnaire employed a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), without a neutral option, to encourage clear responses. Although the original MRQ consists of 54 items and the MORQ consists of 20 items, this study selected four relevant dimensions from each instrument. Consequently, a total of 24 items were used, consisting of 12 items for print books and 12 items for e-books, to ensure relevance and efficiency.

The questionnaire was administered as a single integrated form consisting of three sections. Section A contained demographic information and reading format preferences, Section B included MRQ items for motivation to read print books, and Section C included MORQ items for motivation to read e-books. Based on participants' responses, they were naturally grouped according to their preferred reading format, and their reading motivation scores were compared through statistical analysis.

The data in this study was collected through the distribution of Likert-scale questionnaires to the third-semester students of English Language Education Department at UIN Mataram. The questionnaire was distributed online using Google Forms through the students' class groups or forums, so the participants can fill it up anywhere and anytime according to the specified time. The participants were asked to fill in their identity on the first page according to the information requested. To ensure data completeness, the researcher remained on site until all participants have completed the questionnaires. The researcher guarantees that the identity and answers of respondents would be kept confidential and would not be distributed to other parties.

In addition, documents were used as secondary data to support the primary data obtained from the questionnaire. The documents included official attendance lists and student records from the English Language Education Department. These documents were used to identify the total number of active third-semester students and to ensure accurate selection and accessibility of respondents during the data collection process.

### **Technique of Data Analysis**

The data in this study were analyzed quantitatively based on questionnaire responses. The total number of Likert-scale questionnaire responses was used to calculate each student's reading motivation score. The higher the score, the higher the level of reading motivation. The data analysis was conducted in several steps:

1. Scoring and Determining Reading Motivation Levels

Prior to descriptive analysis, the questionnaire data was scored. Scoring was conducted to obtain a reading motivation score for each respondent based on their responses on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Strongly Agree). After obtaining the percentage score, each respondent was classified into five reading motivation categories based on the standard score interpretation used in previous research by Yusniar & Purnamalia (2024). Thus, each respondent had two separate scores and motivation categories: motivation to read using printed books (MRQ) and motivation to read using e-books (MORQ). This scoring process served as the basis for further analysis to describe students' reading motivation levels and to examine comparisons between the two groups based on reading media preferences.

2. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted to describe the level of reading motivation among students in each group (print and e-book users). This analysis involved calculating the mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and percentage values.

3. Assumption Tests

Before conducting inferential analysis, assumption testing was performed to determine the appropriate statistical procedure. Normality testing was performed to check whether the data were normally distributed, using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, because the sample size exceeded 50. A significance value greater than 0.05 indicates a normal distribution, while a value below 0.05 indicates a non-normal distribution. The results of the normality test were used to determine whether a parametric or non-parametric test would be applied. Furthermore, homogeneity testing was performed using the Levene's

Test to assess the equality of variances between the two groups. A significance value greater than 0.05 indicates homogeneous data, while a value below 0.05 indicates non-homogeneous variances. The results of this assumption testing guide the selection of the appropriate statistical test for hypothesis testing.

#### 4. Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis test in this study aims to determine whether there is a significant difference in reading motivation between EFL students who prefer printed books and students who prefer e-books. Before conducting the hypothesis test, the data was first tested for normality to determine the appropriate type of statistical test. Since the data was not normally distributed, the hypothesis test was conducted using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test, which does not require the assumption of data normality.

## RESULT

### Respondents' Information

A total of 67 third-semester students from the English Language Education Department at UIN Mataram participated in this study which consist of six classes (3A-3F).

**Table 1.** Students' Preference

Category	Code	Total	Percentage
Printed	1	32	47.76%
E-Book	2	35	52.24%

Based on their reading format preferences, it can be seen that more students prefer to read using e-books rather than printed books, 32 students (47.76%) preferred printed books, while 35 students (52.24%) preferred e-books. These preferences were used to divide the respondents into two groups for further analysis of reading motivation.

### Scoring and Motivation Level Classification

After all respondents' answers were collected, raw scores, motivation percentages, and motivation level categories were obtained for each respondent.

**Table 2.** Percentage Distribution of Reading Motivation Levels

Category	Frequency Printed	Percentage	Frequency E-book	Percentage
Very High	8	25%	9	25.71%
High	20	62.5%	24	68.57%
Moderate	3	9.375%	2	5.71%
Low	1	3.125%	0	0%
Very Low	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total (N)</b>	32	100%	35	100%

Based on Table 2, the majority of respondents in both groups fall into the high and very high categories. In the printed book group, the highest frequency is in the high category with 20 students (62.5%), followed by the very high category with 8 students (25%). The lowest frequency is in the very low category with 0 students (0%), while only 1 student (3.125%) falls into the low category.

Similarly, in the e-book group, the highest frequency is also found in the high category with 24 students (68.57%), followed by the very high category with 9 students (25.71%). The lowest frequency is in the low and very low category, both with 0 students (0%). These results indicate that most students in both groups demonstrate high levels of reading motivation.

### Descriptive Statistics

The table below presents descriptive statistics consisting of the mean, standard deviation, minimum value and maximum value for reading motivation scores in two groups of respondents based on their reading preferences.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics of Reading Motivation Scores

Statistics	Value (Printed)	Value (E-Book)
Total (N)	32	35
Mean	35.125	35.88571429
SD	6.593007048	4.490325735
Minimum	18	21
Maximum	48	45

These statistics provide an overview of the distribution and scores of reading motivation in each respondent group. This data forms the basis for further analysis in the next stage. And for the percentage distribution of motivation levels for each group based on the classification of reading motivation levels used, overall, most respondents from both groups were in the High Motivation category.

### Assumption Tests

#### Normality Test

Normality of the data in this study was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test because each group contained fewer than 50 respondents. The normality test results for both formats are shown in the following table:

**Table 4.** Result of Normality Test (Printed Book)

Tests Normality of Printed Book						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Reading Motivation Score (Printed Book)	.178	32	.011	.911	32	.012
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Based on the table above, the significance value for the printed book group was 0.012. It less than 0.05, indicating that the data was not normally distributed.

**Table 5.** Result of Normality Test (E-Book)

Tests Normality of E-Book						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Reading Motivation Score (E-Book)	.167	35	.014	.907	35	.006
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

The table above showed that the significance value for the e-book group was 0.006. It less than 0.05, indicating that the data was not normally distributed. Since the data in both groups

were not normally distributed, the appropriate test was conducted by using the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test.

**Homogeneity Test**

The homogeneity test was performed using Levene's Test to examine the similarity of variance between the two groups.

**Table 6.** Result of Homogeneity Test

Test of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Total Score	Based on Mean	3.525	1	65	.065
	Based on Median	2.528	1	65	.117
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.528	1	57.668	.117
	Based on trimmed mean	3.259	1	65	.076

The table shows that Levene's Sig. value was 0.065. This value was greater than 0.05, which means the variance of the two groups (printed books and e-books) were homogeneous based on the results of Levene's test.

**Hypothesis Testing (Mann-Whitney U Test)**

Since the data were not normally distributed, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze whether there was a significant difference in reading motivation between students who prefer using printed books and those who prefer using e-books.

**Table 7.** Ranks of Mann-Whitney U Test

Ranks				
	Preference	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Total Score	1	32	34.42	1101.50
	2	35	33.61	1176.50
	Total	67		

This table showed the ranking position of reading motivation scores in each group, displaying the number of respondents in each preference category, the mean rank, and the sum of ranks for each group. This table served as the basis for calculations in the Mann-Whitney test.

**Table 8.** Mann-Whitney U Test Statistics

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
	Total Score
Mann-Whitney U	546.500
Wilcoxon W	1176.500
Z	-.171
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.864
a. Grouping Variable: Preference	

This test statistics table displayed the main values generated from the Mann-Whitney U test. The Mann-Whitney U, Wilcoxon W, Z, and Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) were displayed as standard outputs from the test procedure. And the result of the test indicated that the significance value

( $p=0.864$ ) was greater than 0.05, which means the  $H_0$  (Null Hypothesis) was accepted.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the research results presented above, this study aims to determine whether there is a significant difference in reading motivation between EFL students who prefer printed books and those who prefer e-books. The results of the data analysis showed that, in general, the level of reading motivation among students in both groups was relatively high. The results of the motivation level scoring and classification showed that most respondents both those who prefer printed books and e-books, fall into the high motivation category. It indicates that the format of reading materials, whether printed or e-book is not a major obstacle for students in building their motivation to read. Students showed a strong enthusiasm to read, regardless of the medium they use. These findings support previous study by Pardede (2019) which indicate that reading motivation is more influenced by internal factors within students, such as academic needs, personal interests, and learning demands, than by the format of the reading material itself. Besides, Senjahari et al. (2021). also said that learning objectives significantly affect motivation, with students driven by future job opportunities, academic requirements, and cultural interest.

The results of descriptive statistical analysis also showed that the average reading motivation score in the e-book user group was slightly higher than the printed book user group. However, the difference in mean scores was very small. In addition, the variation in scores in the printed book group appears to be greater than in the e-book group, as indicated by the higher standard deviation value. However, this difference is not sufficient to indicate a statistically significant difference between the two groups. At the assumption testing stage, the normality test results showed that the reading motivation data in both groups were not normally distributed. Therefore, hypothesis testing was conducted using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test. The Mann-Whitney test results showed that the significance value was greater than 0.05, which means that there was no significance difference in reading motivation between students who preferred printed books and students who preferred e-books. Thus, the null hypothesis in this study was accepted.

These findings indicate that preferences for reading formats do not significantly affect the reading motivation level of EFL students. Students who choose printed books and who choose e-books have comparable reading motivation levels (Deanna & Szabo, 2016). This can be explained by the current learning conditions that require students to be accustomed to using various reading sources, both printed and e-book. Easier access to e-books and the availability of printed books in academic environments allow students to adjust their reading format according to their individual needs and preferences without reducing their reading motivation (Comfort & Oni, 2019). The results of this study are in line with a previous study conducted by Fatma et al, (2015) which state that reading format is not always a determining factor in reading motivation. These studies showed that students can have high levels of reading motivation when using both print and digital media, as long as the reading material is relevant to their academic needs and interests. Thus, the results of this study reinforce the view that reading motivation is more influenced by reading objectives and learning context than by the reading media itself. It is specifically emphasized by Alda et al. (2024) that although media preferences exist, intrinsic motivation and learning context are more critical.

Overall, the results of this study show that there is no significant difference in reading motivation between EFL students who prefer printed books and those who prefer e-books. This finding implies that educators and educational institutions do not need to limit the use of particular reading format. Instead, providing a variety of reading format options can be an effective strategy to support student reading motivation without having to worry about differences in motivation based on format preferences.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion presented, this study concludes that EFL students who prefer printed textbooks and those who prefer e-books both exhibit high levels of reading motivation. This conclusion is supported by the descriptive statistics, which showed that the mean score for the printed group ( $M=35.125$ ) and the e-book group ( $M=35.885$ ) is both categorized as high motivation. In addition, the majority of students in both groups fall into the

high and very high motivation category. The Mann–Whitney U test results showed no significant difference in reading motivation between the two groups ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that reading format preference does not significantly influence students' reading motivation. Therefore, both printed textbooks and e-books are equally effective in supporting EFL students' reading motivation.

However, this study is limited by its sample size and setting, as it involved students from a single department and relied solely on questionnaire data. Future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples, employ a mixed-methods design, and replicate this study in different educational contexts. Practically, these findings imply that EFL lecturers can flexibly integrate printed and digital reading materials to support students' reading motivation according to their learning objectives and learner needs.

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