



THE EFFECT OF MOTIVATION TOWARD EFL LEARNERS' ENGLISH READING SKILL ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation affect the reading performance of third-grade EFL students at Al Kautsar Putra Secondary School. Using a qualitative approach, data were gathered from questionnaires, interviews, and academic records. The questionnaire, with "agree" or "disagree" options, assessed students' motivation toward reading English texts. Ten randomly chosen students also participated in interviews. Findings showed that 70% were mainly influenced by extrinsic factors such as grades, rewards, and teacher expectations. However, some students demonstrated intrinsic motivation, enjoying the reading process and feeling satisfied when understanding texts independently. Interview data revealed a mix of motivations, with peer and teacher support playing key roles. Institutional support, such as structured activities and social reinforcement, was found to significantly boost motivation and reading growth. These supports also improved students' confidence in speaking English. Consistent academic progress in reading scores from Grade 7 to Grade 9 further confirmed that motivation, supported by continuous instruction, positively impacts language learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Motivation, Intrinsic, Extrinsic, Reading Skill Achievement.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill essential for the cognitive and intellectual growth of children (Bakkaloğlu & Pilten, 2023). Far from being a mere mechanical act of decoding words, reading is a multifaceted process that involves cognitive engagement, linguistic competence, and sociocultural understanding (Tyas, 2024). Learners actively construct meaning by integrating textual information with their prior knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes (Saraswati et al., 2021), making reading not only a vehicle for acquiring knowledge but also a reflective act that shapes how individuals perceive and interact with the world around them.

Research by Tyas (2024) emphasizes that effective and well-structured reading instruction plays a pivotal role in fostering comprehension and literacy. The alignment of pedagogical approaches with students' needs, motivations, and backgrounds is critical, as different instructional models

yield diverse outcomes. Within the EFL context, reading assumes a vital role alongside speaking, writing, listening, and (Tyas, 2024; Rojabi, 2021; Puripunyanich, 2025). However, for many learners, mastering reading in English presents significant challenges due to language limitations and a lack of motivation necessitating both ongoing practice and supportive motivational frameworks.

Motivation itself is a decisive element in language learning success. Fachraini (2017) asserts that without sufficient motivation, learners may disengage from even the simplest tasks, whereas highly motivated individuals are more resilient in tackling complex material. Motivation, understood as an internal mechanism that directs and sustains goal-oriented behavior, is generally categorized into intrinsic (driven by personal interest or satisfaction) and extrinsic (influenced by rewards or recognition). Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's capability to perform specific tasks, also plays a

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significant role in determining learner persistence and success in reading (Wray et al., 2022; Jaya et al., 2025; Carroll & Fox, 2017).

Further reinforcing this, Kircher and Mostert (2017) propose that reading motivation can be viewed through three interconnected lenses: a sense of reading competence and efficacy, the value attached to reading goals, and social influences. These dimensions encapsulate learners' self-perceptions, their motivational goals, and the impact of social interactions on their reading behavior.

Against this theoretical backdrop, the present study aims to investigate the motivational factors both intrinsic and extrinsic that influence English reading achievement among third-grade students at Al Kautsar Putra Secondary School. Specifically, the research is guided by two core questions: (1) What types of motivation affect the reading achievement of third-grade EFL learners? and (2) In what ways does learning motivation shape their reading performance? The study, therefore, seeks to identify and analyze the motivational drivers behind students' English reading development, while also examining how these motivational factors translate into tangible academic outcomes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Motivation In Reading Scope*

Motivation is a vital factor in learning, particularly in improving reading comprehension (Bakkaloğlu & Pilten, 2023). In EFL contexts, reading motivation refers to the internal drive that sustains students' interest in reading English texts (Barber & Klauđa, 2020). This inner drive significantly influences reading frequency and comprehension outcomes. According to Barber and Klauđa (2020), motivated learners tend to read more and understand texts better. Similarly, Pelletier et al. (2022) emphasize that both reading ability and the desire to read are key to becoming proficient readers. Semenova, as cited in Radiyah, Astrid, and Husaini (2023), also found that motivation is consistently associated with higher reading comprehension, though its role is often underappreciated.

Banditvilai (2020) classify reading motivation into three domains: (1) Competence and Reading Efficacy, relating to confidence and challenge-seeking; (2) Achievement Values and Goals, which cover both intrinsic (curiosity, enjoyment) and extrinsic (grades, praise) motivations; and (3) Social Aspects, involving peer influence and social norms. More broadly, motivation is divided into intrinsic and extrinsic types (Ryan & Deci, 2020), while self-efficacy, the belief in one's capability to succeed, strongly affects learning behaviour (Dornyei & Taguchi, 2019).

2.2 *Reading*

Reading is a vital component of language acquisition that requires more than the mechanical act of recognizing written words; it involves the ability to understand, interpret, and construct meaning from text. As noted by Amirah and Saidalvi (2023), reading represents a dynamic interaction between the reader and the written material, allowing for the development of fluency. In this context, reading becomes a process through which learners extract meaning from text and internalize information. Comprehension is central to this process, as students must relate new information to existing knowledge to interpret messages accurately. According to Fadilah et al. (2023) and Sheng (2019), reading comprehension involves higher-order thinking skills that allow individuals not only to understand text content but also to explain and evaluate it. The motivational dimension of reading, as highlighted by Kusuma (2023), plays a critical role in this process. Motivation fosters deeper engagement with texts and supports metacognitive functions such as identifying main ideas and applying strategic reading approaches, which are essential for developing literacy proficiency (BAKĪ, 2025).

In addition to cognitive skills, reading achievement is reflected in a student's capacity to comprehend both literal and inferential meanings within a text (Lewis, 2019; Par, 2020; Kaforina et al., 2023). Literal comprehension deals with directly stated information, whereas inferential comprehension requires students to make logical deductions from context (Bakkaloğlu

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& Pilten, 2023). The mastery of both elements indicates a well-developed reading ability that also contributes to critical and analytical thinking (Fitria, 2024; Martinez, 2017; Merris et al., 2021).

Next, this study is limited to examining the types of learning motivation specifically intrinsic and extrinsic and their influence on the reading skill achievement of EFL learners. It focuses on identifying which type of motivation has a more significant impact and exploring the ways in which motivation affects students' reading performance. The research does not extend to other potential factors that may influence reading achievement, such as teaching strategies, reading materials, language proficiency levels, or socio-cultural background. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the scope of motivational influence and may not be generalized beyond this specific focus.

Finally, this study is grounded in a range of prior scholarly works that have provided theoretical and empirical foundations for the research focus. First, Southworth (2022), conducted a study to examine the critical role of motivation in the process of acquiring English as a second language. Employing a structured and objective approach, the researchers based their analysis on a wide range of existing literature. Their findings revealed that psychology defines motivation through various constructs such as instincts, drives, needs, and conditioned responses. Meanwhile, theories from cognitive and educational psychology interpret motivation as an outcome of mental processes intertwined with social factors. The study concluded that motivation is a key dynamic element in second language acquisition, as it is not only essential but also adaptable and subject to change over time. Their research highlighted that motivation greatly influences both the learning process and its outcomes in the context of learning English as a second language.

Second, by Nayeem et al. (2025), in a study titled *Reading Habits Among Students and Its Effect on Academic Performance: A Study of Students of Koforidua Polytechnic*, explored how students' reading behaviors affect their academic success. The research

was carried out among students of Koforidua Polytechnic in Ghana, using questionnaires as the main data collection tool. Out of 1,052 distributed questionnaires, 1,000 were successfully returned, indicating a high response rate of 95%. The data were analyzed using SPSS, and the findings were presented through visual representations such as charts and tables. The results showed that while students acknowledged the importance of reading, 81.9% had not read any fiction or novels during the last two semesters, and 62.0% admitted to reading solely for examination purposes. A significant correlation was found between reading habits and academic performance.

Third, Al Ayub Ahmed et al. (2022) carried out research focusing on the influence of motivation on EFL learners' reading comprehension abilities. Recognizing reading as one of the most vital language skills, the study involved English lecturers and undergraduate students from Blue Nile University in Sudan. A descriptive-analytical method was adopted, and data were collected through questionnaires administered to lecturers and both pre-tests and post-tests conducted with students. The findings demonstrated that motivational strategies effectively enhanced students' intrinsic motivation and had a significant positive impact on their reading comprehension. Moreover, students' attitudes and levels of motivation were found to be crucial in improving their reading performance. The researcher recommended that explicit instruction in reading strategies should be provided and suggested incorporating enjoyable elements such as games and humor into the classroom setting to foster both engagement and comprehension.

Fourth, Tyas (2024) investigated the relationship between students' reading motivation and their reading comprehension in English as a foreign language. The study was conducted at a vocational high school and included 99 tenth-grade students from five different academic departments. The data were collected through a reading motivation questionnaire the Foreign Language Motivation Reading Questionnaire (FLMRQ) and a reading comprehension test. The study revealed that despite students demonstrating a high level of motivation to

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read in English, there was no significant relationship between their motivation and actual reading comprehension outcomes. The lack of correlation was attributed to limited reading proficiency, particularly in vocabulary acquisition. This was reflected in the average reading comprehension score of 56.00, which remained low despite a high motivation score of 72.45. These findings suggest that motivation alone is insufficient without adequate reading skills to support comprehension.

Lastly, unlike four previous studies above, the present research was carried out at Pondok Pesantren Al Kautsar and involved ninth-grade students as participants. This study aims to explore how motivation influences the achievement of English reading skills among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The general importance of motivation in second language acquisition, the impact of students' reading habits on academic performance within a Ghanaian polytechnic context. The role of motivation in developing English reading comprehension among university students in Sudan, and Tyas (2024) investigated the correlation between reading motivation and reading comprehension in a vocational high school setting. In contrast, the current study is uniquely positioned within an Islamic boarding school (pesantren), providing a distinct educational environment that may influence learning outcomes. By focusing on junior high school students in this context, the research seeks to offer new perspectives on the motivational factors that support the development of English reading proficiency among EFL and how it is affected learners achievement at the secondary level.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, chosen for its alignment with the study's objectives and contextual focus. The qualitative approach is appropriate for examining how learning motivation influences students' reading achievement, as it allows the researcher to explore patterns and issues identified in the introductory section. According to Sugiyono (2021), qualitative research offers deep insights into

complex educational phenomena, making it particularly effective for analyzing the motivational elements that shape language learning outcomes.

3.2 Data Collection Method

This study employed three primary data collection methods structured interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis of students' academic performance to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research focus (Harahab, 2020). Structured interviews were conducted in Indonesian to create a comfortable environment for participants, allowing them to express themselves openly and without disrupting the learning process (Hardani et al., 2020). The interview questions explored the link between students' motivation and their English reading comprehension.

To support these findings, the researcher analyzed academic records from Al Kautsar Putra Secondary School, specifically English reading scores, as quantitative indicators of students' performance. Questionnaires were also used to enrich the data, consistent with the qualitative approach as long as they serve a data-gathering function (Hardani et al., 2020, citing Williams). The questionnaire, adapted from Dornyei and Taguchi (2019), consisted of binary-response items ("agree" or "disagree") and aimed to measure students' motivation in reading English texts.

Ten students were randomly selected based on their active participation in English learning. This sample size was chosen to ensure relevance while minimizing classroom disruption, aligning with Anebelle and Ramadhan's (2025) view that data richness outweighs quantity in qualitative research. To enhance data credibility, triangulation was applied by cross-validating findings through multiple sources and methods (Harahab, 2020; Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019).

3.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis in this qualitative study followed an inductive approach, where insights emerged from field data rather than being shaped by pre-existing theories (Hardani et al., 2020). This approach

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facilitated the identification of patterns, meaningful themes, and deeper interpretations. The analysis was guided by Miles and Huberman (2019) interactive model, which includes three key stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction phase, raw data from interviews and documents were coded, sorted, and filtered to retain only relevant information (Anebelle & Ramadhan, 2025). The reduced data were then organized systematically during the display stage using narratives or visual tools to support clearer interpretation. In the final phase, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the organized data in relation to the research objectives (Harahab, 2020). This analytical process was iterative and ongoing throughout the research.

The research procedure itself was conducted in four structured phases: planning, data collection, data analysis, and conclusion formulation. During planning, the researcher designed the study framework, prepared instruments, and developed a proposal. Data collection involved administering questionnaires, conducting interviews, and obtaining students' academic records. Analysis adhered to Miles and Huberman's model, and the study concluded by synthesizing findings to directly address the research questions, ensuring the results were valid, coherent, and aligned with the study's aims.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings derived from both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data were collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews involving ten randomly selected students from Al Kautsar Islamic Boarding School. These instruments aimed to explore students' motivation regarding English reading activities. Meanwhile, the secondary data consisted of students' daily academic scores, which were randomly selected from various classes. The integration of both data types was intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between learning motivation and students' reading achievement in English. The findings presented here serve as the basis for addressing the research questions and

supporting the analysis in the discussion section.

Table 1. Students Questionnaire Analysis Results

| No | Name | Intrinsic | | Extrinsic | |
|----|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | | Agree | Disagree | Agree | Disagree |
| 1 | MF | 57% | 43% | 71% | 29% |
| 2 | AR | 43% | 57% | 71% | 29% |
| 3 | AWH | 86% | 14% | 71% | 29% |
| 4 | DBRF | 43% | 57% | 71% | 29% |
| 5 | MIH | 57% | 43% | 57% | 43% |
| 6 | MZA | 71% | 29% | 71% | 29% |
| 7 | NSA | 71% | 29% | 14% | 86% |
| 8 | MAL | 57% | 43% | 71% | 29% |
| 9 | MAR A | 57% | 43% | 29% | 71% |
| 10 | MAZ A | 71% | 29% | 71% | 29% |

The table above presents a comparison between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation levels among ten students regarding their English reading activities. The data indicates that extrinsic motivation tends to be more dominant, with 70% of the students showing higher levels of agreement with extrinsic factors such as rewards, grades, or external encouragement. For example, seven out of ten students (MF, AR, AWH, DBRF, MZA, NSA, MAZA) demonstrated a 71% agreement with extrinsic motivation statements. In contrast, intrinsic motivation driven by personal interest and internal satisfaction varied more widely. While students like AWH, MZA, and MAZA showed strong intrinsic motivation (ranging from 71% to 86%), others such as AR and DBRF exhibited lower intrinsic engagement (43%). Notably, only one student (MARA) showed a stronger tendency toward intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation. These findings suggest that while some learners are driven by internal interest in reading, external factors remain a significant motivating force for the majority.

Table 2. Questionnaire Analysis

| Statements | Agree | Disagree |
|---|-------|----------|
| <i>Intrinsic motivation</i> | | |
| I read English texts because I enjoy the reading process. | 80% | 20% |
| I feel challenged when I try to understand difficult English texts. | 100% | 0% |

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| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| I read English books because I'm curious about the story. | 50% | 50% |
| Reading in English makes me feel satisfied. | 90% | 10% |
| I feel happy when I can understand English texts without using a dictionary. | 80% | 20% |
| I like reading English because I want to know more about the content. | 10% | 90% |
| I feel like I learn something new when I read English books. | 20% | 80% |
| Presentage | 61% | 39% |

The findings presented in the table above illustrate students' intrinsic motivation in reading English texts. The majority of participants demonstrated a positive response toward reading, with 61% agreeing with the statements provided. Notably, all students (100%) reported feeling challenged when reading difficult texts, indicating a strong motivational drive to engage with complex material. A significant portion also expressed enjoyment and satisfaction, with 80% stating they read for pleasure and feel happy when they understand English without relying on a dictionary, and 90% agreeing that reading brings satisfaction. However, lower agreement levels were observed in statements related to curiosity and knowledge acquisition, as only 50% agreed they read out of curiosity, and just 10%–20% found reading useful for learning new content. Overall, the data suggests that while most students are intrinsically motivated by the emotional and cognitive satisfaction of reading, fewer are driven by a desire to gain new information from texts.

Table 3. Questionnaire Analysis

| Statements | Agree | Disagree |
|---|-------|----------|
| Extrinsic motivation | | |
| I read English because I want to get good grades at school. | 70% | 30% |
| I read English texts because my teacher tells me to do so. | 80% | 20% |
| I want to be praised for my ability to read in English. | 20% | 80% |

| | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| I read because I want to avoid punishment from my teacher if I do not read. | 60% | 40% |
| I read English so that I can win a reading competition. | 80% | 20% |
| I read so that my friends will think I am good at English. | 20% | 80% |
| I read English books because it is a school assignment that needs to be done. | 90% | 10% |
| Presentage | 60% | 40% |

The table illustrates students' responses related to extrinsic motivation in reading English, revealing that a majority are driven by external factors. Notably, 90% of students agreed that they read English books because it is a school assignment, indicating compliance with academic requirements as a strong motivator. Similarly, 80% read because they are instructed by their teacher or motivated by the opportunity to participate in competitions. Furthermore, 70% agreed that they read English to achieve good grades, and 60% stated they read to avoid punishment. In contrast, only 20% of students read to gain praise or to impress their peers, reflecting a lower influence of social rewards. Overall, the data shows that 60% of the students are extrinsically motivated to read English, suggesting that institutional and task-based obligations play a more significant role in shaping their reading habits than personal interest or social recognition.

From the findings from interviews conducted with ten students at Al Kautsar Putra, various factors were identified as influencing their motivation to read English texts. In response to the first question, "What usually motivates you to read English texts or textbooks at Al Kautsar Putra?", four students indicated intrinsic motivation, such as a desire to improve their English proficiency, support memorization practices, experience comfort while reading, and prepare for future goals. Conversely, five students were mainly driven by external factors, including assignments and teacher-imposed requirements, while one student was motivated by the content of the reading

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material and encouragement from teachers or senior peers. Regarding the second question, “How do you feel when reading English texts assigned by your teacher at school? Do you enjoy the reading process?” Eight students reported enjoying the reading activities, although their emotional state sometimes influenced their level of engagement. The remaining two students admitted that they participated in reading activities solely due to academic obligations. Responding to the third question, “What is the role of the school, especially Al Kautsar Putra, in helping you increase your motivation to read English?” most students emphasized the positive impact of structured school programs, particularly the pesantren-based learning support, on their reading development. One student also highlighted the importance of reading for their future, reflecting a blend of institutional support and personal aspiration. Finally, in response to the fourth question, “What efforts will you make to improve your reading comprehension skills?” all students agreed that their surrounding environment including the support of the boarding school, teachers, peers, and family plays a crucial role in encouraging them to enhance their reading comprehension. These findings underscore the combined influence of internal motivation, academic demands, institutional structures, and social support in shaping students’ English reading habits and abilities.

Table 4. Students' Daily English Reading Scores

| No | Name | 7 Grade | 9 Grade |
|----|------|---------|---------|
| 1 | MF | 60 | 84 |
| 2 | AR | 68 | 82 |
| 3 | AWH | 65 | 86 |
| 4 | DBRF | 63 | 87 |
| 5 | MIH | 68 | 83 |
| 6 | MZA | 62 | 81 |
| 7 | NSA | 69 | 82 |
| 8 | MAL | 64 | 85 |
| 9 | MARA | 61 | 83 |
| 10 | MAZA | 62 | 84 |

The data in the table illustrates the comparison between students' daily English reading scores in 7th grade and their

corresponding scores in 9th grade at Al Kautsar Putra. A consistent upward trend is observed across all participants, indicating a notable improvement in their reading performance over time. For example, student MF improved from a score of 60 in 7th grade to 84 in 9th grade, and AWH progressed from 65 to 86. This pattern is consistent among all ten students, with increases ranging from 14 to 25 points. These findings suggest that students have experienced a significant enhancement in their English reading skills as they progressed through grade levels, which may be attributed to a combination of sustained instructional efforts, the school’s structured learning environment, and increased exposure to English reading materials over time. This improvement supports the effectiveness of the school’s educational practices in promoting reading proficiency.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore how the type of learning motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) influences the English reading proficiency of EFL students and to investigate how motivation affects their academic outcomes. Utilizing both primary data (from questionnaires and interviews) and secondary data (in the form of daily academic scores), the findings demonstrate that intrinsic motivation is the most impactful factor contributing to students’ reading success at Al Kautsar Islamic Boarding School. Evidence of intrinsic motivation was observed through students' genuine interest in reading, curiosity about English texts, and a sense of fulfillment when they were able to comprehend challenging materials. These traits are aligned with the model proposed by Kircher and Mostert (2017), which emphasizes the importance of personal interest, confidence, and autonomy in developing reading motivation (Gopalan, Bakar, Zulkifli, Alwi, & Mat, 2017). Students driven by intrinsic motivation showed improvement, willingness to tackle difficult passages, and more strategic involvement during reading tasks (Filgona, Sakiyo, Gwani, & Okoronka, 2020). While extrinsic motivation (such as aiming for high grades, meeting teacher expectations, or

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gaining recognition) was present among students, its impact was relatively limited (Alizadeh, 2016). These external incentives often served as short-term motivators to initiate reading but were not sufficient to maintain long-term engagement (Siregar & Siregar, 2020). This finding is in line with Ryan and Deci's theory in their journal published 2000, they suggests that for sustained academic engagement to occur, external motivation must eventually be internalized (Gopalan, Bakar, Zulkifli, Alwi, & Mat, 2017).

The connection between intrinsic motivation and reading performance was further validated through the analysis of students' academic records. Learners who exhibited intrinsic motivation consistently achieved better results in English reading tasks. This supports the research of Banditvilai (2020), which found that intrinsically motivated readers tend to adopt deeper learning approaches, employ effective reading strategies, and achieve stronger comprehension outcomes.

Additional qualitative insights gathered from student interviews highlighted the role of intrinsic motivation in enhancing reading development. Several students mentioned that they voluntarily read English materials outside of class time, which contributed to vocabulary enrichment and improved fluency. In EFL environments where exposure to English is limited, such autonomous learning practices are particularly valuable.

The influence of motivation on reading proficiency can be further understood through the lens of engagement theory. The theory highly motivated students are more likely to invest cognitively and emotionally in learning (Calixto, 2017). They set personal goals, monitor their own comprehension, and actively address difficulties behaviors that are essential for achieving reading success (Tyas, 2024). These patterns show that motivation influences not only how often students read but also the quality of their engagement with texts.

In summary, the results of this study clearly show that intrinsic motivation plays a more significant role than extrinsic motivation in shaping the English reading achievement of EFL learners. It fosters consistent effort, promotes deeper

understanding, and supports autonomous learning core aspects of effective language acquisition (reference). Although extrinsic motivation contributes by encouraging initial participation, long-term progress in reading skills is most strongly driven by internal interest and self-determined learning goals.

5. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the impact of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the English reading achievement of EFL learners at Al Kautsar Islamic Boarding School, using a combination of questionnaire data, interview findings, and academic performance records. The results indicate that intrinsic motivation driven by curiosity, enjoyment, and personal fulfilment has a more profound and lasting influence on reading development compared to extrinsic motivators like grades or external rewards. Learners who were intrinsically motivated showed consistent engagement, applied effective strategies, and demonstrated improved comprehension. Notably, these students also read beyond classroom requirements, contributing to vocabulary growth and fluency critical factors in low-exposure EFL settings. These findings underscore the importance of cultivating learners' internal drive through autonomy-supportive teaching, meaningful materials, and opportunities for personal connection with texts.

Implications of the study suggest that educators should prioritize learning environments that enhance students' intrinsic interest in reading. This can be achieved by integrating student-centered approaches, offering choices in reading materials, and linking content to learners' real-life experiences. Future research is recommended to explore how digital media, peer collaboration, or project-based learning can further strengthen intrinsic motivation across diverse EFL populations, including longitudinal studies to examine motivational changes over time and their sustained impact on reading proficiency.

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