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CONTENTS

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON WATTPAD IN READING IN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT UNIVERSITAS BANDAR LAMPUNG

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Abstract

In the development of technology, reading can be obtained both from books and other media like handy smartphones. One application that can be used as a reading source, social and entertainment medium at once is Wattpad application since Wattpad is not only as simple as reading platform but it also facilitates the readers to directly connect with other readers and their favorite writers. Wattpad may encourage the taste of reading especially extensive reading or reading for pleasure. Therefore, Wattpad is multifunctional medium that may enhance educational performance, social engagement, and personal development. This research aimed to explore the students' perception on Wattpad in reading. The sample of this research was all students of English Department of Universitas Bandar Lampung who used Wattpad as the reading platform. They are from first until thirteenth semester. This research applied qualitative design with descriptive qualitative method. The data were collected through two instruments: questionnaire and interview. The result indicated that most students have positive perceptions on Wattpad in reading especially in enhancing their vocabulary.

Keywords: *Wattpad; reading; reading with technology; students' perception*.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an activity providing many benefits. One of them is that reading for pleasure. According to Clark and Rumbold (2006:6), reading for pleasure refers to reading activities that have a purpose for self-pleasure to get satisfaction while reading. The other benefit is that reading can be an entertainment media for some people. Lewis (2009) stated that reading can also be an activity of reducing stress. In a recent study, it is stated when people reading a book or any kind of text six minutes a day continuously, it can reduce stress level of the person by sixty eight percent. Therefore, reading can help increase someone's relaxation and decrease body tension. Moreover, in the development of increasingly sophisticated technology, reading can be obtained both from books and other media like handy smartphones. Today, there are many reading platforms available that provide a variety of interesting reading such as e-books, audiobooks, fairy tales, short stories, and novels with various genres without having to spend money to buy them.

One application that can be used as a reading source, social and entertainment

media at once is Wattpad application. For some people, Wattpad is no longer a strange thing anymore. Wattpad is one of the reading platforms that are being loved by both young and old people. Wattpad is an application that provides stories in the form of digital novels, and people can make friends or discuss with fellow readers and novel writers in it. Wattpad provides novels in a variety of genres ranging from fiction to non-fiction, romance, horror, mystery, and comedy. Based on the issues above, the writer specified the objective that she wants to achieve. It is to explore the students' perception on Wattpad in reading.

LITERATURE REVIEW

McDonald (2011:2) argues that perception is the way how people view a phenomenon happened in the world. It is based on the background knowledge of someone because someone can only clarify their perception from what she or he has known. In other way, people's perception of something is their own point of view or interpretation of valuating something. According to Irwanto (2002:71) the result of perceptions is divided into two, positive and negative. According to Sobur as cited in Nursanti (2016:163) the factors that can influence people's perception come from the inside and outside factors, or known as internal and external factors.

Wattpad is one of the applications which provides novel stories in the form of e-books. According to Rodman as cited in Contreras, Gonzaga, Trovela, and Kagaoan (2015:309), e-book is a term related to the existing books in digital forms. In this application, there are a lot of genres of novels available

that can be accessed for free by novel lovers.

E-book is the digital version of books that can be accessed with mobile phone with preferred features such as dictionary, digital audio, and word search tools, and many more. In order to create e-books that can be accessed by young readers, software developers have designed application, such as e-readers, Wattpad, and many others. E-readers appear with developed features such as record buttons, discussion forums, animated images, and sound effects. A diversity of multimedia and multisensory features, e-reader application especially, helps students read independently with full of pleasure (Ciampa, 2012:2). Howard (2011:46) clarified that pleasure reading was started to accomplish three general functions. It enhanced educational performance, social engagement, and personal development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used qualitative design. The writer thinks that it is quite interesting because in qualitative research she explore real world experience as well as human behavior (Creswell, 2014:48). Djamba and Neuman (2002:17) clarifies that in qualitative research, the researcher is involved in the interactive process. This research applied descriptive qualitative method. According to Moleong as cited in Putri (2019:62), descriptive qualitative is a research method which creates descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people's behavior which is observed.

The population of the research were all active students from first until thirteenth semester of English Department of

Faculty of teacher Training, Universitas Bandar Lampung. There are about 162 students in total. The sampling technique which the writer used was purposeful sampling. Creswell (2012:206) explains that it involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of the participants which mainly experienced with the current phenomenon. The main reason of using purposeful sampling was because the writer had a purpose to totally select anyone from the total of the population who uses Wattpad in reading, without considering their ages, background knowledge, or gender.

Firstly, the data were gathered by providing questionnaire to the students. After that the writer conducted an interview to get more and deeper understanding of the students' perceptions and elaborate the result of the questionnaire. At the end of the research, she combined the whole data from questionnaire and interview to find out the result. After all of the data were collected, the writer combined the whole data in forms of descriptions. In the questionnaire, she accumulated important answers from the students that need to be discussed further or might affect the whole research result. The interview was done to get further perceptions of the students about the application Wattpad in reading. The result combined from the two instruments above was in the form of table and diagram which was described in sentences to interpret the diagram and table.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result explained how the students perceived Wattpad and clarified their perception. The experience of using Wattpad as a medium for story reading to see if Wattpad had a positive/negative impact and conveyed some benefits. The indicators taken are: Interest, Experience, Personality, Mood, Object Size, Interactive Activities, Genres, Accessibility, Entertainment, Relaxation, Social Engagement, Personal Reassurance, Personal Development, Positive, Negative, and Educational Performance.

Interest

In the questionnaire, most students were interested in reading the stories available on Wattpad. There were some students who used Wattpad because of their friends' recommendation. In the interview, there were various reasons of the students which made them interested in reading on Wattpad. There were 10 students out of 20 in interview section which clarified that they started using Wattpad because they really liked reading so that they were interested in reading using Wattpad. There were a few students who used Wattpad because of their friends' recommendation and they started to use Wattpad. There was also a student who liked reading on Wattpad only for killing her free time. Interestingly, there were two students who stated that they usually read on Wattpad because they liked writing. They claimed that they wanted to write, so that their writing skill would be developed by reading from others' work and their ideas would enhance.

Experience

Based on the questionnaire, most students' experiences of using Wattpad was positive. They felt that Wattpad was a fun reading platform and they enjoyed a lot reading stories on Wattpad. It was supported by the interview result. The researcher firstly

asked about how long they had used Wattpad. The answers were various. Some had used Wattpad for a long time and some others for a short time. Then, the students were asked about their feeling and impression about Wattpad. Even though the answers were varied, mostly they stated a positive thing. However, there was only a student who mentioned a bad impression about Wattpad. He understands that Wattpad provides a lot of stories and various genres, but Wattpad lacks adequate reading filters so that the stories in Wattpad are not all of them of good quality.

Subsequently, the researcher tried to find their perception about the difference between reading a book and reading in Wattpad based on their experience in using Wattpad. Mostly, the students' answers were similar that Wattpad was more practical, simpler, and more efficient. There were some students mentioned that Wattpad and a book were just similar. They did not have a significant difference and the only difference was that Wattpad is more flexible to carry anywhere compared to a book.

Personality

Based on the questionnaire, there were more students who liked romance and fiction genres than those who liked mystery or horror genre. The interview section provided supporting explanation about students' personality based on their favorite genre. Basically, the students who prefer romance or fiction genre are the type of person who easily understands the feelings of others. While the students who have preference in reading horror or mystery genre, they are the type of people who like challenging things.

Mood

Based on the questionnaire, many students read stories in Wattpad only when they were in a good mood. The students might feel that good mood helped them a lot in understanding the stories they read. Other than that, in interview part, the researcher asked the students about the correlation between bad moods in reading, whether it is possible reading on Wattpad help them in overcome bad moods. The result of the interview was almost all of the students stated that reading on Wattpad was able to help them for mood booster. One way the ways that they use is reading stories with comedy genre so that they feel better.

Object Size

Based on the questionnaire result, most students prefer hand phone as the medium in accessing Wattpad. There were only a few students who used laptop while accessing Wattpad. It is in line with the result of the interview that hand phone is the suitable medium for the students to read stories in Wattpad. Their reason is various but mostly they stated that hand phone was more flexible to be carried anywhere and its size was fitted to them. However, there was only one student of twenty interviewees who prefer laptop than hand phone. He stated that laptop size was more satisfying and the browser was easy for multitasking. However, there was only one student of twenty interviewees who prefer laptop than hand phone. He stated that laptop size was more satisfying and the browser was easy for multitasking.

Interactive Activities

In the result questionnaire, more than half of them used Wattpad to interact with fellow readers or writers. It is

supported with the results of the interview that half of the total interviewees use Wattpad to interact with others but the other half do not, they tend to focus only on reading.

Genres

Based on the questionnaire result, the students have not explored all the genres available on Wattpad yet. There is only a few of students who have explored all the genres available on Wattpad. It was supported by the result of the interview that most students had their own favorite genre while reading on Wattpad and it turned out that the genre they mostly read are almost the same such as romance. The other mentioned genres are mystery/horror, thriller, fiction (fan fiction, teen fiction, and sci-fi), chicklit, and comedy.

Accessibility

Based on the questionnaire result, Wattpad does not require a strong internet connection since most students did not agree with the statement *'Wattpad needs strong internet connection'*. It is in line with the result of the interview that almost all students stated that they never experienced the difficulties in accessing Wattpad. In addition, Wattpad is not only easy to be accessed but also it does not spend much quota. There was only one student from twenty interviewees who stated that in the specific places like remote place (village), Wattpad was hardly to be accessed. Therefore, it can be concluded that Wattpad did not have any difficulties in accessibility.

Entertainment

Based on the questionnaire result, it was found that most students consider reading on Wattpad as their recreational activity which was able to make them feel more entertained. It is in line with the result of the interview that many of the students feel entertained because of reading stories on Wattpad. There were only a few of the students who stated that they did not entertain due to Wattpad.

Relaxation

Based on the questionnaire result, reading stories on Wattpad was the students' most preferred medium to relax when they were hectic. The result of the interview also supported that many students felt more relaxed when reading stories in Wattpad.

Social Engagement

Based on the result of the questionnaire, many students felt the benefits of Wattpad especially in getting more friends who have similar hobby with them. By this, when they got together they were able to develop their social skills by discussing what was trending on Wattpad. It is supported by the result of the interview that half of the total of the interviewees clarified social engagement by using Wattpad.

Personal Reassurance

Based on the questionnaire result, most students were more aware of their own life and appreciated what they were having at the moment. They might think that it was better to appreciate and be grateful for everything they were got in their life. The result of the interview showed that all of the students mentioned what good things that they could take to inspire their life after reading some stories on Wattpad. They were also asked to mention the title of the story that might make them inspired.

Personal Development

Based on the questionnaire result, most students had their strong beliefs about their future like to be professional writers. The interview showed that more students had been inspired to be writers because of reading stories on Wattpad. However, there were some who did not expect to be writers in the future because they preferred reading to writing. There were also some students who were not sure whether they wanted to be writers someday.

Positive

Based on the result of the questionnaire, there were many students who would continue using Wattpad since they got a lot of benefits from it. It was supported by the result of the interview that almost all of them clarified a positive attitude towards Wattpad.

Negative

Based on the questionnaire result, many students did not have a tendency to stop using Wattpad because only a few of them who thought that Wattpad was unbeneficial for them. It was supported by the interview result that there was only one student who clarified a negative statement towards Wattpad. She suggested that it was better to stop using Wattpad if we could not manage our time.

Educational Performance

The last indicator, *educational performance* aims to point out what benefits that the students could gain from Wattpad especially in English education. Based on the questionnaire result, many students thought that their English vocabulary had improved because they were used to reading on Wattpad. The interview result conveyed that all of the students mentioned the benefits that they gained from reading

on Wattpad. No one answered that Wattpad did not bring any benefits for them especially in English education.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

As the conclusion, according to the students who have already used Wattpad for reading stories, there were various statements in the internal and the external factors that influenced their perception. Furthermore, Wattpad considered as an entertainment and relaxation medium. They were also able to clarity their strong beliefs about their future and they felt better about themselves because of reading on Wattpad. Mostly, they had similar attitudes towards reading on Wattpad. The result of this research indicated a positive perception of the students in reading on Wattpad especially in enhancing their English vocabularies.

Suggestion

In this research, the writer proposed a recommendation to the English lecturers, students, and other researchers who want to conduct the same research about reading on Wattpad. Lecturers are expected to enrich their choices of taking extensive reading materials that the students prefer. Technology has been massively developed in the globalization era. To be professional teachers and lecturers, it is recommended to adjust ourselves with current technological development.

For the students who learn English, they are expected to encourage extensive reading or reading for pleasure. Reading is an activity which provides many benefits especially in English. One of them is to enhance reading

comprehension and vocabulary. Reading serves many kinds of information as well as enjoyment. By reading a lot, we are not stuck in a narrow scope of circumstance, but we are able to try to expand our wings even further. It is also recommended for the students to use their handphone wisely for beneficial purposes like accessing Wattpad to increase their reading habit.

It is also expected to help other researchers conduct the same research further and more deeply. The weaknesses of this research can be strengthened and make the readers realize how important reading is in human life. Finally, the result of this research can provide more information and add the number of reading references.

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