FOREMOST JOURNAL | **e-ISSN: 2721-642X**
Vol. 7, No. 2, July 2026, Pg.221-229
http://ejournal.unis.ac.id/index.php/Foremost

Effect of Reading Difficulties, Reading Interest and Support System on Reading Comprehension

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Article Info

Article History:

Submission: 17-06-2026

Revised: 09-07-2026

Accepted: 22-07-2026

Published: 31-07-2026

Keywords:

Reading Difficulties;

Reading Interest;

Reading Comprehension;

Support System;

ABSTRACT

Reading is an important skill in English learning that supports students' understanding and academic achievement. However, students may experience difficulties in comprehending English texts, while reading interest and support systems may also vary. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the effect of reading difficulties, reading interest, and support systems on students' reading comprehension at SMPN 3 Pasar Kemis in the 2025/2026 academic year. This quantitative correlational study involved 158 of 259 eighth-grade students selected using the Slovin formula. Data were collected through questionnaires and a reading comprehension test and analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The results showed that reading difficulties (Sig. = 0.365), reading interest (Sig. = 0.640), and support systems (Sig. = 0.584) did not significantly affect reading comprehension individually. Simultaneously, the three variables also showed no significant effect (Sig. = 0.479). The R^2 value of 0.016 indicated that they explained only 1.6% of the variation. These findings suggest that other factors may better explain students' reading comprehension.

To Cite This Article:

Widya, E., Sudarmaji, I., & Swara, M. M. (2026). E, Effect Effect of Reading Difficulties, Reading Interest ,and Support System on Reading Comprehension. *Foremost Journal*, 7(2), 221–229. https://doi.org/10.33592/foremost.v7i2.9226

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is an essential skill in English learning because it enables students to understand information and supports academic achievement (Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Dewani et al., 2024). Reading comprehension involves constructing meaning, understanding information, and interpreting ideas in written texts (Gedik & Akyol, 2022; Khasawneh & Belton, 2025). However, some students still experience difficulties in understanding English texts, including main ideas, supporting details, and vocabulary, which may affect their learning process and academic performance (Tercan & Bayhan, 2025).

Several factors may be associated with students' reading comprehension, including reading difficulties, reading interest, and support systems. Reading difficulties may result from limited vocabulary, phonological awareness, and other learning factors that make it difficult for students to understand

e-ISSN: 2721-642X

texts (Ergül et al., 2023; Coggins, 2024). Reading interest can encourage students to engage more frequently in reading activities and develop their comprehension and vocabulary (Fatima et al., 2022; Monipo et al., 2025). In addition, support from teachers, parents, and peers can provide motivation, guidance, and a supportive environment for students' reading development (Diana, 2023; Klauda & Wigfield, 2012).

Previous studies published in Foremost Journal have also highlighted several issues related to students' reading comprehension. Kurnianingsih and Isnaniah (2022) found that students experienced difficulties in identifying main ideas, understanding text meanings, and developing vocabulary. Similarly, Khotimah et al. (2022) reported that limited vocabulary, low motivation, and lack of student engagement were among the issues affecting students' reading comprehension. In addition, Alviani et al. (2025), in their study at SMK PGRI 31 Legok, identified several factors related to students' reading comprehension, including learner background, teaching approaches, learning environments, and teacher-student relationships. Their study also found that both Think-Pair-Share and Reciprocal Teaching strategies improved students' reading comprehension, with Reciprocal Teaching showing better results. These findings suggest that students' reading comprehension is related to various learning and environmental factors, highlighting the importance of examining different factors associated with reading comprehension.

Although previous studies have examined factors related to reading comprehension, many have focused on one or two factors separately. Therefore, this study integrates reading difficulties, reading interest, and support systems simultaneously to provide a broader understanding of factors related to students' reading comprehension. The study focuses on eighth-grade students at SMPN 3 Pasar Kemis in the 2025/2026 academic year and examines reading comprehension through vocabulary, main ideas, details, and references.

Based on the identified problems and research gap, this study aimed to examine the effects of reading difficulties, reading interest, and support systems on students' reading comprehension, both individually and simultaneously. The novelty of this study lies in its examination of these three factors within a single analytical framework, providing a more comprehensive understanding of their relationships with reading comprehension among eighth-grade students at SMPN 3 Pasar Kemis in the 2025/2026 academic year. By investigating these factors simultaneously, this study offers context-specific empirical evidence that may contribute to understanding students' reading comprehension. Specifically, the study addressed four research questions:

(1) Is there a significant effect of reading difficulties on students' reading comprehension?
(2) Is there a significant effect of reading interest on students' reading comprehension?

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(3) Is there a significant effect of support systems on students' reading comprehension? and
(4) Is there a significant effect of reading difficulties, reading interest, and support systems simultaneously on students' reading comprehension?

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational design using multiple linear regression analysis to examine the effects of reading difficulties, reading interest, and support system on students' reading comprehension. The population consisted of 259 eighth-grade students at SMPN 3 Pasar Kemis in the 2025/2026 academic year. A sample of 158 students was selected using the Slovin formula. Data were collected using questionnaires and a reading comprehension test. The questionnaires were designed to measure students' reading difficulties, reading interest, and support systems using a four-point Likert scale consisting of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The questionnaire initially consisted of 22 statements, of which 20 valid statements were retained for the final analysis. The questionnaire covered three aspects: reading difficulties (6 items), reading interest, and support systems. The items were developed to assess students' perceived difficulties in reading, their interest and engagement in reading activities, and the support they received from their surrounding environment, respectively. Each variable was measured through relevant indicators, namely vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation difficulties; reading preferences, benefits, desire, and habits; and teacher, family, and peer support, respectively. Reading comprehension was measured using a 32-item multiple-choice test based on narrative texts, covering vocabulary, main ideas, supporting details, and references. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 20. Before the main analysis, normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests were conducted to assess the regression assumptions. Multiple linear regression analysis was then performed, with t-tests used to examine the partial effects of each independent variable, the F-test to examine their simultaneous effect, and R^2 to determine the proportion of variance in reading comprehension explained by the independent variables.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 158 eighth-grade students of SMPN 3 Pasar Kemis in the 2025/2026 academic year. This study aimed to examine whether reading difficulties, reading interest, and support systems were significantly associated with students' reading comprehension, both individually and simultaneously. Data were collected through questionnaires measuring reading difficulties, reading interest, and support systems, as well as a reading comprehension test. The descriptive statistics of the research variables are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistic

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading Difficulties	158	16	8	24	2772	17.54	2.761
Reading Interest	158	18	14	32	3685	23.32	3.373
Support System	158	15	9	24	2732	17.29	2.712
Reading Comprehension	158	25	7	32	3281	20.77	5.956
Valid N (listwise)	158						

Table 1 shows the descriptive characteristics of the four research variables. Reading interest had the highest mean score among the three independent variables (M = 23.32), while reading comprehension had the highest standard deviation (SD = 5.956). This indicates that students' reading comprehension scores varied more widely than their responses to the questionnaire variables. Before hypothesis testing, the regression assumptions were examined. The residuals were normally distributed (Sig. = 0.343), and the linearity test indicated linear relationships between each independent variable and reading comprehension, with Deviation from Linearity significance values of 0.583 for reading difficulties, 0.112 for reading interest, and 0.468 for support system. The multicollinearity test also showed that all Tolerance values were above 0.10 and all VIF values were below 10. Furthermore, the Glejser test showed significance values above 0.05 for reading difficulties (0.160), reading interest (0.790), and support system (0.245). Thus, the regression model met the required assumptions for further analysis.

The partial effects of the independent variables were examined using multiple linear regression. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. t-Test Analysis

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	21,718	5,481		3,962	0,000
	Reading Difficulties	0,171	0,188	0,079	0,908	0,365
	Reading Interest	-0,084	0,178	-0,047	-0,469	0,640
	Support System	-0,115	0,210	-0,052	-0,549	0,584

a. Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension

Table 2 shows that reading difficulties had a positive regression coefficient (B = 0.171), while reading interest (B = -0.084) and support system (B = -0.115) had negative coefficients. However, none of the three variables showed a statistically significant partial effect on reading comprehension because all significance values were greater than

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0.05. Reading difficulties obtained a significance value of 0.365, reading interest 0.640, and support system 0.584.

The simultaneous effect of the three independent variables was examined using the F-test, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. F-Test Analysis

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	88,650	3	29,550	0,830	0.479[b]
	Residual	5481,685	154	35,595		
	Total	5570,335	157			

a. Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension

b. Predictors: (Constant), Support System, Reading Difficulties, Reading Interest

Table 3 shows that the regression model was not statistically significant (F = 0.830, Sig. = 0.479). Since the significance value was greater than 0.05, reading difficulties, reading interest, and support system did not have a significant simultaneous effect on students' reading comprehension.

The contribution of the independent variables to reading comprehension was further examined through the coefficient of determination, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination Analysis (R^2)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.126[a]	0,016	-0,003	5,966

a. Predictors: (Constant), Support System, Reading Difficulties, Reading Interest

Table 4 shows an R Square value of 0.016, indicating that reading difficulties, reading interest, and support system together explained 1.6% of the variation in students' reading comprehension. The remaining 98.4% was associated with other factors outside the research model. The relatively low R Square value suggests that the three variables examined in this study provided only a limited explanation of differences in students' reading comprehension.

The overall findings indicate that reading difficulties, reading interest, and support system did not significantly predict students' reading comprehension, either individually or simultaneously. The low R Square value further suggests that reading comprehension is influenced by various factors beyond those examined in this study. This finding is consistent

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with Snow and Chair (2002), who describe reading comprehension as a complex process involving interactions among the reader, the text, and the reading activity. Cognitive processes such as connecting information, using prior knowledge, reasoning, and applying reading strategies may therefore contribute to comprehension beyond the three variables examined in this research.

Regarding reading difficulties, the results showed no significant effect on reading comprehension (Sig. = 0.365). This finding differs from Hermida (2025) and Rasheed et al. (2011), who associated difficulties such as limited vocabulary and spelling with problems in reading comprehension. It also differs from Ramadhianti and Somba (2023), who reported a negative relationship between reading-related difficulties and English learning outcomes. However, the present finding is consistent with James et al. (2023), who explained that reading difficulties do not necessarily result in poor comprehension because students may use compensatory strategies when dealing with reading challenges. Students may rely on context, prior knowledge, or assistance from teachers to understand texts despite experiencing difficulties with certain aspects of reading. These strategies may help explain why reading difficulties were not a significant predictor of reading comprehension in the present study.

Reading interest also did not significantly affect reading comprehension (Sig. = 0.640). This finding differs from studies reporting a relationship between reading interest or reading ability and comprehension, including Fatima et al (2022). However, it is consistent with Dewani et al. (2024), who found that reading-related factors do not always have a significant effect on students' literacy outcomes. One possible explanation is that students' reported interest in reading does not necessarily reflect the quality or type of reading they engage in. Although interest may encourage students to read, comprehension of academic texts also requires vocabulary knowledge, linguistic competence, inference skills, and effective reading strategies. Therefore, reading interest alone may not be sufficient to produce higher reading comprehension performance.

The support system variable also showed no significant effect on reading comprehension (Sig. = 0.584). This finding differs from Mocsin (2025), Zainal (2025), and Labareno (2025), who emphasized the importance of support from parents, teachers, and the school environment in students' reading development. However, the finding can be considered in relation to Bacalso et al. (2025), who explained that support from teachers, parents, and others may provide motivation, guidance, attention, and learning resources. Such support may contribute to students' motivation and learning environment without directly determining the cognitive processes involved in comprehending a text. Reading comprehension still requires students to process information, connect ideas, use prior knowledge, and apply appropriate reading strategies independently.

The differences between the present findings and several previous studies may be related to differences in

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participants, educational settings, instruments, and learning contexts. The non-significant results do not necessarily indicate that reading difficulties, reading interest, and support systems are irrelevant to reading comprehension. Rather, within the context and sample of this study, these variables did not statistically explain substantial variation in students' reading comprehension. The R Square value of 1.6% suggests that other factors may have a greater role in explaining students' performance, including vocabulary knowledge, linguistic competence, prior knowledge, inference ability, and cognitive reading strategies. Therefore, the findings reinforce the view that reading comprehension is a multidimensional skill that cannot be adequately explained by a limited number of factor.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, reading difficulties, reading interest, and support system did not significantly affect students' reading comprehension, either individually or simultaneously. Reading difficulties (Sig. = 0.365), reading interest (Sig. = 0.640), and support system (Sig. = 0.584) showed no significant part ial effects on reading comprehension. Similarly, the simultaneous test showed no significant effect of the three variables on students' reading comprehension (Sig. = 0.479). The coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.016) further indicated that these variables explained only 1.6% of the variation in students' reading comprehension, while the remaining 98.4% was associated with other factors outside the research model.

These findings indicate that reading comprehension is a complex skill influenced by various factors beyond reading difficulties, reading interest, and support systems. Other factors, such as vocabulary knowledge, prior knowledge, reading strategies, and learning experiences, may also play a role. Therefore, future studies are recommended to explore these factors using larger and more diverse samples to gain a broader understanding of students' reading comprehension.

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