

Reading Literacy Level of Students at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar: Gender Study

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ABSTRACT:-The research highlights male students' reading literacy levels, depicts female students' reading literacy levels, and describes male and female differences in reading literacy at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar. The research method adopted was quantitative and ex posts facto. The research population consisted of 395 pupils from class VIII, and the research sample was four classes with 103 pupils chosen using a basic random sampling procedure. Data were acquired using an instrument in the multiple-choice question in the google form. The data found that male literacy levels at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar were low. Whilst female literacy levels at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar were adequate and moderate. Reading literacy levels differed between males and females at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar. It signified that there was a gender disparity in this school.

Keywords: gender; reading; reading ability; reading literacy

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are language empathy skills. These four abilities are inextricably linked and cannot be separated. Reading skills, meanwhile, play a critical role in mastering the proper and correct use of human language(see Kiew & Shah, 2020). Reading is the ability to comprehend an information contained in a written work(see, Delgadova, 2015; Nunan et al., 2003; Loh et al., 2020;Sultan et al., 2020).(Clark & De Zoysa, 2011; Loh et al., 2020; Sultan et al., 2020)identified a high connection between pleasure and achievement, that students who read more are skilled readers. Each person believes that they will be able to enjoy and gain an idea from reading and study material that has been widely read when completing reading activities pleurably. (Tengku et al., 2018)said that the aim of the reading activity was done for enjoyment, information, and general comprehension.Reading activities are very directly tied and an essential element in developing a person's cognitive processing(see also Britt et al., 2012; Kiew & Shah, 2020) or activity (Meylana, 2019). However, many people still believe that reading is a simple task, even though reading needs profound thinking and expertise to assess the contents of what is read thoroughly. Reading is asophisticated activity that necessitates the application of a range of abilities and knowledge(Kiew & Shah, 2020)about language and print(see also Britt et al., 2012; Cambridge Assessment, 2013; Catts et al., 2006;Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Loh et al., 2020; Pang, 2008). Then, (Luis & Moncayo, 2015)said that reading understanding is a challenging human learning activity. As a result, reading activities necessitate a high concentration level for a person to comprehend every word, from phrase to paragraph.

Seeing the numerous advantages of reading should encourage everyone, particularly students, to improve their reading frequency. However, this does not appear to be the case for Indonesian students who have been found to have poor reading skills(see also Sultan et al., 2020; Suryaman, 2015). According to PISA data(Summaries, 2019), Indonesian students received 396 in 2013.In 2016, the test was repeated, and Indonesian students scored 397 (OECD, 2016), placing them 65th out of 68 countries. Indonesian students had a reading literacy score of 371 in 2019(Summaries, 2019). The score dropped 26 points from the previous year, and the country was rated 72 out of 77. According to these figures, the reading literacy level of Indonesian schoolchildren has deteriorated from year to year.

Students' ability to read cannot be separated from gender disparities inability. Gender is the distinction between men's and women's qualities and talents, particularly in reading.Several claims have emerged from gender conversations about reading, claiming that girls have more incredible language acquisition skills than boys(Pretorius & Machet, 2004). (Logan & Johnston, 2009; Oda & Abdul-Kadhim, 2017; Sultan et al., 2020)argued that females had higher reading skills, read more regularly, and were more enthusiastic about reading than males. In(Logan & Johnston, 2009)study found gender inequality in the association between

reading skills, reading varieties, and viewpoints and attitudes toward assignments and school. The same thing was said by (Sultan et al., 2020) that gender had been recognized as a distinguishing element in reading aptitude, motivation, reading choice, strategy, and material predictor. On average, girls have a fundamental reading ability, read more regularly, and are more motivated to read and attend school. Although girls' attitudes have improved over time, they have become more stable. Female pupils are also more interested in reading than male pupils (McLaughlin et al., 2014). In 48 of the 50 nations studied in the 2016 PIRLS survey, female students outperform boys in academic success, while boys do not outperform girls. Since 2001, females have outperformed boys in reading achievement, and the gap has not closed.

Further, gender is a social construct that refers to how society treats and constructs people's traits. (Britt et al., 2012; Catts, 2018) argued that diverse assessments of children's skills depending on gender on reading comprehension accomplishment result in different impacts on reading comprehension achievement in the form of treatment. It is based on the fact that data in the literature show that boys have a lower proclivity for reading than girls (see also Bortolussi et al., 2010; Clark & Douglas, 2011; Loh et al., 2020; Performance & Volume, 2014; Sultan et al., 2020).

STATE OF THE ARTS

Literacy skills have been extensively researched. However, research on literacy skills differences between men and women is still limited. The research that has been conducted is "Their connection The Gender Effect on Reading Comprehension at the College Level" by (Oda & Abdul-Kadhim, 2017). Gender and reading ability achievement in the collegiate extent is investigated in this study. The study results were compared between two gender groups (male and female) at each of the four reading comprehension levels to discover if there was a link between gender and reading comprehension. They further said that at the "critical level," women significantly surpassed men in reading. In the study "Gender and Reading" by (Bortolussi et al., 2010), the protagonist's gender impacted the reader's judgment of book quotations. According to existing research on gender roles in reading, there should be a gender match effect, with women preferring books with female protagonists. (Ritonga & Sutapa, 2020) carried out another study about literacy and gender in early childhood programs. The findings revealed that gender roles influence children's choices of everyday activities and kindergarten play areas. Boys select a play area with little girl participation, but the location includes resources that promote various literacy activities. It explains why boys have a lower literacy rate than girls.

The previous studies' results indicate a skills gap between male and female students at the college level and early childhood schools. It is what makes the difference between previous research and the current one. The current research is entitled "Reading Literacy Level of Students at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar: Gender Studies". The problems are how is the reading literacy level of male students at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar? How is the reading literacy level of female students at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar? What is the difference between the reading literacy levels of male and female students at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar? This study aims to represent the reading literacy level of male and female students and the differences in reading literacy between male and female students at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK LITERACY

Literacy, or the reading and writing skill, can be defined differently. These definitions are continually changing, 'literacy' can apply to reading alone, reading and writing, speaking, and listening (Cambridge Assessment, 2013). The low capacity to understand reading is causing students' lack of interest and willingness to read. A person's high level of interest and reading abilities demonstrate that they are literate. Human literacy results from a person's ability to read with interest and have high reading comprehension skills (Wahyuni, 2015a). Students' learning processes are hampering their inability to read. The ability of Indonesian pupils to see the benefits of reading skills is not in line with their abilities. International survey institutions have conducted tests that show that Indonesian schoolchildren have poor reading skills. The 2018 PISA survey backs it up (Harsiati, 2018), which found that Indonesian students scored 371 out of 550 points, putting them 72nd out of 77 countries. Indonesia ranks below countries like China, Singapore, and a few other countries that almost reached the top score.

The PISA categorizes literacy into three levels, i.e., reading, math, and scientific literacy. Reading literacy, in particular, was indicated by PISA 2018 (OECD, 2019) as the ability to comprehend, utilize, analyze, and represent speech to attain someone's objectives, expand someone's understanding and skills, and participate in the community. Evaluating involves determining the text's accuracy, examining the author's assertions, and drawing conclusions from the author's viewpoint. The government and authorities should be concerned about this in the future to enhance reading literacy (Afriyanti et al., 2018). Scientific literacy is a person's skill to understand, discuss, and master scientific concepts in everyday life as a problem solver.

READING

Reading is a form of communication where the writer and the reader exchange thoughts or feelings. A person's reading skills are essential if he wishes to communicate effectively. What is meant by a good reading series is the ability to receive a good reading structure, the ability to determine diction in reading, and the ability to comprehend every word in a reading so that one can obtain an idea from the writing that is read (Sánchez et al., 2017). One of the most fundamental reading abilities is fluency. Reading fluency in reading achievement cannot be overstated (Kocaarslan, 2017). People who strongly desire to read will find it fluent and straightforward to communicate. One of the advantages of reading exercises is that they provide a significant level of vocabulary mastery, which helps in communication. It will be difficult to communicate because of a lack of language expertise, unlike those with a low reading desire.

Reading skills are the fundamental abilities everyone must possess to obtain information, impacting how often people read. Someone with a high reading intensity has a more excellent command of vocabulary, making the learning process much more manageable. Reading allows a person to learn new things and expand their knowledge and vocabulary, all of which help communication work smoothly. However, if one's reading abilities are poor, it will impact one's quality of life, which will, in turn, influence the next life (Wahyuni, 2015a). Reading exercises do not have to be limited to reading the complete text. However, there is another objective to be met. The point is that to learn new things from what they read, readers must understand every word. This reading is exceptionally well-done and provides significant value. People who are lazy or do not read often do not appreciate the joy of reading a book from beginning to end. People who enjoy reading have a solid desire to purchase books or occasionally look at their electronic devices.

(Harsiati, 2018) said that individuals' reading abilities had linked to their ability to think, reason, and be creative to grow and progress in life. Individuals or pupils who read play a vital part in their life. Students learn essential reading and comprehension skills that impact their living through reading activities. Reading is the most straightforward activity since it can be done anytime and anywhere. It only requires a reading that can get from books, newspapers, and other electronic devices. As a result, reading is simple to accomplish and has numerous advantages, for instance, providing a wealth of information and demonstrating a creative nature in someone who enjoys reading. Reading is the main factor in developing one's creativity. Reading delivers information to the reader that will be valuable if it is done effectively and the reader understands each reading. Reading provides readers with new knowledge, a more extensive linguistic vocabulary that facilitates communication, and the ability to think creatively, all of which can be applied in the future (Pujiono, 2012).

READING LITERACY

Reading literacy denotes a person's competence to comprehend textual reading to achieve the intended result and then apply it to others (Harsiati, 2018). Furthermore, reading literacy is a talent that every student must have from an early age to form knowledge that will be used in schools to guide the learning of other sciences. Literacy in reading means the capability to understand and apply written words in a way that society or individuals require (Online, 2017). In addition, reading literacy indicates a person's proficiency in comprehending, applying, and reflecting on written text to attain specific goals (Kendeou et al., 2014; Kucan & Beck, 1997). The power to read literacy is linked to a person's ability to respond to all types of writing clearly and logically. Reading literacy refers to a person's or a student's understanding of words and integrating their meaning into the text (see also Perfetti & Adlof, 2012; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014; Taylor et al., 2007). In other words, students will understand the reading contents more quickly if they understand words well. On the other hand, they will struggle to comprehend the reading content if they lack words and do not forget the terminology meaning (Hall, 2012).

Reading literacy learning aims to increase pupils' enthusiasm for reading. Based on these goals, growing reading literacy is a process that takes time and involves careful planning and programs for children's reading ability to improve. Reading makes sense of what we have read, applying what we have learned in the classroom to real-life circumstances, and connecting what we have read with what we have experienced (Hasanah & Warjana, 2019). Literacy culture is more than just a person's pleasure or fondness for reading; it is also an endeavour to meet the time needs. Literacy culture is critical in forming an intelligent society, as it will produce superior, creative, and excellent youngsters for the country. A person can prepare for today's challenges and future challenges by participating in literacy activities. Because literacy activities alter people's thinking when reading current events and opportunities, they will be more cautious in future decisions (Robi & Abidin, 2020).

READING LITERACY LEVEL IN INDONESIA

Indonesian schoolchildren have the lowest literacy capacity of any state in the world. It demonstrates that Indonesian pupils' reading abilities are still far behind other countries (Suryaman, 2015). Indonesia is on the list bottom, well below China and Singapore, both at the top. Compared to pupils their age in other nations,

Indonesian students' literacy skills are still lacking. Based on the PISA study, Indonesian pupils rate 39th of 42 countries with an average score of 371. Indonesian students, with a score of 371, are at level 2 of reading ability, according to PISA 2018 data (OECD, 2019). It places Indonesian pupils ahead of Albania (349), Peru (327), and the rest of the world. Neighbouring nations such as Thailand still outperform Indonesian kids in reading literacy. PIRLS conducted reading assessments for fourth-grade elementary school students worldwide (Lafontaine et al., 2019), taking a test that followed participants from 45 countries, including reading and writing hobbies. Indonesian students ranked 41st in PIRLS 2011 (Warsihna, 2016). On the other hand, students in Indonesia tend to overlook the level of literacy in reading. It implies they disregard the maximum degree of reading literacy, roughly 9%.

FACTORS INFLUENCE READING LITERACY

Reading literacy is influenced by five elements, i.e., school, family, gender, personal, and economic (see also Riitsalu & Pöder, 2016). School factor. The pupils' competence to read and write is crucial at the primary school level. They cannot conduct the learning process successfully if they cannot read and write. Students who can write well will find it easier to learn to read in the long run. If these two abilities have not been developing since elementary school, it will impact pupils' learning in the future. As a result of Indonesia's low reading literacy, the government has finally established a program implemented in schools. In August 2015, the Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia, Anies Baswedan, formally started the initiative. It has been building a Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS) program, which tries to familiarize and urge children to read and write more to build good character and establish a literacy culture. GLS is a program that teaches learners to read, listen, write, and discuss intelligently and purposefully. In other words, GLS can be a role model in managing the school as a literacy ecosystem. This campaign is a government-backed initiative to improve student literacy in all schools. Students' literacy should improve due to this curriculum.

Family factor. Families have a critical role in supporting and encouraging children to participate in educational activities. Their parents supply the atmosphere in which children receive their initial education. The ability of parents to let their children watch more television than study has resulted in children who no longer enjoy studying and instead prefer to watch television. In addition, children's willingness to learn reading wanes, causing their literacy skills to suffer. During the preschool period, parents play a critical role in guiding children. Before their children reach school age, parents should begin teaching them letters and the alphabet. It makes it easier for kids to pick up on their parents' reading and writing techniques. Children must master reading and writing abilities at an early grade level; this mastery improves children's achievement and learning outcomes. Children with high reading and understanding of a lesson or a question were more quickly than children with poor reading skills (Saputri et al., 2017).

Gender factor. Gender disparities impact kids' reading literacy achievement (Whitaker, 2015). Compared to male students, female students are substantially better at reading literacy (Bazen et al., 2020; Nergård-Nilssen & Eklund, 2018). In contrast to Peruvian and Israeli pupils, who have a higher reading literacy rate than females, female students in other nations have a strong interest in reading. Personal factor. The development of linguistic skills in children begins at an early age (see also Kern & Friedman, 2009; Łockiewicz et al., 2018). Children's reading levels might be influenced by their local environment. Children who grow up in homes that value reading and learning can develop into persons similar to their surroundings. Still, the opposite is true if the child grows up in a family or setting that does not value reading or learning. This component causes some youngsters to become sedentary due to childhood habits and the effect on their environment.

Economic factor. Parents' finances are essential in increasing their children's interest in reading (see also Carnevale et al., 2006). The scenario of parents with financial resources is increasingly advantageous because all the needs of their children can be met (see also Kurzrok et al., 2021; Poppas et al., 2008). However, in contrast to parents with a poor economy, providing adequate learning tools will be difficult. The economy plays a vital role in helping children improve their reading skills, supported by adequate facilities in the learning process. Every child who wants to attend school must be financially supporting their family. The social and economic position is a barometer of their children's educational performance (Basten & Verropoulou, 2015). If the economy is strong enough, all the demands and needs of the school will be met (Falch et al., 2007). Children's learning achievement will increase and develop if these needs are met (Wahyuni, 2015b).

GENDER AND LITERACY

Gender is one of the elements that influences reading literacy (Oda & Abdul-Kadhim, 2017; Taha & Reishaan, 2008). The gender gap is a concept that describes the disparity in achievement between men and women. Gender differences in many learning elements, such as interests, attitudes, needs, beliefs, and motives, can dominate learning in general (Oda & Abdul-Kadhim, 2017). Language and gender have created significant difficulty in learning languages (Huertas-Abril, 2021; Khreisat & Mugableh, 2021; Koch et al., 2022; Mahmud & Nur, 2018). Reading abilities are a highlight in language and gender (Caccia et al., 2019). In reading

comprehension, gender has a role in differing performances and achievements (Anantasa & Kemuning, 2016). Based on this remark, it claims that males and females have different reading abilities.

In addition, feminist-style works have influenced gender conversations and reading. According to Miles (1995: 50 in Anantasa & Kemuning, 2016), readers are subject to various reasoning forces influencing their reading. Furthermore, the language directly or indirectly confronts the reader and supports specific interpretations to make the text meaningful; it also plainly affects how individuals read. Reading comprehension is influenced by gender. Other elements influencing text comprehension include the text's genre, the topic's familiarity, and the reader's gender. There are distinctions between boys and girls in reading (Lackoff, 1975 in Anantasa & Kemuning, 2016). The reading centre locates in the brain's left hemisphere (Hemisphere). The status of the left brain of women is more developed than the brain of men, so it influences differences in reading skills between men and women. Women are better at reading than men (Combet & Oesch, 2021).

Reading ability was related to boys' and girls' reading habits and competent perceptions (see Inoue et al., 2018; Sainio et al., 2019). However, only boys' reading aptitude was linked to their perspectives on reading and education, toward reading and school. It means that boys in school earn lower grades in reading literacy than girls. Gender disparities (see also Sainio et al., 2019), in particular, were the primary discovered in the interactions between parts as opposed to within the components themselves (see also Caccia et al., 2019; Catts, 2018; Kocaarslan, 2017; Logan & Johnston, 2009; Mahmud & Nur, 2018; Oda & Abdul-Kadhim, 2017; Sultan et al., 2020). Previous research has concentrated on the gender differences observed in individual pieces rather than these linkages. Conclusions are drawn about how these findings apply in the classroom.

II. METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

The researcher use a quantitative study that employs the ex post facto method. The study took place at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar, located at Jalan Batua Raya, Manggala District, Makassar City, Indonesia. The research lasted three months, from May to June and July 2021. All 395 pupils from SMP Negeri 8 Makassar participated, particularly those in class VIII. Simple random sampling is the sampling method used. In this case, randomization was applied to a class of students rather than individual students to determine the class that would serve as the study's sample. Meanwhile, the sampling procedure was carried out using essential random sampling by drawing lots; eleven classes were placed in a lottery box, and four were picked. The total number of pupils in the four courses studied was 143.

INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

The instrument employed in this study was a test consisting of 23 multiple-choice questions. The correct answer receives a score of 5, while the incorrect response receives a 0. This test compares male and female pupils in reading literacy at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar. The reading indicators used by PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) to measure students' reading literacy skills in numerous countries, including Indonesia, are modified for the multiple-choice test. The PISA study evaluates three critical reading skills for comprehending a discourse, i.e., the ability to seek and find information; the ability to develop meaning from the information found and make inferences using one or more pieces of information; and the capacity to react on and interpret the discourse data based on experience, knowledge, and development of the ideas found. After being tested using multiple-choice questions, validity and reliability tests were used to validate the data. The validity test determined how well the research instrument achieved the anticipated results (Prof. Dr Sugiyono, 2011; Sugiyono, 2008). The study results are legitimate if there are parallels between the data obtained and the actual data. A reading literacy instrument with Pearson Correlation Value provides the validity test (R Count). While to assess the reliability test of students, the researchers used Cronbach's Alpha. The researchers utilized the SPSS 26 program to conduct validity and reliability tests on the instrument to assess its quality.

Furthermore, the research procedures used are observation, developing reading test instruments, collecting data, analyzing results, making conclusions, and closing the research series. Data collection techniques by giving instrument tests to students are carried out online via a google form. The data gathering strategies employed in this study are (1) providing information regarding the test's implementation, how to fill in the blanks, and how long it takes to answer the questions; (2) requiring students to read multiple-choice questions; (3) allowing students time to answer questions from the questions provided by the researcher.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data were examined utilizing descriptive and inferential statistics. The minimum, maximum, mean, median, and sum were calculated using descriptive statistical analysis, whereas normality, homogeneity, and hypotheses were tested using inferential statistical analysis. The value of sig. 0.05 is used to make hypothesis testing judgments. If sig. 0.05 is less than 0.05, H₀ is rejected, or there is a gender disparity in pupils' reading

levels at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar. If the value of sig. > 0.05; however, H₀ is accepted, indicating that there is no gender disparity in literacy levels of pupils at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar.

III. FINDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF MALE STUDENTS' LITERACY LEVEL

Fifty-two male students responded to data literacy level reading. The total was represented in four distinct courses. After taking an online test, the data was then collected. Male students were separated into five categories to determine their reading literacy levels: very high, high, moderate, low, and very low. The test results classified male pupils into various kinds, each with its outcomes. The table below finds information on male students' literacy levels.

TABLE 1: Reading literacy categories of male students based on PAP TypeII

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rating Category
68-85	5	10	Very high
56-<67	7	14	High
47-<55	8	15	Adequate
39-<46	11	21	Low
0-<38	21	40	Very low
Total	52	100	

Table 1 shows that out of 52 male students, five students (10%) have incredibly high literacy levels, seven students (14%) have a very high literacy level, eight students (15%) have an adequate reading literacy level, eleven students (21%) have a low reading literacy level, and twenty-one students (40%) have a deficient reading literacy level. As a result, most male students have a low reading literacy level.

MALE STUDENTS' READING LITERACY LEVEL IN THE ABILITY ASPECT TO SEEK AND FIND INFORMATION

A multiple-choice exam with six questions and fifty-two male students as responders yielded information on the reading literacy level of male students in their capacity to seek and find information. The highest rating was 30.00, and the lowest rating was 0. Based on data from the capacity to aim and gain knowledge, the highest rating was 30.00, and the lowest was 0. The analysis yielded a mean of 16.4423, a median of 15.00, a mode of 15.00, and a standard deviation of 7.88.

TABLE 2. Categories of male students' reading literacy levels from the ability aspect to find information based on PAP Type II

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rating Category
24-30	14	27	Very high
19-<23	9	17	High
16-<18	0	0	Adequate
13-<15	12	23	Low
0-<12	17	33	Very low
Total	52	100	

Table 2 depicts the literacy level of male students in the element of the ability to seek and obtain information with six items, with 14 students (27%) in the very high category and nine students (17%) in the high class. Surprisingly, none of the students qualified as sufficient. Twelve students (23 %) were in the low group, while 17 students (33 %) were in the deficient category.

MALE STUDENTS' READING LITERACY LEVEL FROM THE ABILITY TO DEVELOP MEANING AND DRAW INFERENCES FROM DATA

Fifty-two male students performed data from a nine-item multiple-choice exam on their literacy levels to draw meanings from material found and make inferences using one or more pieces of information. The most fantastic score was 40.00, and the lowest score was 0. Based on data from the ability to create meaning, the highest score

was 40.00, and the lowest was 0. The analysis yielded a mean of 21.3462, a median of 22.50, a mode of 25.00, and a standard deviation of 10.76101.

TABLE 3. Categories of male students' reading literacy levels from the ability aspect to develop meaning based on PAP Type II

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rating Category
36-45	3	6	Very high
29-<35	13	25	High
25-<28	10	19	Adequate
20-<24	7	13	Low
0-<19	19	37	Very low
Total	52	100	

According to Table 3, on the feature of the ability to generate meaning and make conclusions from information gathered from nine items, as many as three students (6%) respondents were in the very high group. Thirteen students (25%) fell into the high category. The moderate category had been assigned to ten pupils (19%). Seven students (13%) were in a low category, and nineteen (37%) were in the deficient category.

MALE STUDENTS' READING LITERACY LEVEL FROM THE ABILITY ASPECT TO REFLECT AND EVALUATE DISCOURSE CONTENT

A multiple-choice exam with fifty-two (52) male students yielded data on the degree of reading literacy of male students in terms of their ability to reflect and evaluate the substance of the discourse with experience, knowledge, and growth of the concepts discovered. Based on data from the ability aspect to consider and assess the discourse content, the highest rating was 10.00, and the lowest was 0. The analysis results show a mean of 4.1346, a median of 5.00, a mode of 5.00, and a standard deviation of 3,531.

TABLE 4. Categories of male students' reading literacy levels from the ability aspect to reflect and evaluate discourse content based on PAP Type II

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rating Category
8.1-10	9	17	Very high
6.6-<8	0	0	High
5.6-<6.5	0	0	Adequate
4.6-<5.5	25	48	Low
0-<3	18	35	Very low
Total	52	100	

According to Table 4, on the ability element to reflect and analyze the content of the conversation with a total of two items, nine pupils (17%) of respondents fall into the very high category. There are no pupils in the high and moderate categories. There were as many as 25 pupils (48%) in the low group and 18 students (35%) in the deficient category.

DESCRIPTION OF FEMALE STUDENTS' LITERACY LEVEL

The data findings on female students' reading literacy levels with a sample size of 51 students were mixed. The data test results came from 51 female students tested; the lowest score was 20.00, while the highest was 75.00. The table below finds information on female students' reading levels.

TABLE 5. Category of reading literacy level of female students of SMPNegeri 8 Makassar based on PAP Type II

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rating Category
68-85	9	18	Very high
56-<67	11	21	High
47-<55	6	12	Adequate
39-<46	18	35	Low
0-<38	7	14	Very low
Total	51	100	

Table 5 shows that of 51 female students, nine or 18% of respondents have very high literacy levels. Eleven students (21%) have a high literacy level, and six (12%) have an adequate reading literacy level. Eighteen students (35%) have a low reading literacy level, and seven (14%) respondents have a deficient reading literacy level. Thus, it can be concluded that most female pupils have a low level of reading literacy.

FEMALE STUDENTS' READING LITERACY LEVEL IN THE ABILITY TO SEEK AND FIND INFORMATION

A multiple-choice exam with a total of 51 female students as responses yielded information on the reading literacy level of female pupils in their capacity to seek and find information. The most outstanding score was 30.00, and the lowest score was 5.00. Based on data from the ability to search and find knowledge, the mean was 19.4118, the median was 20.00, the mode was 15.00, and the standard deviation was 6.68.

TABLE 6. Category of reading literacy level of female students from the ability aspect to seek and find information based on PAP Type II

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rating Category
24-30	5	10	Very high
19-<23	7	14	High
16-<18	8	15	Adequate
13-<15	11	21	Low
0-<12	21	40	Very low
Total	51	100	

Table 6 depicts female students' ability to seek and find knowledge, with six categories yielding results. As many as five students, or 10% of responses, fall into the highest high category—seven students (14 %) in the high class. Eight students (15%) are in the excellent category. Eleven students (21 %) of respondents were in a low category, and 21 students (40%) of respondents were in the very low category.

FEMALE STUDENTS' READING LITERACY LEVELS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ABILITY ASPECT TO DEVELOP MEANING AND DRAW INFERENCES FROM INFORMATION

A multiple-choice exam with a total of fifty-one (51) female students as responses yielded data on the literacy level of female students in terms of their capacity to construct meaning from the information collected and make inferences using one or more facts. The maximum score was 45.00, and the lowest was 10.00, based on data from the capacity to generate meaning from the information gathered and make inferences using one or more facts. The average was 27.1569, the median was 22.00, the mode was 25.00, and the standard deviation was 7.63249.

TABLE 7: Female students' reading literacy categories in the ability aspect of developing and making meaningful inferences from information based on PAP Type II

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rating Category
36-45	5	10	Very high
29-<35	18	35	High
25-<28	15	29	Adequate
20-<24	9	18	Low
0-<19	4	8	Very low
Total	51	100	

Table 7 shows that female students in the ability aspect to develop and make meaningful inferences obtained from information with nine items get the same results as five students (10%) were in the very high category. Eleven students (35%) of respondents were in the high category. Fifteen pupils (29%) were in anadequate category. While nine pupils (18%) of respondents were in a low category, four pupils (8%) of respondents were in the lowest category.

FEMALE STUDENTS' READING LITERACY LEVEL IN THE ABILITY ASPECT TO REFLECT AND EVALUATE DISCOURSE CONTENT

A multiple-choice test with 51 female students as respondents yielded data on the degree of reading literacy of female students in terms of their ability to reflect and evaluate the contents of the discourse with experience, knowledge, and development of the concepts found. The most excellent score is 10.00, and the lowest score is 0. The highest score is based on data from the ability aspect to reflect and analyze the substance of the conversation with experience, knowledge, and development of the ideas found, and the lowest score is 0. The average was 4.9020, the median was 5.0000, the mode was 5.00, and the standard deviation was 3.23886.

TABLE 8. Category of female students' reading literacy level from the ability aspect to reflect and evaluate discourse content based on PAP Type II

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rating Category
8.1-10	10	20	Very high
6.6-<8	0	0	High
5.6-<6.5	0	0	Adequate
4.6-<5.5	30	59	Low
0-<3	11	21	Very low
Total	51	100	

Table 8 depicts female pupils' competence in focusing and analyzing a discourse content, with several questions and two items yielding responses from as many as ten students, or 20% of respondents, falling into the very high category. There are no pupils in the high and moderate categories who get the position. However, thirty students (59%) are in the law category, and eleven students (21%) are in the deficient category in the very low category.

IV. DISCUSSION

MALE STUDENTS' READING LITERACY LEVEL

The data analysis results indicate that the reading literacy levels of male pupils are low. The descriptive test results using the SPSS 26 program show that the mean and median values are 39-46. It means that male students at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar have low literacy. Twenty-one of the 52 students asked to participate got shallow scores. It also impacted male students who were only in the low-scoring range. This finding correlates with the lower literacy rate of male students(see also Caccia et al., 2019; Catts et al., 2006; Hall, 2012, 2012; Kormos et al., 2019; OECD, 2016).Reading literacy is strongly influenced by a lack of desire and motivation(Loh et al., 2020). Reading literacy shows a person's reading and writing ability at a basic level. Many people believe that reading is simple, but it does not seem like it is.

Otherwise, many others have difficulties deciphering every word in a reading they are doing(Elleman & Oslund, 2019). Some people can read and write, but they cannot gain literacy. It is the reason why so many people struggle with reading literacy. Reading literacy is essential for developing a person's

interest in reading and writing. A strong reading literacy culture will be able to provide a broad understanding of the outside world. According to the research findings, male students' reading literacy levels are poor since their motivation to read is similarly low. Males still believe that women are good at reading. This finding is supported by (Ritonga & Sutapa, 2020) that boys frequently regard reading as a gendered activity and develop perceptions that reading is a "feminist" activity. Due to the perception, boys have low reading literacy. When the reading literacy skill of male students is only at a low level, they are classified as level 1 on the PISA test. At this level, male students can only find one or more openly stated pieces of information, recognize the author's topic or aim, and create simple correlations between information in a text that only requires a single criterion and contains little or contradictory information in the text.

The findings revealed that male students' reading proficiency levels differed in seeking and finding information. It resulted in several categories in the test given to students, with six items linked to locating information in the reading. The fact that male pupils' scores are in the deficient group. It was evident in the number of male students who were asked questions that 17 of them received poor grades. The rest are in the upper level of their respective categories. In this case, students must be able to locate one or more information mentioned openly during the reading process. This hope, however, was not realized well.

Furthermore, the reading literacy level of male students in terms of their capacity to generate meaning and draw inferences from data reveals that this element provides the most significant number of students in the very low-grade categories, with as many as 19 pupils. It suggests that the reading process does not operate in this aspect, where pupils must combine several portions of the text to identify important ideas, understand relationships, or translate the meaning of words or phrases. It means that male pupils' literacy levels in developing areas are inferior. In terms of the component of reflecting and evaluating abilities, the same thing happened to male students' reading literacy levels. This aspect of the reading process requires the ability to assess or develop hypotheses based on particular knowledge critically. However, data analysis revealed that male students' scores in reflecting and evaluating were in the low range. The group with the most pupils was in the lowest category, with as many as 25 students. Then 18 kids scored in the very low range. Only nine pupils are in the top 10% of their class. It also demonstrates that student reading literacy in reflecting and assessing is at an all-time low. The study findings, in general, are not dissimilar to the findings of previous researchers who discovered that reading literacy in boys was lower than in girls (Clark & Douglas, 2011; Clark & Rumbold, 2006; Kern & Friedman, 2009; Logan & Johnston, 2009) in all dimensions.

FEMALE STUDENTS' READING LITERACY

The data analysis results show that female pupil reading literacy is in the excellent or moderate category. It is based on information evaluated by the SPSS 26 program using a descriptive test that indicates that the mean and median values are 47-55. It means that female reading literacy, in this case, is considered good (Harsiati, 2018). Women have a strong desire to read throughout their lives. This finding aligns with arguments that girls enjoy reading more (Clark & De Zoysa, 2011; Clark & Rumbold, 2006). Due to this desire, women at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar have a higher literacy level. However, female students' reading literacy levels regarding their capacity to seek and find information in reading remain low. It can be seen when students are given a test with six questions about discovering information in the reading. Students should be able to locate one or more information mentioned plainly at this point. It, however, did not occur.

On the other hand, female pupils cannot employ optimal reading skills. Most pupils are in the deficient group, with as many as 21 students demonstrating it. The poor group has as few as 11 students, while the excellent category has eight students. There are seven students in the high category and only five in the very high level. It suggests that female students' reading literacy level in seeking and obtaining information is good.

In addition, female students have a high reading literacy level in their capacity to generate meaning and make inferences from data. It can be seen in the responses to the questions provided as many as nine items that the maximum number of students occupying the high category position is 18; the very high category has five students, and the excellent category has 15 students. There are nine kids in the low group and just four students in the deficient category. It suggests that female students' reading literacy level in developing meaning is relatively high.

Meanwhile, the ability to reflect and assess, one of the talents tested by looking at the degree of students' reading literacy, is viewed from the perspective of female students' reading literacy. This facet involves a more challenging reading procedure than the previous two. The ability to critically assess or generate hypotheses based on specific knowledge is part of the reading process. Due to the data analysis, female students' scores differed from those of male students. Most students are in the lowest group, with as many as 30 students; there are 11 students in the deficient group. The very high category includes up to ten students. This category has none of the pupils in the high and sufficient category. The study findings show that female students' literacy levels in reflecting and evaluating are still poor or below average. These arguments relate to the results of poor

comprehenders of female students' literacy (Catts et al., 2006; Kormos et al., 2019; Pretorius & Machet, 2004; Summaries, 2019).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS IN READING LITERACY LEVELS

Data analysis and hypothesis testing findings on male and female pupils' reading literacy levels using the SPSS 26 program revealed that the two genders have different literacy levels. It is evident from the hypothesis testing results using the Independent Samples Test formula with the sig value. (2-tailed) of 0.03. value $0.03 < (0.05)$. The study has a significant difference if the significance value in the test formula is less than 0.05. Developing reading abilities is becoming increasingly vital when there is a gender disparity in literacy. Boys receive lower grades than girls. The finding is more related to the arguments presented by (Inoue et al., 2018; Sainio et al., 2019) that the gender gap affects the reading ability of boys and girls in school. It is affected by the notion that women are the only ones who read. Due to this disparity, men are less interested in reading and are more interested in other pursuits such as leisure activities. It induces a desire to read male students with poorer literacy abilities than female students. Female students have more excellent reading skills than boys (Logan & Johnston, 2009). This disparity backs with previous research that found female students to have a greater literacy rate than male students. The findings revealed that boys have a lesser proclivity for reading literacy than girls in SMP Negeri 8 Makassar. This reasoning is consistent with the findings of (Anantasa & Kemuning, 2016) in their previous study.

V. CONCLUSION

The study's data and discussion findings were analyzed, and the conclusion was that male students at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar have a low literacy level. In terms of findings, male pupils have a sufficient reading literacy level. Male pupils have a low reading proficiency level in terms of developing meaning. Male students' reading literacy levels are similarly low when reflecting on and assessing discourse content. Female students at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar, on the other side, have a moderate reading literacy level. In findings term, female students have a very high reading literacy level. Female students' reading literacy level falls into the sufficient group to develop meaning.

Furthermore, female students' reading literacy level is poor in reflecting and assessing the discourse substance. As a result, male and female students at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar have different reading literacy levels. Male and female pupils' reading literacy levels differ significantly in the finding aspect; male and female pupils' reading literacy levels have significantly different in the developing meaning aspect; male and female pupils' reading literacy levels do not differ much in the reflecting aspect evaluating discourse content. This study showed a disparity in male and female pupils' reading literacy capacity at SMP Negeri 8 Makassar. Female pupils are more capable of comprehending and analyzing the materials they read than male students. However, further investigation is required to support findings and offer new research about school student literacy from a different viewpoints.

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ABOUT THE AUHORS

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