



THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT AND STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM OF UNIVERSITAS RIAU KEPULAUAN

KORELASI ANTARA KONSEP DIRI AKADEMIK DAN PEMAHAMAN MEMBACA MAHASISWA DI PROGRAM STUDI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS UNIVERSITAS RIAU KEPULAUAN

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Abstrak

Pemahaman membaca merupakan keterampilan penting untuk keberhasilan akademik, terutama bagi mahasiswa dalam konteks English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Salah satu faktor psikologis yang dapat memengaruhi pemahaman membaca adalah konsep diri akademik, yaitu keyakinan siswa terhadap kemampuan akademik mereka sendiri. Meskipun penelitian sebelumnya telah mengkaji peran konsep diri dalam pembelajaran bahasa, masih sedikit penelitian yang meneliti bagaimana hal tersebut berkorelasi dengan pemahaman membaca dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi di Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki apakah terdapat korelasi yang signifikan antara konsep diri akademik dan pemahaman membaca mahasiswa semester enam pada Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Riau Kepulauan. Metode kuantitatif dengan desain penelitian korelasional digunakan dalam studi ini. Sebanyak tiga puluh lima mahasiswa dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Dua instrumen digunakan: kuesioner untuk mengukur konsep diri akademik dan tes pemahaman membaca untuk menilai performa mahasiswa. Data menunjukkan distribusi normal; oleh karena itu, korelasi Pearson Product Moment diterapkan. Hasil menunjukkan korelasi positif yang sangat kuat ($r = 0,987$) dan signifikan secara statistik ($p < 0,001$). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa dengan konsep diri akademik yang tinggi cenderung memperoleh skor pemahaman membaca yang lebih baik. Hasil ini menekankan pentingnya menumbuhkan konsep diri akademik mahasiswa sebagai salah satu cara potensial untuk meningkatkan keterampilan pemahaman membaca mereka. Penelitian selanjutnya dapat mengeksplorasi hubungan ini di berbagai institusi atau mengikutsertakan variabel kognitif dan afektif lainnya.

Kata kunci: Konsep diri akademik, Pemahaman membaca, Pelajar EFL, Penelitian korelasi

Abstract

Reading comprehension is a crucial skill for academic success, especially for students in English Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. One psychological factor that may influence reading comprehension is academic self-concept, which refers to students' beliefs about their own academic abilities. While previous research has examined the role of self-concept in language learning, there is still limited research on how it correlates with reading comprehension in Indonesian higher education settings. This study aims to investigate whether there is a significant correlation between academic self-concept and students' reading comprehension among sixth-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Riau Kepulauan. A quantitative method with a correlational research design was employed. Thirty-five students were selected using purposive sampling. Two instruments were used: a questionnaire to assess academic self-concept and a reading comprehension test to evaluate students' performance. The data were found to be normally distributed; therefore, the Pearson Product Moment correlation was applied. The results revealed a very strong positive correlation ($r = 0.987$) which was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that students with higher academic self-concept tend to achieve better reading comprehension scores. These results highlight the importance of fostering students' academic self-concept as a potential way to enhance their reading comprehension skills. Future research may further explore this relationship across different institutions or incorporate other cognitive and affective variables.

Keywords: *Academic self-concept, Reading comprehension, EFL learners, Correlational research*

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is one of the most essential skills that university students need to develop, especially in English education programs. This skill plays a significant role not only in academic success but also in shaping one's future career and social life. Students who have strong academic reading comprehension tend to perform better in their studies, have lower chances of academic failure, and gain wider access to job opportunities and social life (Urrutia et al. 2024). In the context of English education specifically, reading is not just a language skill but also a foundation for academic growth. Students are frequently required to engage with various academic texts, such as journals, textbooks, and research articles. Without strong comprehension abilities, they find it difficult to follow course materials, which can negatively impact their confidence and motivation to learn (Ma and Zhao 2025). Strong reading comprehension helps them to understand and absorb knowledge effectively, making it a key factor in achieving better academic outcomes (Ramadhianti and Somba 2023). Furthermore, at the university level, reading comprehension goes beyond simply understanding texts, it also supports independent learning and critical thinking (De-la-Peña and Luque-Rojas 2021). It encourages students to question ideas, reflect on what they read, and connect information across different sources. Therefore, enhancing reading comprehension is not only about improving English proficiency but empowering students to become more confident, independent, and successful in their academic journey and beyond.

Despite the crucial role that reading comprehension plays in academic success, many university students still face significant challenges in mastering this skill. These challenges are not only related to language proficiency, such as limited vocabulary or grammar, but also

closely connected to psychological factors. One common issue is the lack of motivation to read. Many students have low interest in reading or do not develop consistent reading habits, which weakens their comprehension over time (Monica and Soplantila 2024; Nurhayati, Julyan, and Williyen 2023). In addition, low self-confidence is another contributing factor. When students doubt their own ability to understand academic texts, they may avoid reading or engage with the material less actively, resulting in lower academic performance (Sağlam 2024). Background knowledge also plays a critical role in reading comprehension. When students are unfamiliar with the topic or context of a text, it becomes harder for them to make inferences or understand the intended meaning (Zagoto 2020).

Similar problems are seen among the population of this study. Some of them may struggle with vocabulary or sentence structure, but many also seem unsure about their own ability to understand what they read. This lack of confidence often causes them to put less effort into reading tasks or even avoid difficult texts altogether. As a result, their struggles with reading do not just come from language difficulties, but also from how they see themselves as learners. This suggests that reading comprehension is not only influenced by language ability, but also by a psychological factor, namely, academic self-concept. This refers to the way students perceive their own academic abilities, which can directly affect how well they perform in reading. When students believe they are capable of learning, they are more likely to face reading tasks with confidence, stay focused, and not give up easily. On the other hand, when they have a negative view of their academic abilities, their reading comprehension may suffer, even if they actually have the skills needed to do well.

Academic self-concept has been confirmed as one of the psychological factors that can influence students' reading comprehension. When students have a positive view of their academic abilities, they tend to be more motivated to read, more confident in their learning process, and more willing to put in the effort needed to succeed. Research has shown that students with a strong academic self-concept are more likely to feel intrinsically motivated to read, which then helps improve their reading comprehension (Locher et al. 2021). In other words, when students believe that they are good at reading, they naturally become more interested and engaged with reading tasks. Likewise, students who believe in their academic abilities are more likely to approach reading with confidence, while those who lack confidence tend to score lower on academic reading tasks (Sağlam 2024). A strong academic self-concept also encourages students to put greater effort into their studies. When they feel capable, they are more driven to work hard and achieve their academic goals (Zagoto 2020). This shows that academic self-concept does not just influence how students feel, it also affects how they act, especially when it comes to reading. On the other hand, students with a low academic self-concept may doubt their abilities and become less motivated to engage in reading, which can limit their overall academic progress. Therefore, academic self-concept can be seen as a key psychological factor that supports or hinders students' reading comprehension.

Despite the growing interest in reading comprehension, there are still few studies that explore how academic self-concept relates to English language skills, particularly in the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners in Indonesia. Understanding how students view their own academic abilities could provide meaningful insights into their reading performance, especially since English is not their first language. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the correlation between academic self-concept and students' reading comprehension in the English Education Study Program of Universitas Riau Kepulauan. Specifically, it aims to answer the research question: Is there any significant correlation between academic self-

concept and students' reading comprehension of English Education Study Program in Universitas Riau Kepulauan?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Comprehension

Reading is more than just recognizing letters and pronouncing words; it is a complex cognitive process that plays a crucial role in how individuals understand written language. Reading involves a variety of foundational skills such as alphabet knowledge, awareness of initial consonant sounds, understanding the concept of words within texts, spelling patterns, phonemic awareness, word recognition, and the ability to interpret words within a specific context (Paris 2005). Similarly, Bojovic (2010) explains that reading should be viewed as an activity that demands concentration and cognitive engagement, where the reader actively interacts with the text to construct meaning. These definitions highlight that reading is not a passive activity; rather, it is a dynamic process that requires readers to use their prior knowledge, linguistic understanding, and thinking skills to make sense of what they read.

When discussing reading comprehension specifically, the focus shifts toward the deeper ability to understand, interpret, and mentally engage with the meaning of a text. Reading comprehension is a complex skill that requires the reader to establish an active connection with the elements of a written text (Manurung et al. 2024). This includes not only decoding words but also understanding sentence structures, recognizing ideas, and making inferences. Anggara (2021) supports this by stating that reading comprehension involves recognizing and understanding words in context and drawing meaning from entire sentences or paragraphs. Therefore, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is a skill that demands both cognitive ability and mental effort to successfully derive meaning from written texts.

To better understand how student process and comprehend texts, reading comprehension is often evaluated using specific indicators that target various aspects of understanding. The first is identifying the main idea, which involves recognizing the central point or the most important message within a paragraph or passage. This skill is crucial because it helps readers focus on the core content being communicated. The second indicator relates to understanding expressions, idioms, or phrases in context, which requires readers to interpret figurative or context-dependent language and grasp its intended meaning rather than taking it literally.

The third indicator is making inferences, or understanding implied details that are not directly stated in the text. This skill demands higher-order thinking, as students must read between the lines and draw logical conclusions from the available information. The fourth indicator focuses on grammatical features, such as identifying the reference of pronouns or understanding sentence structure, which supports clarity in comprehension. Fifth, students are assessed on their ability to scan for specifically stated details, where they must locate and retrieve precise pieces of information from the text efficiently.

The sixth indicator involves the ability to exclude unstated facts, meaning students should distinguish between information that is actually present in the text and ideas that are assumed or inaccurately added. The seventh is identifying supporting details, which includes recognizing the examples, facts, or explanations that reinforce the main idea. Finally, the eighth indicator is understanding vocabulary in context, where readers use contextual clues, such as synonyms, antonyms, or surrounding sentences, to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. These eight indicators are for measuring reading comprehension and help educators diagnose specific areas where students may need support, while also offering insight into how deeply students engage with and understand written texts (Brown 2004).

Academic Self-Concept

Academic self-concept is an essential psychological construct that plays a significant role in how students view their own academic abilities. It reflects students' personal beliefs and perceptions about their competence in school tasks, such as learning, understanding subjects, and achieving goals. These beliefs are not formed instantly, but rather shaped gradually through experiences, feedback from teachers, interactions with peers, and comparisons with other (Bong and Skaalvik 2003). Academic self-concept can influence students' behaviors, learning motivation, subject preferences, and even their academic performance (Marsh 1993). In this sense, when students believe they are capable in a certain subject, they are more likely to be motivated, persist through difficulties, and perform better. Moreover, academic self-concept can be recognized through students' level of academic confidence and academic effort (Liu and Wang 2005).

Academic self-concept is a part of broader self-concept structure, where general self-concept is divided into academic and non-academic domains. The academic self-concept includes specific areas like language or math, while non-academic self-concept includes areas like social or physical self (Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton 1976). Self-concept is dynamic, meaning it can grow and change over time, depending on how individuals interpret their experiences and how others respond to them (Burns 1982; Woolfolk 2016). In conclusion, academic self-concept is more than just how smart students think they are; it encompasses how they feel, behave, and respond in academic settings.

The indicators are used to measure students' academic self-concept. Academic self-concept consists of two indicators: academic confidence and academic effort. These two aspects are part of the academic self-concept scale developed by Liu and Wang (2005), and they help us understand how students see themselves about their school performance

1. Academic Confidence (AC)

This refers to how confident students feel about their academic abilities. It reflects whether they believe they are capable of doing well in school. For example, a student with high academic confidence might agree with a statement like, "I am good in most of my school subjects." On the other hand, someone with low confidence might relate more to a negative statement like, "Most of my classmates are smarter than I am." These kinds of statements help to assess how students view their strengths and weaknesses in learning.

2. Academic Effort (AE)

This indicator looks at how much effort students put into their studies. It shows how dedicated, motivated, and engaged they are in their schoolwork and learning activities. A student with strong academic effort might agree with statements like, "I am interested in my schoolwork." In contrast, a student who lacks effort might agree with a negative statement like, "I daydream a lot in lectures." These items are designed to evaluate how seriously students take the learning responsibilities.

METHODOLOGY

This research used quantitative method with correlational research design to examine the correlation between academic self-concept and students' reading comprehension in English Education Study Program in Universitas Riau Kepulauan.

Participants

This research consisted of 35 sixth-semester students from the English Study Program of Universitas Riau Kepulauan. These participants were selected using purposive sampling

technique based on specific purpose criteria. All of the participants had completed all the reading courses in the English Education Study Program, including Basic Reading, Intermediate Reading, Critical Reading, and Extensive Reading. Participants' completion of these courses ensured that all participants have sufficient and equal exposure to reading comprehension, thus making it suitable for investigating the relationship between academic self-concept and reading comprehension.

Data Collection

This research used two instruments to collect data, such as academic self-concept and reading comprehension test. The questionnaire was adopted from the Academic Self-Concept Scales developed by Liu & Wang (2005) as cited in (Matovu 2012). This questionnaire consisted of 20 items categorized into two subscales, such as Academic Confidence (AC) and Academic Effort (AE). Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for positive statements and reversed for negative statements. This questionnaire was selected because it has been widely used in previous research to assess students' academic self-concept in educational setting.

Therefore, the reading comprehension test was fully adopted from Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test by Deborah Philips. The reading comprehension test consisted of 48 multiple-choice questions taken from the reading section of the book. Furthermore, the selected questions were aligned with the indicators of reading comprehension proposed by Brown (2004), such as main idea, expressions/idioms/phrases in context, inference, grammatical features, stated detail, unstated detail, supporting details, vocabulary in context. As the test items were taken directly from an established publication widely used in English education, they were considered appropriate for assessing the reading comprehension skills. Finally, after both instruments were prepared, they were distributed to participants. The responses were then collected and organized for further analysis in line with the research objective.

Data Analysis

To analyze the relationship between academic self-concept and students' reading comprehension several statistical procedures were carried out. The first step was to conduct a normality test to determine whether the data for both variables, such academic self-concept and reading comprehension, were normally distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk test was employed due to the relatively small sample size. The results showed that the significance values for both academic self-concept and reading comprehension were above the threshold of 0.05, it indicated that the data were normally distributed. The result of normality test is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Normality Test Result

	Shapiro-Wilk	
	Statistics	Sig.
Academic Self-Concept	0.966	0.335
Reading Comprehension	0.940	0.054

Therefore, the assumption for using parametric analysis was met. As a result, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was selected to examine the relationship between the two variables. All data analyses were conducted using SPSS version 27.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to analyze the correlation between academic self-concept and students' reading comprehension. To determine the appropriate statistical test, a normality test was conducted on both variables. The results showed that the data were normally distributed, thus meeting the assumptions for parametric testing. Therefore, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to analyze the relationship between the two variables. Moreover, before conducting the correlation test, descriptive statistics were examined to provide an overview of the data. The descriptive statistics presents the minimum, maximum, and mean of students' academic self-concept and reading comprehension. The results are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Result

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Academic Self-Concept	56	92	72.77
Reading Comprehension	60	90	73.87

After that, Pearson correlation test was conducted. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis show that there is a medium, positive, and significant correlation between academic self-concept and students' reading comprehension, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.987$ and sig. 2 tailed = <0.001 . This indicate that students who have higher academic self-concept tend to have higher comprehension scores. The result of Pearson correlation is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Result

		Academic Self-Concept	Reading Comprehension
Academic Self-Concept	Pearson Correlation	1	0.987
	Sig. 2-tailed		<0.001
Reading Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	0.987	1
	Sig. 2-tailed	<0.001	

The result of this research supports the hypothesis that there is a significant and positive correlation between academic self-concept and reading comprehension. This means that student who have a higher belief in their academic abilities also tend to get high scores in reading. Academic self-concept, which refers to how students see themselves as learners, can influence how they perform in reading comprehension tasks. When students believe they are capable, they are more confidence and engage while reading.

This result is also in line the results of previous similar research. Locher et al. (2021) explained that students with a strong academic self-concept are usually more motivated to read and to learn. Similarly, Sağlam (2024) found that students who are confident in their academic ability tend to face reading tasks with less anxiety, in the other hand, students who lack confidence may avoid reading or not try their best, which can lower their performance. Another research by Zagoto (2020) emphasized the role of academic self-concept in encouraging students to put in more effort, students more likely to spend their time to studying and reading when they feel capable and this leads to better reading outcomes including reading. Therefore, academic self-concept not only influences how students feel but also how they behave during reading. In English as Foreign Language (EFL), reading can be difficult skill. Students have to

understand vocabulary, grammar, and ideas in another language. If students do not believe in their ability to succeed, they may feel frustrated and lose interest. In the other hand, if students have a strong academic self-concept, they more confidently willing to try and improve they reading comprehension skills.

Although, this research has some limitation. First, this research is only focus on the relationship between academic self-concept and reading comprehension. It does not explore other English skills, such as listening, speaking, or writing. These other skills are also important and may be influenced by academic self-concept in different ways. Second, the research is only involved students from Universitas Riau Kepulauan majoring in English Education Study Program. This makes the sample quite limited. The result might be different if the research was done in other university or students from another majors.

Even with these limitations, this research still has both theoretical and practical value. Theoretically, it adds to the existing research about how students' affect their reading performance. It shows that reading comprehension is not only about reading skills, but also about psychological factors like self-belief. Practically, the results can be helpful for students, teachers, and institutions. Students can reflect on how their mindset affects their learning, especially in reading. If they realize that believing in themselves helps them succeed, they may try to build a more positive self-concept. Teachers can also play a role in helping students feel more confident by giving support and encouragement. In sum, this research shows that academic self-concept is closely related to students' reading comprehension. Students who believe in their academic abilities tend to perform better in reading. This means that improving academic self-concept can be a useful strategy to support reading development. Future research is encouraged to include other skills and more diverse participants for broader insights.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to examine the correlation between academic self-concept and reading comprehension among students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Riau Kepulauan. The analysis revealed that there is a significant and positive correlation between the two variables, indicating that students who have a stronger belief in their academic abilities also tend to perform better in reading comprehension tasks. This result supports the idea that psychological factors, particularly how students view themselves academically, play an important role in shaping their learning outcomes.

Academic self-concept influences not only students' motivation but also their attitude and behavior toward learning. When students have a positive self-concept, they are more motivated to put effort into reading, more confident in facing difficult texts, and more engaged during the learning process. This supports the findings of previous studies, which suggested that students with strong academic self-concept are more likely to succeed because they believe in their ability to learn and improve. Therefore, reading comprehension is not solely determined by linguistic knowledge or reading strategies, but also by how students perceive their own capabilities.

However, this study also has its limitations. The research focused only on reading comprehension and involved a limited sample from one university and one study program. Other language skills such as writing, listening, and speaking were not included, and the experiences of students from other programs or institutions may differ. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore the role of academic self-concept across a broader range of language skills and with a more diverse sample of participants to strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

In conclusion, academic self-concept plays a meaningful role in students' reading comprehension performance. Helping students build a strong and positive view of their academic ability can support their success in learning, especially in reading and possibly other areas of language learning as well.

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