

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LET'S READ APPLICATION AS A LEARNING TOOL  
TOWARDS STUDENTS' ABILITY ON READING COMPREHENSION AT SMP  
ISLAM MIFTAHUL HUDA**

**Neng Siti Mahmudah**  
[nengsiti170221@gmail.com](mailto:nengsiti170221@gmail.com)

**Utami Rosalina**  
[utamistiba@gmail.com](mailto:utamistiba@gmail.com)

**Lili Sururi Asipi**  
[kiaikampung70@gmail.com](mailto:kiaikampung70@gmail.com)

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**Abstract:** This study aims to measure the effectiveness of the Let's Read application as a learning tool on students' reading comprehension skills at Miftahul Huda Islamic Junior High School. The research method used was a pre-experimental method with a one-group pretest-posttest design. The subjects were 18 eighth-grade students. The instruments used consisted of a reading comprehension test and a questionnaire to measure students' responses to using the Let's Read application. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed a significant increase in the posttest scores compared to the pretest scores. The pretest average score was 18.83, while the posttest average score increased to 26.83. The validity and reliability tests indicated that the instruments used were valid and reliable. Hypothesis testing using a paired sample t-test showed a p-value of less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results. In conclusion, the Let's Read application is effective as a learning tool for improving students' reading comprehension skills at Miftahul Huda Islamic Junior High School. Future researchers are recommended to explore the use of this application over a longer period and with a larger sample.

**Keywords:** Let's Read, ability on reading comprehension, model of integration, SMP Islam Miftahul Huda.

## INTRODUCTION

English is the primary capital for communicating in international relations, which is a common requirement that must be fulfilled. One way to become proficient in English is to educate a generation of individuals who are prepared to compete in the global market by learning English through various channels, both formal and non-formal; such as primary schools, classes, or extracurricular activities. Indonesia has identified educational reform as a key strategy for enhancing the quality of its human capital and better equipping the country to navigate the complexities of the contemporary global environment. In line with this, Ahmadi & Uhbiyati (2015) argue that education can support future development education that can develop students' potential, so concerned can face and solve problems in life.

There are four key components of learning a foreign language, namely English; speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Listening and reading skills are categorized as receptive abilities while speaking and writing are productive capabilities. In addition to the above four language skills, reading is important for students who demonstrate that their native language is not English, they have limited opportunities to the language in terms of listening or speaking. Understanding English is difficult for students without basic knowledge, especially understanding a reading text. Reading is important for learning other skills. This is in accordance with the Kusumawanti & Bharati (2018) that reading plays the most important role in student's academic success because the initiation and development of overall learning activities are contingent upon the undertaking of reading activities.

Reading remains a critical skill for academic and career success in the current digital age. At the secondary school level, the development of reading skills is a top priority, as reading is central to learning in all subject areas. (Adams, 2020)

The objective of reading can be classified into two main categories, namely: to receive a piece of information (the readers are looking for information about unfamiliar topics or experiences) and to have fun (readers do not need any special information but read for entertainment).

Additionally, (Oberholzer, 2005) argues that is crucial to understand what we are reading. If you don't understand, reading is useless. This implies that understanding text is the most essential component of the reading process. This statement was related to

(Townend, 2003) that comprehension implies we must completely get all viewpoints of the content.

Meanwhile, several problems faced by students in reading comprehension of English texts are divided into three themes; a) problems from students themselves, b) problems from teachers, and c) external problems. (Ganie et al., 2019) The problem from the students themselves consists of three parts; students' basic English ability, paucity of interest in the subject, and unmotivated. The problem with the teacher is not using any supporting media such as games when teaching. External problems are material and environment.

Technological advances creating a new phenomenon with more and more digital reading applications and platforms that can be accessed by everyone, including students. The role of technology in education has become a prominent trend to enhance the effectiveness of learning in schools. Digital applications and platforms provide several features that can improve student interaction and engagement in the learning process. (Chen, Wang, & Kinshuk, 2020)

Sattarov & Khaitova, (2019) stated a learning application can be an effective tool for enhancing students' reading abilities. A well-designed app can provide an interactive and supportive learning experience, which facilitates better comprehension of texts. One of which is the *Let's Read application*. We can access this digital library anywhere and anytime for free through the *Play Store application* on *Android* and the *website* link <http://reader.letsreadasia.org>. (Farhani et al., 2022)

The *Let's Read application* has a vision and mission to cultivate a love of reading for children through the provision of educational storybook content with a wide selection of foreign and regional languages. The use of digital libraries in children can optimize children's language aspects through reading activities. (Permatasari et al., 2022)

Sri, (2022) said that not only that, it can also be utilized by teachers as a means of education, information, and recreation for children. It seems to offer various conveniences. The types and genres of reading available are also more diverse, access is very easy and customizable, and there is no need to download files. (Mulyaningtyas & Setyawan, 2021)

In this case, the researcher wants to know the effectiveness of the *Let's Read application* in improving reading comprehension at SMP Islam Miftahul Huda.

Despite the many studies conducted on the effectiveness of various tools and methods in improving reading skills, some research gaps have yet to be filled. Firstly, many studies were conducted in international contexts or primary schools. In contrast, this study focuses on SMP Islam Miftahul Huda, which provides a unique and specific context that has not been widely explored. Secondly, most studies explored the Let's Read app separately or in combination with other tools such as hand puppets. However, more comprehensive research combining different digital tools in one study has not been conducted. Thirdly, many studies were conducted in the short term, while long-term studies evaluating the impact of sustained use of the Let's Read app on students' reading ability are limited. Finally, research at the junior high school level, especially in Indonesia, is limited. Hence, this study provides new insights into how the Let's Read app can affect junior high school students' reading ability in the context of Islamic education.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research used the quantitative methodology. It is a research method that relies on the use of objective measurements and the statistical analysis of sample data gathered through the use of questionnaires, opinion surveys, tests, or other research instruments to prove or test hypotheses (i.e., temporary conjectures) proposed in the course of the research process. This follows the statement of Creswell (2009), that “quantitative research tests objective theories by examining the relationship among variables”.

This study will employ a *pre-experimental* research design using the *one-group pretest-posttest method*. The *pre-experimental* design involves one or more experimental groups observed under specific treatments. It is a simple research design that follows the basic steps of experiments. As stated by Leavy (2022: 108), *pre-experimental* research is focused on a single group that receives the experimental intervention, and only experimental groups are considered. (Leavy, 2022)

The design was selected because the primary objective is to determine if there is a difference in students' reading ability before and after using the *Let's Read Application* by giving a treatment to the group. A pretest is administered to a single group to establish the subject's baseline, followed by the experimental intervention and a post-test. The pretest and post-test scores are compared, and any differences are attributed to the experimental

intervention. This design enables researchers to identify changes that may occur using the application.

This study aims to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of the *Let's Read application* as a learning tool for improving the reading ability of grade VII students at SMP Islam Miftahul Huda. Data will be collected through various techniques and instruments, including a reading ability test covering different text comprehension aspects, such as word meaning and main idea comprehension, and a questionnaire.

A questionnaire for students will be an important tool to investigate their perceptions of using the *Let's Read application*. The questionnaire will consist of structured questions that can reveal students' comfort in using the app, the clarity of the material presented, and their level of satisfaction with the learning delivered through the app.

In collecting data, the researcher used some procedures as follows:

Before administering the treatment using the *Let's Read application*, the researcher administered the students a pre-test to determine their prior knowledge of reading text when using it in writing or speaking. The pre-test was needed to find out the student's reading comprehension skills before administering the treatment.

After completing the pre-test, the students received treatment through the *Let's Read Application*. During each meeting, the researcher presented stories from various categories. In the first meeting, a story from the 'Folktales' category was shared. In the second session, a story from the 'Art and Music' category was presented, and in the third session, a story from the 'Animal' category was presented. In the fourth meeting, the researcher shared a story from the 'Problem Solving' category.

At each meeting, the researcher used the same procedure but for the 4th point, the researcher will give different instructions. In the first meeting, the researcher will provide knowledge about the kinds of reading. In the second meeting, the researcher will provide knowledge about the elements of text. In the third meeting, the researcher will ask students to write the main idea of the text. In the last meeting, the researcher asks students to write the elements of the story according to the type of text.

Similar to the pre-test, the researcher gave a post-test to determine the effect of the treatment by comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test to see the improvement of

students' reading comprehension. The researcher gave some questions that had been learned through the Let's Read Application. The questions were in the form of multiple choice and essay with varying levels of difficulty. This aims to assess the extent to which students have mastered certain concepts. Not only that, the researcher also provided questions related to various aspects of reading skills, such as understanding the meaning of each word, and main idea, and analyzing the text structure.

Descriptive analysis will provide a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of the collected data on students' reading ability test results before and after the treatment using the *Let's Read application*. Two kinds of statistics are used to analyze the research data, namely *descriptive statistics and preliminary test analysis*.

By designing an appropriate post-test, the researcher can obtain accurate and relevant data to evaluate the impact of the *Let's Read Application* on students' reading comprehension abilities.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This study utilized two primary instruments, namely: *a reading ability test* and a *questionnaire* designed to measure students' responses to the *Let's Read Application*. The *reading ability test* was administered both before and after the intervention to evaluate changes in students' abilities. The questionnaire, which used a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, was employed to gauge students' engagement and attitudes towards the application. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to determine the effectiveness of the *Let's Read Application*.

To get the results of the reading comprehension data, the researcher distributed a *reading ability test* consisting of a pre-test and post-test. The following are the results of the pre-test and post-test:

No	Nama	Instrument Penelitian						
		Pre-test		Post-test				
		Skor	Nilai	PG	Nilai	Essay	Nilai	Skor
1.	Ratu Safina. N	24	80	17	54,09	15	30	84,09
2.	Ira Puspitasari	5	16,66	21	66,82	9	18	84,82
3.	Rani Aulia. N	22	73,33	6	19,09	10	20	39,09
4.	Najwa Naila	27	90	21	66,82	15	30	96,82
5.	Vina Destiani	27	90	7	22,27	15	30	52,27
6.	Nabiela T	11	36,66	7	22,27	15	30	52,27
7.	Neyza Putri A	24	80	22	70	15	30	100
8.	Siti Fatimah	22	73,33	16	50,91	15	30	80,91
9.	Syifa L	13	43,33	21	66,82	15	30	96,82
10.	Zani Z	21	70	9	28,64	15	30	58,64
11.	Kasih Sayu	27	90	20	63,64	15	30	93,64
12.	Rivani Rahma	23	76,66	10	31,82	15	30	61,82
13.	Eka Dewi L	21	70	21	66,82	15	30	96,82
14.	Silvi L	14	46,66	17	54,09	15	30	84,09
15.	Sintia	15	50	3	9,545	6	12	21,55
16.	Syafa	17	56,66	9	28,64	15	30	58,64
17.	April	17	56,66	9	28,64	15	30	58,64
18.	Bunga	9	30	6	19,09	6	12	31,09
Jumlah		1130		Jumlah				1252

Table 1. The result of intrument data (Reading Ability Test)

The statistical description of the questionnaire instrument includes the mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation values of the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test results showed an average score of 67.22 with a minimum score of 29 and a maximum of 85 and a standard deviation of 12.767. Meanwhile, the post-test results showed an average score of 75.50 with a minimum score of 0 and a maximum of 93 and a standard deviation of 21.402. The pre-test descriptive statistical graph shows the variation in student scores which reflects the difference in initial ability before the learning intervention. While the post-test graph shows significant variation in scores, reflecting differences in understanding of the material after the intervention.

The following is the graphic of the test results:

Figure 1. Descriptive statistic of pre-test

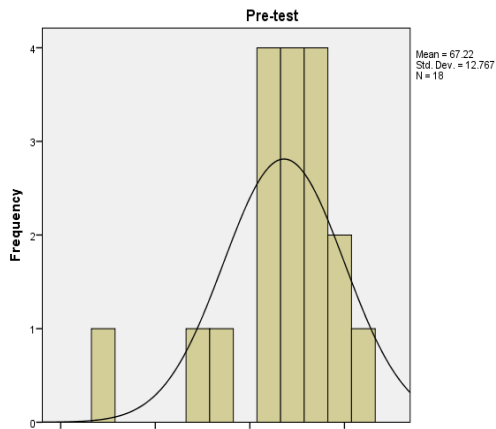
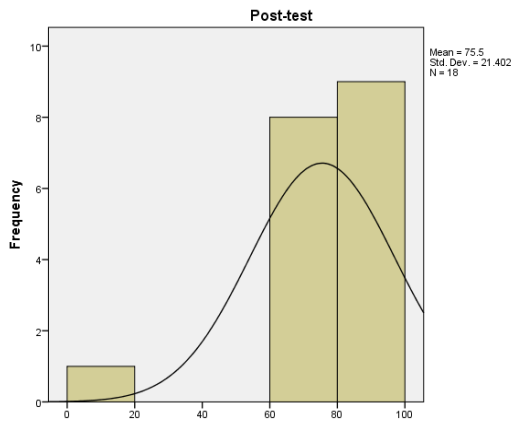


Figure 2. Descriptive statistic of post-test



The statistical description of the reading ability test instrument also includes the mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test results showed an average score of 62.83 with a minimum score of 17 and a maximum of 90 and a standard deviation of 21.742. The post-test results showed an average score of 69.00 with a minimum score of 22 and a maximum of 100 and a standard deviation of 24.007. The pre-test descriptive statistics graph shows the variation in students' scores reflecting the differences in their initial abilities. The post-test graph shows significant variation in the test results, reflecting the difference in comprehension of the material after the intervention.

The following is the graphic of the test results:

Figure 3. Descriptive statistic of pre-test

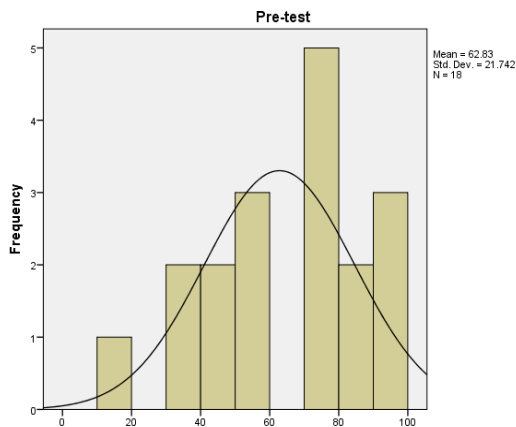
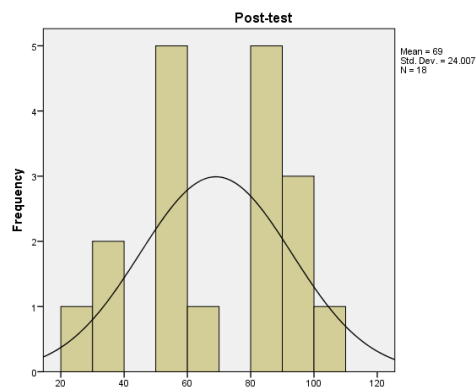


Figure 4. Descriptive statistic of post-test





To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the findings, the study conducted validity and reliability tests on the instruments used. The reading comprehension test and the questionnaire were subjected to these tests to confirm their robustness. The validity test results indicated that all but two items on the pretest and all but three items on the post-test were valid, with values exceeding the threshold. The reliability of the instruments was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which showed high-reliability scores of 0.868 for the pretest and 0.899 for the post-test. The questionnaire also demonstrated high reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.889.

A normality test was conducted on the pre-test and post-test of the questionnaire Let's Read Application and reading ability test scores. Given that the number of respondents in this study was less than 100, the researcher employed the Shapiro-Wilk normality test technique with the assistance of the SPSS 24 for Windows program to assess the normality of this distribution. A distribution is deemed to be normally distributed if the p-value (two-tailed significance level) is greater than the significance level of 5% (0.05).

The data that has been tested for normality is then tested for homogeneity of variance. It is conducted to determine whether the samples taken from the population have the same variance or do not have significant differences between one another. This variance homogeneity test was conducted on the pre-test and post-test score data from the reading ability test.

This calculation was carried out using the help of SPSS. The data requirement is declared homogeneous if the value of p (Sig.) > 0.05. The results of the homogeneity test of the pre-test and post-test can be seen in the following table:

**Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

Skor_Nilai			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.431	1	34	.516

Based on the table, it can be seen that the result of the homogeneity of variance test of the pre-test and post-test reading ability test data is .516 (.516 > 0.05) which indicates that the test has a homogeneous variance or has no difference in variance.

In this hypothesis test, researchers used the paired sample t test which aims to determine whether there is a difference in the average of two paired samples. The two samples in question are the same sample, but have two data, namely pre-test and post-test.

- If the Sig value. (2-tailed)  $< 0.05$ , then there is a significant difference between students' reading ability in the pre-test and post-test data.
- If the Sig. (2-tailed)  $> 0.05$ , then there is a significant difference between students' reading ability in the pre-test and post-test data.

From the paired sample t-test results, it is known that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) of the *questionnaire* is .014 ( $.014 < 0.05$ ) and *reading ability test* is 0.19 ( $.019 < 0.05$ ). This shows that there is a significant difference in the reading ability of grade 7 students before and after using the Let's Read Application and it has a significant impact on students' reading ability.

The significant improvement in post-test scores compared to pretest scores highlights the effectiveness of the Let's Read application as a learning tool. The application appears to have provided students with engaging and interactive reading materials that facilitated better understanding and retention of information. The increase in mean scores from 18.83 to 26.83 demonstrates that students were able to comprehend texts more effectively after using the application.

The results align with previous research on the benefits of technology-enhanced learning. Studies have shown that digital tools and applications can significantly improve students' engagement and learning outcomes. The Let's Read application, with its interactive features and tailored reading activities, likely contributed to the positive outcomes observed in this study. The application's ability to provide immediate feedback and adjust the difficulty of reading materials based on students' performance may have played a crucial role in enhancing reading comprehension skills.

Furthermore, the high-reliability scores of the instruments used in the study indicate that the findings are consistent and dependable. The validity of the reading comprehension test and the questionnaire ensures that the instruments accurately measured what they were intended to measure. These robust instruments provide confidence in the study's conclusions and suggest that the Let's Read application can be a valuable tool in educational settings.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Let's Read application is an effective tool for improving students' reading comprehension skills at SMP Islam Miftahul Huda. The significant increase in post-test scores compared to pretest scores indicates that the application had a positive impact on students' ability to understand and interpret texts. The validity and reliability of the instruments used in the study ensure that the results are accurate and dependable.

In conclusion, the Let's Read application offers a promising approach to enhancing reading comprehension skills in educational settings. By providing engaging and interactive reading materials, the application helps to motivate students and improve their reading abilities. Future research should explore the long-term effects of the application, involve larger and more diverse samples, and investigate its integration with other teaching methods. With continued research and development, the Let's Read application has the potential to significantly enhance reading comprehension skills and contribute to better educational outcomes for students.

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