



## The Students' Attitude toward English reading Learning at Seventh Grade of SMP Swasta Kristen Tomosa 1

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze students' attitudes toward learning English reading in seventh-grade students at Tomosa 1 Private Christian Junior High School. The research method used was descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. The study subjects consisted of 38 seventh-grade students and one English teacher. Data analysis was conducted in four stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The results showed that most students had positive attitudes toward learning English reading. This was evident from their active involvement in reading texts, their willingness to answer questions based on the reading, and their efforts to understand vocabulary and text content. However, several students also exhibited negative attitudes, such as a lack of interest in reading English texts, difficulty understanding the reading content, and a tendency to be passive during the reading activity. Factors influencing students' attitudes toward learning English reading include family environment, peer influence, unsupervised use of gadgets, the teacher's reading learning methods, and students' perceptions of the difficulty level of English reading texts. In addition, this study found that the application of interesting reading strategies, the use of texts that are appropriate to students' ability levels, the integration of character education, providing motivation, and increasing interaction between teachers and students are effective in building students' positive attitudes towards reading activities.

*Keywords: students' attitude, English, reading learning*

## Sikap Siswa terhadap Pembelajaran Membaca Bahasa Inggris di Kelas Tujuh SMP Swasta Kristen Tomosa 1

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis sikap siswa terhadap pembelajaran membaca bahasa Inggris pada kelas VII SMP Swasta Kristen Tomosa 1. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, angket, dan dokumentasi. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari 38 siswa kelas VII dan satu guru bahasa Inggris. Analisis data dilakukan melalui empat tahapan, yaitu pengumpulan data, reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa memiliki sikap positif terhadap pembelajaran membaca bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa memiliki sikap positif terhadap pembelajaran membaca bahasa Inggris. Hal ini terlihat dari keterlibatan aktif siswa dalam kegiatan membaca teks, kesediaan menjawab pertanyaan berdasarkan bacaan, serta usaha memahami kosakata dan isi teks. Namun, ditemukan pula beberapa siswa yang menunjukkan sikap negatif, seperti kurang berminat membaca teks bahasa Inggris, kesulitan memahami isi bacaan, dan cenderung pasif selama kegiatan membaca berlangsung. Faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi sikap siswa terhadap pembelajaran membaca bahasa Inggris meliputi lingkungan keluarga, pengaruh teman sebaya, penggunaan gawai tanpa pengawasan, metode pembelajaran membaca yang diterapkan guru, serta persepsi siswa terhadap tingkat kesulitan teks bacaan bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa penerapan strategi membaca yang menarik, penggunaan teks yang sesuai dengan tingkat kemampuan siswa, integrasi pendidikan karakter, pemberian motivasi, serta peningkatan interaksi antara guru dan siswa efektif dalam membangun sikap positif siswa terhadap kegiatan membaca.

*Kata kunci : sikap siswa, pembelajaran membaca, bahasa Inggris*

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning English at the junior high school level plays a strategic role in preparing students to face global communication demands. However, the success of English learning is not solely determined by curriculum content and teaching methods, but is also strongly influenced by students' attitudes toward the learning process. Attitude reflects a tendency to think, feel, and behave in responding to learning activities, which in turn affects students' motivation, participation, and achievement. Tohirin (2005) explains that attitude is a form of mental readiness shaped through individual experiences that directs responses toward certain objects or situations (Tohirin, 2005 in Suralaga, 2021). This indicates that attitude is not merely a spontaneous reaction, but a psychological condition that develops through interaction with the learning environment.

Empirical facts show that students' attitudes toward English learning vary significantly. Several studies report that positive attitudes contribute to higher engagement and better learning outcomes, while negative attitudes often lead to low participation, boredom, anxiety, and avoidance of learning tasks. Liu et al. (2021) found that students with positive attitudes tend to show stronger involvement and achievement in learning English as a foreign language. Similarly, Gardner (2023) emphasizes that favorable attitudes toward English enhance learning motivation and support successful language acquisition. These findings underline the importance of students' attitudes as a key factor influencing English learning.

From a broader educational perspective, students' attitudes are closely related to national educational goals, particularly character education. The Indonesian education system emphasizes character development through the integration of values within all subjects. The Strengthening Character Education policy and the Profil Pelajar Pancasila highlight the importance of cultivating positive behaviors such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and active participation in learning. Ulumudin et al. (2022) state that

students' attitudes are reflected in observable behaviors that align with spiritual, social, and civic values. In this context, English learning is not only expected to develop linguistic competence, but also to foster positive behavioral attitudes consistent with national character education goals.

Despite these expectations, classroom realities indicate that many students still demonstrate negative behavioral attitudes toward English learning. Previous research by Handayani et al. (2020) revealed that negative behaviors such as passiveness, lack of discipline, and disengagement frequently emerge during classroom activities. Likewise, Telaumbanua (2024) reported that students' negative perceptions of English often result in reluctance to participate, even when teachers employ varied teaching strategies. Similar conditions were also observed at SMP Swasta Kristen Tomosa 1, where some seventh-grade students perceived English as difficult and irrelevant, leading to low participation and limited behavioral engagement.

Based on these considerations, this study focuses on students' attitudes toward English learning, particularly on the behavioral aspect. The behavioral component is considered crucial because it represents students' real actions in the learning process, such as participation, discipline, and responsiveness to instructional activities. Understanding students' behavioral attitudes, the factors influencing them, and possible improvement strategies is essential for enhancing the effectiveness of English learning at the junior high school level.

The research problems formulated in this study are as follows: (1) how are the students' behavioral attitudes toward English learning at the seventh grade of SMP Swasta Kristen Tomosa 1? (2) what factors influence the students' behavioral attitudes toward English learning? and (3) what strategies can be implemented to improve students' behavioral attitudes toward English learning?

In line with the research problems, the objectives of this study are to describe the students' behavioral attitudes toward English learning, to



identify the factors influencing these attitudes, and to explain strategies that can be applied to improve students' behavioral attitudes in English learning. These objectives are consistent with the objectives stated in the abstract of this article.

The significance of this study can be viewed from several perspectives. From a theoretical perspective, this study is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge related to students' attitudes in English learning, particularly regarding the behavioral dimension. From a practical perspective, the findings of this study may provide useful insights for English teachers in designing learning strategies that promote positive student behavior, for schools in creating a supportive learning environment, and for future researchers as a reference for conducting similar studies in different contexts.

Theoretically, attitude is commonly understood as a multidimensional construct consisting of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Ajzen (2020) explains that attitude involves beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies toward an object. Orfan (2020) further states that the behavioral aspect of attitude is reflected in how individuals act and respond in particular situations (Orfan in Fitria et al., 2022). In educational settings, the behavioral aspect of students' attitudes can be observed through their participation, discipline, and engagement during learning activities. Several factors influence students' attitudes, including family environment, peer interaction, and teaching strategies (Wulandari, 2014; Wulandari et al., 2023).

Relevant empirical studies also support the importance of examining students' attitudes toward English learning. Al-Hafiedz (2020) found that junior high school students demonstrated positive attitudes toward English when teachers employed engaging and varied instructional methods. Yusuf (2021) reported that although students showed positive cognitive and affective attitudes, behavioral issues such as time management and discipline remained challenges. In addition, Telaumbanua (2024) highlighted that negative

student perceptions could hinder behavioral engagement in English learning. These studies indicate the need for further research focusing specifically on students' behavioral attitudes, which forms the basis for the present study.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate students' attitudes toward English reading instruction, with a particular focus on behavioral aspects. A qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of students' attitudes, behaviors, and learning experiences as they occur naturally in the classroom environment. This design allows researchers to describe phenomena comprehensively rather than producing numerical generalizations. This study was conducted at Tomosa 1 Christian Private Junior High School in the second semester of the school year.

The research participants consisted of seventh-grade students who actively participated in English reading activities. Participants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the reading learning process and its relevance to the focus of the study. In addition, English teachers were also involved as informants to provide supporting data related to students' attitudes towards English reading instruction. Students' attitudes were analyzed based on three main components, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor components. Each component was evaluated using specific indicators appropriate to its nature. The cognitive component focused on students' knowledge and understanding of English reading.

The indicators include students' ability to identify main ideas, understand vocabulary in context, understand explicit and implicit information, and interpret the meaning of reading texts. Data for this component was collected exclusively through reading comprehension tests, because cognitive aspects must be measured through students' actual knowledge performance, not through questionnaires or numerical self-

reports. The affective component focuses on students' feelings, interests, and attitudes toward English reading activities. Indicators include interest in reading English texts, motivation to participate in reading activities, confidence when reading English texts, and attitudes toward reading tasks. Data for this component is collected through questionnaires and supported by interviews to capture students' emotional responses and learning preferences. The psychomotor component emphasizes students' observable behavior during English reading activities. Indicators include active participation in reading tasks, attention during reading lessons, discipline in completing reading tasks, responsiveness to teacher instructions, and willingness to read aloud or discuss texts. Data for this component is obtained through classroom observation and supported by interviews with students and English teachers. The research procedure was conducted in several stages. The first stage involved preliminary observations to identify classroom conditions and general student behavior during English reading lessons. The second stage focused on systematic data collection through reading tests, observations, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The final stage involved organizing, analyzing, and interpreting the collected data to answer the research questions. Data analysis followed qualitative analysis procedures, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting and focusing on information relevant to students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor attitudes in reading English. Data presentation was carried out by organizing the findings into descriptive narratives and tables to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions are drawn by identifying patterns and relationships in the data. To ensure data credibility, triangulation of data sources and techniques is applied by comparing the results of tests, observations, questionnaires, and interviews.

## RESULTS

### Cognitive Attitude

Students' cognitive attitude toward English language learning was identified based on reading test results. Cognitive attitude in this study refers to students' understanding, perception, and assessment of English language learning as reflected in their reading achievements.

Students who obtained low reading scores showed negative cognitive attitudes. They tended to demonstrate limited understanding of reading texts, low interest in reading activities, and difficulty in interpreting information. These students often viewed English reading assignments as challenging and showed lower motivation to interact with the material.

On the other hand, students who scored high on reading showed positive cognitive attitudes. They demonstrated better understanding of texts, higher interest in reading activities, and more positive perceptions of English language learning. High-achieving students viewed reading tasks as manageable and meaningful, reflecting a positive mindset toward English language learning.

Overall, the results show that students' cognitive attitudes are closely related to their reading achievement. High reading scores reflect positive cognitive attitudes, while low scores indicate negative cognitive attitudes toward English language learning.

### Affective Attitudes

Students' affective attitudes were identified based on classroom observations conducted during four meetings. Affective attitudes refer to students' feelings, interests, motivation, confidence, and emotional responses to English language learning. In the first meeting, students showed varying affective responses. Some students showed interest and enthusiasm, while others appeared passive, hesitant, and unmotivated. Some students lacked confidence in speaking and were reluctant to answer questions or express their opinions.

As the sessions progressed, positive changes were observed. Students gradually became more



confident, showed greater interest in learning activities, and demonstrated better motivation. In the third and fourth sessions, most students participated actively in the lessons, showed enthusiasm during discussions, and expressed their ideas more openly.

In addition, students developed positive emotional attitudes such as responsibility, discipline, and respect for classmates. They became more willing to follow class rules, respect others' opinions, and maintain a positive learning atmosphere. These findings indicate that students' affective attitudes toward English learning gradually improved through consistent interaction and guidance in class.

### **Psychomotor Attitudes**

Students' psychomotor attitudes were also identified through classroom observations. Psychomotor attitudes refer to students' actions, skills, participation, collaboration, and physical involvement in learning activities.

At the initial meeting, many students showed limited psychomotor involvement. Some students were slow to respond to instructions, had difficulty working in groups, and were less active in carrying out tasks. Classroom routines, cleanliness, and discipline were not always followed by all students.

However, significant improvements were observed in subsequent meetings. Students became more active in group work, showed better coordination with peers, and demonstrated increased responsibility in completing tasks. In the last meeting, most students were able to collaborate effectively, communicate clearly during activities, and participate actively both verbally and in written assignments.

Students also showed improvement in maintaining classroom discipline, health awareness, and readiness to learn. They followed routines more consistently and exhibited positive learning behaviors. Overall, observations indicate that students' psychomotor attitudes developed positively throughout the learning process. If

desired, I can help tailor these results to the discussion chapter, Pancasila Student Profile indicators, or further tailor them to a more specific reading focus.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Students' Attitudes Based on Observation**

The observation results indicate that students' attitudes toward English learning at the seventh grade of SMP Swasta Kristen Tomosa 1 developed gradually across the four meetings. Improvement was observed in all behavioral indicators of the Pancasila Student Profile, although students initially showed varied levels of participation, responsibility, and confidence. Some students demonstrated positive attitudes from the beginning, while others were inconsistent, passive, or hesitant. Over time, consistent guidance, reinforcement, and classroom routines contributed to noticeable behavioral changes.

Regarding integrity, students showed steady progress in honesty and responsibility. At the early meetings, some students still violated rules or completed tasks inconsistently. However, by the final meeting, most students demonstrated responsible behavior, such as completing assignments honestly and following classroom rules. This finding supports Handayani et al. (2020), who note that negative attitudes often appear as inconsistent behavior, and Analisa (2022), who emphasizes that repeated practice strengthens the behavioral aspect of attitude.

Similar improvement was found in indicators related to self-care and well-being. Students gradually became more attentive to their physical, mental, and spiritual readiness for learning. Initially, several students appeared tired, unfocused, or unprepared, but by the final meetings, most showed discipline, readiness, and enthusiasm. This supports Aini (2022), who argues that discipline and responsibility reflect positive student attitudes.

Students' confidence in speaking honestly and respecting themselves also increased. Many students were hesitant to express opinions during

the first meeting, but participation improved steadily as students became more confident in classroom discussions. This aligns with Fitria et al. (2022), who explain that positive affective development supports students' willingness to act and communicate.

Indicators related to environmental awareness, citizenship, and social responsibility also showed positive development. Students became more responsive to classroom cleanliness, social issues, and civic responsibilities. These changes support Ulumudin et al. (2022), who highlight the importance of continuous guidance in strengthening character values.

In terms of collaboration and communication, students demonstrated significant progress. Initially, many students struggled to work in groups, communicate ideas clearly, or cooperate with peers. However, by the fourth meeting, most students collaborated effectively, communicated toward shared goals, and participated actively in group tasks. These findings align with Ajzen's (2020) theory that positive attitudes increase readiness to act consistently.

Creativity and self-expression also improved over time. Students gradually became more confident in producing original work and expressing their ideas both orally and in writing. This supports Marissa (2022), who states that positive attitudes encourage creativity and authentic participation.

Overall, the observation results show that students' behavioral attitudes toward English learning developed realistically and progressively. Through structured activities, reinforcement, and teacher guidance, students demonstrated growth in responsibility, cooperation, creativity, and inclusivity.

### **Students' Attitudes Based on Interviews**

The interview results with the English teacher confirmed and strengthened the observation findings. According to the teacher, students' attitudes did not change instantly but improved

gradually through consistent strategies and a supportive learning environment.

In terms of maintaining physical, mental, and spiritual health, the teacher noted that students were initially unaware of how their well-being affected learning. Through daily reminders, short physical activities, and reflection sessions, students gradually developed better self-awareness and learning readiness. This supports Ajzen's (2020) view that attitudes develop through the interaction of knowledge, emotion, and behavior.

Students' courage to speak honestly and respect themselves also improved significantly. Early reluctance and fear of making mistakes were addressed through small-group discussions, positive feedback, and a supportive classroom climate. By the final meetings, students spoke more confidently and actively. This supports Azwardi and Paisal (2022), who emphasize that attitudes change when individuals feel valued and supported.

Interviews also revealed improvement in intercultural communication. Initially, students showed limited awareness of cultural diversity. However, exposure to cultural content and inclusive activities increased curiosity and respect for differences. This finding aligns with Badrudin (2024), who highlights the role of multicultural exposure in developing tolerance and respect.

Environmental responsiveness and collaboration showed similar progress. Through project-based learning and group assignments, students became more responsible, cooperative, and engaged. This supports Wulandari et al. (2023), who argue that attitudes are shaped by social interaction and environmental support.

Civic responsibility, creativity, decision-making, and inclusivity also improved over time. Teacher-led democratic practices and creative tasks encouraged students to participate actively, express ideas, and respect differences. These findings confirm that structured learning experiences can strengthen students' behavioral attitudes.



### Findings Compared with Previous Studies

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research on students' attitudes toward English learning. Similar to Liu et al. (2021), this study found that positive attitudes increased students' engagement and participation. The gradual shift from passive to active learning also supports Gardner's (2023) view that motivation is closely linked to attitude development.

The reduction of negative behaviors, such as passivity and reluctance, aligns with Handayani et al. (2020), who suggest that targeted strategies can improve classroom discipline. In addition, the transformation from negative to positive attitudes supports Azwardi and Paisal's (2022) conceptualization of attitude as a psychological evaluation that can change through experience and reinforcement.

### Findings in Relation to Theory

The findings strongly support Ajzen's (2020) theory that attitudes consist of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Cognitively, students developed greater awareness of the importance of English learning. Affectively, they showed increased enjoyment and confidence. Behaviorally, they demonstrated improved participation, cooperation, and responsibility.

These results also support McLeod in Fitria et al. (2022), who argue that learning becomes meaningful when knowledge, emotion, and action are integrated. The influence of peer interaction and learning environment, as emphasized by Wulandari (2014) and Wulandari et al. (2023), was clearly evident in this study.

### Implications of the Findings

Theoretically, this study confirms that students' attitudes toward language learning are dynamic and can develop within a relatively short period when appropriate strategies are applied. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of integrating character education and Pancasila values into English learning. Teachers are encouraged to use reflection, collaboration, and

reinforcement strategies to foster positive behavior. Schools should support learning environments that promote inclusivity and responsibility. For future researchers, this study demonstrates the value of qualitative approaches in exploring behavioral development in depth.

### Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted over only four meetings, limiting the observation of long-term attitude development. Second, the study involved only one school, which restricts generalization. Third, the focus was primarily on behavioral attitudes, while cognitive and affective aspects were not explored in depth. Lastly, as with most qualitative research, researcher interpretation may involve subjectivity, despite triangulation efforts. Future studies are encouraged to involve longer durations, multiple contexts, and broader attitude dimensions.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the overall findings of this study, it can be concluded that students' behavioral attitudes toward English learning at SMP Swasta Kristen Tomosa 1 were initially mixed, with some students showing reluctance, low motivation, and negative perceptions, while others actively engaged and showed willingness to learn. This was influenced by both internal factors, such as motivation, self-confidence, discipline, and emotional readiness, as well as external factors, including teacher support, classroom atmosphere, peer collaboration, and the integration of character education values. Through the implementation of structured learning strategies, engaging activities, collaborative group work, and consistent teacher support, students gradually developed more positive behaviors, including confidence, motivation, participation, and responsibility in learning English. Overall, the study confirms that fostering an inclusive, character-based, and enjoyable learning environment makes English learning more meaningful, effective, and transformative for students.

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