

CORRELATION BETWEEN CONSCIENTIOUSNESS AND READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract: Conscientiousness is one of the personality traits that defined as an individual tendency to be organized, thorough, controlled, decisive and dependable. This study was done to find out (1) the correlation between conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement, (2) the significant difference in conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement between male and female students, (3) the significant difference in conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement between social science students and natural science students, and (4) the contribution of conscientiousness to reading comprehension achievement. The population of the study was the eleventh grade students of one public school in Palembang. One hundred students were purposely selected as the sample on the basis of equal numbers of gender and major. To collect the data, reading comprehension achievement test and conscientiousness questionnaire were distributed to students and analyzed statistically. The findings showed conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement significantly correlated (p value = 0.460) and the contribution of conscientiousness to reading comprehension achievement was 20.4%. The significant difference in reading comprehension achievement in terms of gender and major was found; female and natural science students were found better in reading. The different result was obtained in relations to conscientiousness, suggesting that students tend to have a similar perception toward conscientiousness regardless their gender and major.

Keywords: *correlation, conscientiousness, reading comprehension achievement*

English is known as an international language that is used all over the world. In this 21st century, English is very important to be mastered and it includes all life aspects such as education, economy, politics, art, social and others. In Indonesia, English is considered as a foreign language (EFL) which is taught as a compulsory subject in junior high school, senior high school and university level as stated in (The Indonesia Department of Education, Number 19, Year 2005). Similarly, the Indonesia National Education System law No.20, year 2003 and Government Regulation No. 19 Year 2005 on National Education Standard define that education should be conducted by

developing the culture of reading, writing and numeracy for all member of the community. According to Alexander (2005), reading plays critical role in the development of any academic domain; therefore, competence in reading is the key to competence in other human endeavors. Anderson (1999) states that reading is an essential skill for students to have a good command of a second or foreign language. In order to understand the written information, people need to be able to read and comprehend it. Harmer (2007) argues that reading is important for language acquisition, provided that students more or less understand what they read, the more

they read, the better they get at it. It means the importance of reading textbooks, articles, newspapers, and magazines will improve the student's ability to comprehend their reading ability. Through reading the students will gain information and knowledge. Unfortunately, the data from international measures confirmed that the result of reading ability even in Indonesia is still far being expected. Based on, the result of English Proficiency Index (EPI) published by Education First "EF" (2018) showed that Indonesian proficiency level was categorized low as it was in the 51st rank out of 88 countries in the world. In national scope, the result of English proficiency pointed out that English proficiency in Indonesia was in moderate level, proficiency score of South Sumatra still had low mean score (49.16) (Education First, 2016). Zulkardi et al (2011) investigated the quality of education at some senior high schools in some regions in South Sumatra (Prabumulih, Ogan Ilir, and Ogan Komering Ilir). One of the goals was to find some factors that caused the problems of students in learning some subjects. The result showed that some students seemed to find difficulty in answering English reading comprehension questions in national examinations and they felt worried when they read the long passages. A study conducted by Yani (2010) at SMA Negeri 21 Palembang found that 89% of students had difficulties in reading comprehension achievement because they were lack of vocabulary, 65% of students had problems in comprehending the texts because they only knew little about English Grammar, 45% of students had difficulties in finding specific information, and 41% of students had difficulties in making summary.

Based on an interview with one of the English teachers at the participated school, it was found out that the students also had problems in reading. First, they were lack in vocabulary, it caused problem when they read the text without getting much information in the text. Second, the students were lack of motivation in reading.

Even though the teacher gave homework to the students about reading text in the following weeks they still need time to understand the text. Third, they were lack of prior knowledge. For example, they were lack of vocabulary and also grammar that caused to be reluctant to read the text.

Narrative text was used in this present study because of the availability of the text. Since the result of Jennings Informal Reading Inventory of the students were in level 2. It is considered that the students must be given the reading text in level 1 until level 5. The narrative text was available to be used because most of narrative text was in level 1 until level 5. Meanwhile, the other kinds of reading text were considered too difficult to distribute to the students because the level of the other reading text were usually higher than level 5. According to Pardyono (2007), Narrative text is a text that exactly tell the event that show problematic experience and resolution with the purpose to amuse oftentimes and to give moral lesson to the reader.

In terms of reading processes, Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) state that readers afford a number of different thing into the reading processes including *purpose of reading* (e.g., for getting information/learning or pleasure), *background* (the influence of family, school and culture), *attitude* (toward reading literacy in general), *prior knowledge* (linguistic, content and rhetorical) and *individual differences* (personality, learning style, reading strategies and life experience). Based on five different process of reading above, personality is included as one of factor that can influence the students reading ability. Halnonen and Santrock (1999) state that personality as endurance, manners, though, emotion, and behavior which characterized the way person faced their world. Big five personalities have an acronym as (OCEAN) Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neurotics. As previously explained related to personality traits, in this present study the researcher only focuses on

conscientiousness. Blight (2009, p.639) states "Conscientiousness is defined as an individual tendency to be organized, thorough, controlled, decisive and dependable". The researcher did an interview with an English teacher at the school about conscientiousness of the students and the teacher said that almost a half of the students in her class had low conscientiousness. It was obviously seen during teaching learning process especially when they read the text, they did not pay attention to the detail such as the meaning of vocabulary and they also had problem in comprehending the text, They also did not complete their task in appropriate time, they were not interested in English as the result they were lazy to answer the question. It can be concluded that half of students in her class had low conscientiousness.

This current study focused on one of the personalities named conscientiousness. According to Blight (2009, p.639), "Conscientiousness is defined as an individual tendency to be organized, thorough, controlled, decisive and dependable". It indicates that conscientious people are able to reach their goals, to organize their activity in order, to make plans and thing carefully. McCrae and Costa (2006, p.50) claim "Conscientious people consider they are high in competence, self-discipline, achievement striving, and pursuing excellence in everything they do". They are also characterized by deliberation, making plans in advance and thinking carefully before act. Miler (1972 as cited in Adhiyanti, 2014) says that reading is important for conscientious student who is engaged in the search for understanding of many concepts in education era. This type of student needs the effective of reading style in order to improve their reading ability. Therefore, conscientiousness might be the factor for the students who are highly engaged in reading. Among the factors that might be related to students reading comprehension achievement, gender might also have a significant role. Carr and Pauwels (2006) said that girls are strong in

reading skills and they can cover their under ability in abstract concept, rules and pattern with their interest in reading and literacy. Gender is social construction, how society treats and built the characteristic of persons. Anantasa (2016) found that girls have more positive achievement in reading than boys. Another factor that might be related to students reading comprehension achievement is the differences between natural science and social science major. Hurfy (2008) states that natural science and social science exist as one of the effort to enhance the quality of education and to support the students in exploring their interest, aptitude and ability.

In this present study, it can be inferred that both majors have an important role to support the students to succeed in academic achievement including reading.

There are previous studies that showed the significant correlation between conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement. For instance, a research conducted by Adhiyanti (2014) found that there was significant correlation between conscientiousness, vocabulary mastery and reading achievement. As a result, by giving any kind of reading text the students were familiar with more vocabulary and their knowledge is enhanced. Another previous study conducted by Kertechian (2018) entitled conscientiousness as the key to success for academic achievement among French university students in Management Study. Moreover, conscientiousness was the highest predictor among others personality traits of academic achievement. Hakimi, Hejazi and Lavasani (2011) conducted a research entitled Relationship between conscientiousness and students' academic achievement at Tehran University and the result show that conscientiousness is the highest result among the other personality traits. In line with Wegerman and Funder (2007), conscientiousness was consistent and other researchers consider that conscientiousness is the most reliable predictor for academic performance. Ali and Bano (2012) investigated the relationship

between five personality types which are (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neurotics) and reading skills. They found out that there is a positive correlation between conscientiousness and reading comprehension. It means, conscientiousness became the factor of the success of reading comprehension achievement. A study conducted by Conrad and Patry (2012) found there was a relationship between conscientiousness and academic performance, and the effects of conscientiousness on academic performance were indirect.

METHODOLOGY

Correlational design was applied to conduct this research. In this present study, there were two kinds of variables. Therefore, independent variable in this research was conscientiousness and dependent variable was reading comprehension achievement. The population of this study is all the eleventh grade students of one school in Palembang in the academic year (2018-2019). There are eight classes 4 from natural science class and 4 from social science class and the total of students were 208 students. The sample was selected based on the criteria: the students must be taught by the same English teacher, the reading comprehension level test must be in the same level based on the result of Jennings Informal Reading Inventory the students' level were in the level 2, the total number of sample must be represented the total of population. Since the population of the eleventh grade students was 208, the researcher chooses 100 students as the sample. Therefore, the sample of study was 100 students which were 50 female and 50 male from social science and natural science class.

Two kinds of data were used in this research. They were reading comprehension test and conscientiousness questionnaire. For the reading comprehension test, the test was developed by the researcher and it consisted of five graded levels of narrative text taken from Erlangga book and some

sources from Internet. Since the result from IRI Jennings level test showed that the students were in level 2, the test consisted of level 1, level 2, level 3, level 4, and level 5. The reading test was in form of short answer questions including the aspect of reading comprehension (main idea, detail, sequence, inference, cause effect, and vocabulary). The passages in the reading test had been measured by using Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level to check their reliability. Before the reading test was tried out, it had been validated by two validators of English Education Study Program Lecturers of Sriwijaya University about the appropriateness and the level of difficulty of the reading test and the reading test was consist of 50 questions. The result showed that from the first validator there were 45 questions in "appropriate level", 5 questions in "moderate level". Meanwhile the result from the second validator showed that there were 49 questions in "very appropriate level", 1 questions in "appropriate level". The reading test was tried out to non-sample students of two classes (11 IPA 4 and 11 IPS 1). The result show that 25 out of 50 questions were valid with r table 0.278 and Cronbach alpa ($r=0.801$).

The questionnaire was taken from IPIP (International Personality Item Pool) which consists of 50 items including (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neurotics) was developed by Goldberg. The questionnaire is available at he official website <http://ipip.ori.org>.

To measure the conscientiousness of students the researcher used ready-made questionnaire namely conscientiousness questionnaire was developed by Adhiyanti (2014). She develop the 35 questions in the questionnaire based on the Goldberg questionnaire but she only focus on conscientiousness aspect.

Conscientiousness questionnaire was consist of six constructs which were *competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, deliberation*. In this research, the questionnaire was checked by a lecturer from Consoling study program in

order to check the appropriateness of the questionnaire because the questionnaire is about personality and written in Bahasa Indonesia.

Conscientiousness questionnaire was tried out to the non-sample students of the same school. The validity of questionnaire was checked by factor analysis and the result of each item had the validity $>.30$ with 30 valid items. Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010) assert that factor loading of 0.30 to 0.4 are considered minimally acceptable.

The result of reliability coefficient for reading test was 0.801 which was higher than 0.70. Similarly, the result of reliability of the questionnaire in each construct of the item was higher than 0.70, for the items of *Competence* was 0.803, items of *Order* was 0.805, items of *Dutifulness* was 0.802, items of *Achievement Striving* was 0.804, item of

Self-Discipline was 0.801 and items of *Deliberation* was 0.806. It means both instrument were valid and reliable to be used. *Pearson product moment correlation coefficient* was used to analyze the correlation between two variable, *Independent sample t-test* was used to analyze the differences and to compare two independent group, male and female students were compared and natural science and social science students as well, and *Simple linear regression analysis* was used to analyze the contribution of independent variable to dependent variable.

FINDINGS

As shown in Table 1, 58 % of the students were on moderate category, 42 % were in high category and 0% in low category. Table 1 shows the result of students' conscientiousness questionnaire.

Table 1
Result of Students' Conscientiousness Questionnaire

Conscientiousness Questionnaire Category	N	% of Total N
High	42	42
Moderate	58	58
Low	0	0
Total	100	

Result of Reading Comprehension Test

The result of reading comprehension test is categorized into four, namely very good, good, moderate

and poor. The distribution of each category is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Result of Reading Comprehension Test

KKM	Scoring Range	Category	N	% of Total N
	92 -100	Very Good	15	15
	83-91	Good	12	12
75	82-75	Moderate	35	35
	< 75	Poor	28	28
		Total	100	

The result of reading comprehension showed that there were only 15% or 15 students in very good category, 12% or 12 students were in good

category, 35% or 35 students were in moderate category and 28% or 28 students were in poor category.

Statistical Analyses

Two kinds of data were used in this study. They were conscientiousness (Variable X) and Reading comprehension achievement (Variable Y). Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to find out whether or not there was significant correlation between conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement.

Independent Sample T-test was applied to find out whether or not there was significant different in conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement between male-female and science-social students. Simple Linear Regression Analysis was used to find out whether or not there was significant contribution of conscientiousness to reading comprehension achievement.

Normality of the Data

Before calculating the result of correlation between two variables, normality of the data was checked in order to determine the data had normal distribution. Therefore, the researcher used one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. If the p-value is higher than 0.05, the distribution of data is normal. Therefore, p-value of Conscientiousness questionnaire (0.200) is higher than 0.05. It means the data has normal distribution. Then, p-value of reading comprehension test (0.00) is lower than 0.05. It means that data does not have normal distribution.

However, according to Smith and Wells (2006 as cited in Utami, 2018), the data can be categorized as normally distributed if the sample size is more than 30. Therefore, the samples of this study were 100, it can be concluded that the instruments were in normal distribution.

Table 3
The normality of the instruments based on Kolmogorov Simirnov

	KolmogorvSimirnov		
	Statistic	df	sig
Conscientiousness	.061	100	.200*
Reading Test	.149	100	.000

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Correlation between Conscientiousness and Reading Comprehension Achievement

This section describes the research question number one “was there any

significant correlation between conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement?” Table 4 shows the correlation between two variable.

Table 4
Correlation between conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement

Variables	R (Pearson Correlation)	ρ – (sig 2 tailed) $\rho < 0.05$
Conscientiousness Reading Comprehension Achievement	.460**	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the result of Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient analysis, correlation coefficient was .460. Because p-value 0.000 was lower than 0.05, it means that there was significant correlation between the students' conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement. It showed that the correlation direction was positive. However, the result was categorized as moderate correlation because the range of correlation was 0.36-0.65 (Creswell, 2012). To sum up, the significant correlation between conscientiousness and

reading comprehension achievement was considered moderate and had positive direction.

Differences in Conscientiousness and Reading Comprehension Achievement of Male and Female (Social Science and Natural Science)

To analyze the result of the difference in conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement in each of male and female, the researcher used independent sample t-test (see Table 5).

Table 5
Independent Sample Test

	Levene's test for Equality of variance		t-test for Equality of mean						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Standard error difference	95% Confidence interval of the Difference	
								lower	upper
Conscientiousness	1.306	.256	1.874	98	.064	3.360	1.793	-198	6.918
Equal variance assumed			1.874	93.079	.064	3.360	1.793	-201	6.921
Equal variance not assumed									

Based on the result presented in Table 5, the p-value 0.064 was higher than 0.05 it means that there was no significant difference in conscientiousness between male and female. As the result the mean score of female was 96.70 while mean score of male was 93.34. Therefore, it can

be concluded in terms of conscientious personality male and female tend to have similar perception toward conscientious personality. Meanwhile, reading comprehension achievement difference in each male and female is shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Independent Sample Test

	Levene's test for Equality variance		t-test for Equality of mean					95% Confidence interval of the Difference		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Standard error difference	lower	upper	
Reading Equal variance assumed	8.350	.005	2.139	98	.035	5.600	2.168	404	10.796	
Equal variance not assumed			2.139	89.009	.035	5.600	2.618	398	10.802	

The result presented in Table 6 shows that p-value 0.035 was lower than 0.05 it means that there was significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between male and female. As the result the mean score of female was 73.04 while mean score of male was 67.44. Therefore, in terms of reading comprehension achievement, female were better than male.

Differences in Conscientiousness and Reading Comprehension Achievement of Social Science and Natural Science Students

To analyze the result of the differences in conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement in each of social and natural science students, the researcher used independent sample t-test (Table 7).

Table 7
Independent Sample Test

	Levene's test for Equality variance		t-test for Equality of mean					95 Confidence interval of the Difference		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Standard error difference	lower	upper	
Conscientiousness Equal variance assumed	1.341	.250	792	98	.431	1.440	1.819	-2.170	5.050	
Equal variance not assumed			792	96.912	.431	1.440	1.819	-2.171	5.051	

As shown in Table 7, p-value 0.431 was higher than 0.05 it means that there was no significant difference in conscientiousness between natural science and social science. As the result the mean score of female was 95.74 while mean score of male was 94.30. Therefore, It can be concluded in terms of conscientious personality social students and natural

science students tend to have similar perception toward conscientious personality. Meanwhile, in terms of reading comprehension achievement in each social and natural science the result is presented in Table 8.

Table 8
Independent Sample Test

	Levene's test for Equality of variance		t-test for Equality of mean						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95 Confidence interval of the Difference Standard error difference		
Reading Equal variance assumed	.466	.497	2.397	98	.018	6.240	2.603	1.074	11.406
Equal variance not assumed			2.397	96.607	.018	6.240	2.603	1.073	11.407

Table 8 shows that the result of p-value 0.018 was lower than 0.05 it means that there was significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between social and science students. As

the result the mean score of science students was 73.36 while mean score of social students was 67.12. The difference between two mean score showed that in terms of reading comprehension achievement natural science students were better than social students.

Contribution of Conscientiousness to Students' Reading Comprehension

To answer the research question number four "was there any significant contribution of conscientiousness

(Variable X) to reading comprehension achievement (Variable Y)?" The correlation between two variables was analyzed. The result of correlation is presented in Table 9.

Table 9
Contribution of Conscientiousness to Reading Comprehension

Model	R	R Square	Standard of The Estimate	Adjusted R Square	Sig. F Change
1	.460	.212	11.890	.204	.000

a. Predictor (constant), conscientiousness

Based on the result of regression analysis, the Sig F. change (0.000) is lower than 0.05 and the Adjusted R Square was .204, It means that conscientiousness explained 20.4% of reading comprehension achievement or the contribution of conscientiousness is 20.4% to reading comprehension achievement.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the study, there were several points need to be discussed. The first is the result of Conscientiousness questionnaire and reading comprehension test pointed out that the eleventh grade

students had moderate level. Even though, the reading level was checked to the students before distributing the reading test, the researcher expected that the result of the student will be in high category but the fact showed that the eleventh grade students were in moderate category. It indicates, the ability of the students in reading were still low.

Second, there was significant correlation between conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement of the eleventh grade students.

The r-value was 0.460. It means that the correlation was positive. It was categorized as moderate correlation because the range of correlation was 0.36-

0.65 (Cresswell, 2012). Ali and Bano (2012) found out the relationship between personality types (openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) and reading comprehension, as the result he found that there is a positive correlation with one of the personality types "conscientiousness". Another supporting result of this study is a study conducted by Adhiyanti (2014) found that there was significant correlation between conscientiousness, vocabulary mastery and reading achievement. Hakimi, Hejazi and Lavasani (2011) found the same result that conscientiousness had the highest result among the other personality traits for academic achievement. These findings intensifies that (Wegerman & Funder, 2007) conscientiousness was consistent and it is the most reliable predictor for academic performance. It entails, conscientiousness became as the factor of the success of reading comprehension achievement. The result of conscientiousness questionnaire showed that most of students were in moderate category, it means most of students stands in the moderate level, in other words they do not have high conscientiousness either low conscientiousness.

Third, there was significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between male and female. In terms of reading comprehension achievement, female were better than male students. In line with this present study, Carr and Pauwels (2006) argues that girls is strong in reading skills and they can cover their under ability in abstract concept, rules and pattern with their interest in reading and literacy. Gender is the social construction, how the society treats and built the characteristic of persons. Anantasa (2016) found that girls have more positive achievement in reading than boys. Meanwhile, there was no significant difference in conscientiousness between male and female. Therefore, in terms of conscientious personality male and female tend to have similar perception

toward conscientious personality. It indicates that their personality could be change by the time, they should maintain their conscientious personality. The purpose of maintaining in this case is that the students should know their best way in learning to achieve the maximum result in learning process.

Fourth, there was significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between social science students and natural science students in terms of reading comprehension achievement natural science students were better than social students. Meanwhile, there was no significant difference in conscientiousness between social students and natural science students. Therefore, in terms of conscientious personality social science students and natural science tend to have similar perception toward conscientious personality. In line with the study, Hurfy (2008) states that natural science and social science exist as one of the effort to enhance the quality of education and to support the students in exploring their interest, aptitude and ability. In this present study, the students showed different characteristic such as their interest, aptitude and ability.

Fifth, the result of simple linear regression analysis showed that there is significant contribution of conscientiousness to reading comprehension. Conscientiousness influenced 20.4% to reading comprehension achievement. It caused by the result of conscientiousness questionnaire show that there were 58 students in moderate category. It indicates that more than half students were reached moderate category. It revealed that conscientious personality take an important role to influence students' reading comprehension achievement. Boyce, Wood, Brown, and Gordon (2010) state that conscientiousness people appear to be oriented toward life situation and that are beneficial for well-being, set themselves higher goal and have high level

of motivation to achieve. Conscientiousness takes important role in regulating the students' motivation in academic achievement including reading. Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) state readers afford a number of different thing into the reading process including *purpose of reading* (e.g., for getting information/learning or pleasure), *background* (the influence of family, school and culture), *attitude* (toward reading literacy in general), *prior knowledge* (linguistic, content and rhetorical) and *individual differences* (personality, learning style, reading strategies and life experience). Personality including one of five category (conscientiousness) to influence students' reading ability. Miler (1972 as cited in Adhiyanti, 2014) says that reading is important for conscientious student who is engaged in the search for understanding of many concept in education era. This type of students needs the effective of reading style in order to improve their reading ability. Therefore, conscientiousness could be the factor for the students who are highly engaged in reading.

To sum up, in reading comprehension achievement there was a significant difference between (male and female) and also between (social science and natural science students). Meanwhile, in conscientious personality there was no significant difference between (male and female) and also between (social science and natural science). It means that, in terms of reading comprehension achievement female were better than male and natural science students were better than social science students. In the other side, in terms of conscientious personality male and female and also natural science and social science students tend to have similar perception toward conscientious personality. It could be caused by most of the sample students who were in the moderate category in conscientious personality and it could be the factor why the reading comprehension achievement of

the students was in moderate category as well.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the result of both reading comprehension achievement and conscientious personality of the sample students were in moderate category. There was significant correlation between conscientiousness and reading comprehension achievement. Moreover, there was significant contribution of conscientiousness to reading comprehension. Finally, there was significant difference between (male and female) and also between (social science and natural science students) in reading comprehension. Meanwhile, there was no significant different between (male and female) and also between (social science and natural science students) in conscientiousness. It showed that in terms of reading comprehension achievement female were better than male and natural science students were better than social science students. Meanwhile, in terms of conscientious personality (male and female) and (natural sciences and social science students), they tend to have similar perception toward conscientious personality.

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