

Students' Perceptions of Using Traditional and Digital English Textbooks to Improve Students' Learning Interest

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyze students' perceptions of using traditional and digital English textbooks in improving learning interest. This study employed a quantitative method with subjects were 29 students of class XII.1 at SMAN 9 Tana Toraja, selected through cluster random sampling. Data was collected through a perception questionnaire. The results showed that students had positive perceptions of both types of textbooks. The use of traditional textbooks obtained a mean score of 44.38 with a standard deviation of 4.896, where 4 students (14%) were categorized as having very high perception and 25 students (86%) as high. Meanwhile, the use of digital textbooks obtained a mean score of 48.17 with a standard deviation of 5.795, with 15 students (52%) categorized as very high and 14 students (48%) as high interest. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of textbooks, whether traditional or digital, contributes positively to students' perceptions and learning interest.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly reshaped various aspects of education, particularly in the way instructional materials are created, delivered, and utilized. For decades, printed textbooks have served as the primary source of learning. However, technological innovation has introduced digital textbooks, which can be accessed through laptops, tablets, and smartphones. This transformation is especially evident in English language learning, where digital platforms enable students to engage with authentic texts, multimedia content, and globally sourced materials in more dynamic ways.

Despite the growing adoption of digital textbooks, traditional printed books continue to play a vital role in educational settings. Printed materials offer physical engagement, ease of annotation, and fewer technological distractions. They also reduce screen exposure, which may help minimize digital fatigue. For many students, physical textbooks provide a sense of ownership and structured learning. On the other hand, digital textbooks present distinctive advantages, including interactive activities, embedded audio-visual components, hyperlinks to supplementary resources, and instant accessibility. These features may enhance learner engagement, particularly among students who are accustomed to digital environments in their daily lives.

Learning interest is a fundamental factor influencing students' motivation, active participation, and academic success. According to Slameto (2010), interest refers to an individual's consistent tendency to pay attention to and derive satisfaction from certain activities. Students who demonstrate high learning interest are more likely to invest effort, persist when facing challenges, and retain knowledge more effectively. Consequently, selecting instructional media that can foster and sustain students' interest becomes a crucial consideration in educational practice.

Beyond the choice of learning media, students' perceptions toward the materials they use also contribute significantly to learning effectiveness. Perception involves an individual's interpretation or judgment of a stimulus, which may vary depending on personal experiences and contextual factors (Suprihanto et al., 2002). In the context of textbook usage, students may develop differing views regarding traditional and digital formats. Some learners may prefer printed textbooks due to comfort

and reduced eye strain, while others may favor digital textbooks for their interactive and engaging features. These differing perceptions can directly influence students' enthusiasm and motivation to learn.

A number of previous studies have examined the implementation of traditional and digital textbooks in educational contexts. Prasetyo (2020) reported that digital books can enhance students' learning interest due to their interactive characteristics; however, the study focused primarily on cognitive outcomes and did not explore students' perceptions comprehensively. Dewi and Santoso (2021) found that some students feel more focused when using printed textbooks because they minimize technological distractions, yet their study did not compare how both media influence learning interest. Similarly, Wijaya (2022) identified improvements in reading skills among students who used digital textbooks in English learning, but the affective dimension particularly learning interest was not specifically addressed. Furthermore, Sari (2023) revealed that students' perceptions of digital books vary depending on age and technological familiarity, indicating the need for broader contextual exploration. Hidayat (2023) concluded that combining traditional and digital textbooks may enhance comprehension; nevertheless, the study did not specifically measure their impact on students' learning interest.

Based on these prior investigations, several research gaps remain. Many studies have concentrated on only one type of textbook without examining how each medium individually contributes to students' learning interest. Moreover, although digital media integration has been widely discussed, limited research has simultaneously explored students' perceptions of both traditional and digital English textbooks. Existing literature also tends to emphasize cognitive achievement rather than affective aspects such as learning interest.

Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by analyzing how the use of traditional textbooks and digital English textbooks influences students' learning interest, as well as by exploring students' perceptions of both media. It is important to note that this study does not aim to directly compare the superiority of one medium over the other. Instead, it examines the contribution of each medium separately in fostering students' interest in learning. The findings are expected to offer theoretical insights into the development of instructional media in English education and provide practical guidance for educators in selecting learning resources that correspond to students' preferences and needs.

This study is grounded in four key theoretical frameworks relevant to the research objectives. The literature review systematically examined these core concepts: traditional textbooks, digital textbooks, students' interests, and students' perceptions.

Traditional Textbooks

Traditional textbooks, commonly known as printed instructional materials, are learning resources developed to facilitate teaching and learning processes within formal educational institutions. These materials consist of printed pages containing written explanations, visual elements, and illustrations, compiled and bound in a durable format. They function as organized and systematic sources of knowledge that are designed in accordance with national curriculum frameworks and educational standards (Sitepu, 2012; Wahab, 2013). Beyond presenting core instructional content, printed textbooks typically provide supplementary components such as practice exercises, chapter summaries, and study guidelines aimed at strengthening students' understanding and mastery of the subject matter.

Tarigan (2009) classifies traditional textbooks based on two main dimensions: writing structure and authorship. In terms of writing structure, textbooks may take three forms. First, single-volume textbooks present a comprehensive discussion of a subject within one complete book. Second, multi-volume or bound textbooks divide the subject into several books, each addressing specific subtopics, thereby enabling systematic progression in learning. Third, serialized textbooks are organized sequentially across educational levels, ensuring continuity and gradual advancement from elementary to higher stages of study.

From the perspective of authorship, textbooks may be produced by an individual author or collaboratively by multiple contributors. Textbooks written by a single author tend to demonstrate consistency in language style, conceptual flow, and overall organization, resulting in coherent and logically structured material. However, they may offer limited perspectives. Conversely, textbooks developed by a team of authors incorporate diverse expertise and viewpoints, leading to richer and more comprehensive content. Nonetheless, collaborative writing may pose challenges in maintaining uniformity in style and structural organization.

Traditional textbooks possess several strengths. They can be used without reliance on electronic devices or internet connectivity, are not susceptible to technical malfunctions, and allow physical interaction such as highlighting, annotating, and turning pages, which may enhance students' engagement and learning satisfaction. Despite these benefits, printed textbooks also have certain drawbacks, including limited interactivity, physical bulkiness, relatively high production costs, and environmental implications associated with paper consumption. Even so, traditional textbooks continue to serve as an essential element in formal education due to their dependability, structured presentation of content, and alignment with established curriculum standards.

Digital Textbooks

Digital books, commonly referred to as e-books, represent electronic adaptations of printed texts that can be accessed through digital devices such as computers, tablets, and smartphones. Ramasesh et al. (2014) describe e-books as digital versions of conventional printed materials that require specific electronic readers or software for access. Similarly, Saefullah (2017) defines digital books as integrated multimedia packages containing text, images, audio, and video elements presented within application-based formats compatible with various technological devices.

The evolution of digital books can be traced back to the Gutenberg Project initiated by Michael S. Hart in 1971, which marked the beginning of electronic text distribution. Earlier conceptual developments such as the Dynabook at PARC in the 1970s laid the groundwork for portable digital reading devices. Subsequent innovations including Sony's Data Discman (1992), the Amazon Kindle, and the iPad significantly expanded public access to digital reading and transformed reading habits worldwide.

Digital books are available in multiple formats, including EPUB, PDF, and MOBI, each designed to accommodate different user needs and devices. The EPUB format enables responsive text display that automatically adjusts to various screen sizes, enhancing readability across platforms. In contrast, PDF preserves the original layout and formatting of printed documents, ensuring visual consistency. These diverse formats allow digital books to be accessed flexibly while catering to users' technological preferences.

From an instructional standpoint, digital books incorporate hypermedia features that combine textual information with images, audio recordings, and video components, facilitating interactive engagement with learning content (Prasojo & Riyanto, 2011; Kustandi, 2011). According to Smaldino, Deborah, and Lowther (2018), digital materials can also be revised and updated efficiently to accommodate learners' evolving needs. This adaptability positions digital books as dynamic learning resources capable of delivering current, engaging, and interactive educational content.

Andina (2012) categorizes digital books into two primary forms: e-books and audiobooks. E-books may be distributed in PDF, HTML, or application-based formats, enabling both online and offline access. Audiobooks, which gained popularity through platforms such as Apple's iTunes U, provide audio-based content that allows users to listen to learning materials without relying on visual reading. This format is particularly beneficial for auditory learners or individuals who prefer flexible learning modes, as it supports access to educational materials while multitasking or during mobility.

As learning media, digital books offer numerous advantages. They are portable, space-efficient, environmentally sustainable, and easy to duplicate or store without requiring physical storage (Ruddamayanti, 2019). Their multimedia integration enhances interactivity and user engagement, creating a more stimulating and enjoyable learning experience (Zambarbieri & Carniglia in Priyanto & Sedyaningih, 2013). Additionally, digital books do not deteriorate physically and can be accessed repeatedly, contributing to long-term efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Nevertheless, digital books also present certain limitations. Their use depends on electronic devices and, in many cases, internet connectivity. Extended exposure to digital screens may result in eye strain or fatigue, potentially affecting user comfort. Despite these challenges, digital books remain an innovative and effective instructional medium that promotes learning flexibility, increases engagement, and aligns with the growing demands of digital literacy in contemporary education.

Learning Interest

Learning interest constitutes a fundamental element that influences students' involvement and achievement in the educational process. Hilgard (as cited in Slameto, 2010) conceptualizes interest as a

sustained inclination to direct attention toward and derive enjoyment from particular activities, reflecting an internal drive that encourages learners to engage in learning tasks. Similarly, Afni (as cited in Yustinus, 2013) explains that learning interest encompasses feelings of enjoyment and willingness, which stimulate enthusiasm, concentration, and positive attitudes toward academic activities. When students demonstrate genuine interest, they are more attentive, retain information more effectively, and experience reduced boredom, leading to greater participation in classroom interactions.

Lee et al. (2011) further describes learning interest as an individual preference that indicates the degree to which a learner prioritizes certain subjects over others. When instructional materials correspond to students' personal interests, intrinsic motivation tends to increase, resulting in deeper engagement and active participation. Conversely, a lack of alignment between learners' preferences and learning content may lead to disengagement and minimal involvement. In this regard, interest and motivation are closely interconnected constructs that mutually reinforce one another in supporting meaningful and effective learning experiences.

Slameto (2010) identifies several observable indicators of learning interest, including attention, enjoyment, concentration, awareness, and willingness to engage. These indicators represent behavioral manifestations of students' focus and active participation during instructional activities. In the present study, these dimensions are operationalized into four measurable aspects: attention, enthusiasm, participation, and concentration, which serve as indicators of students' learning interest in English classes.

Furthermore, learning interest is shaped by both internal and external determinants. According to Slameto (as cited in Setiani & Priansa, 2015), internal factors involve students' physical and psychological conditions, such as health, intelligence, attentiveness, aptitude, maturity, and readiness to learn. Adequate physical well-being and psychological preparedness enable students to concentrate and process information effectively. Learners who demonstrate maturity and readiness are more likely to exhibit stronger motivation and sustained interest.

External factors, meanwhile, originate from the surrounding environment, including family, school, and broader social contexts. Family-related influences encompass parenting approaches, interpersonal relationships within the household, home atmosphere, and socioeconomic conditions, all of which shape students' emotional stability and motivational orientation. School-related factors involve instructional strategies, curriculum structure, teacher–student interactions, peer relationships, discipline policies, and the availability of learning resources. These elements collectively contribute to fostering or hindering students' engagement in learning activities.

From a behavioristic perspective, Skinner (1953) emphasizes that observable actions serve as indicators of internal motivation. Behaviors such as persistence in completing assignments, active participation in discussions, and improved academic performance reflect students' engagement and learning interest. Such observable manifestations provide measurable evidence of how deeply students are involved in the learning process.

In summary, learning interest emerges from the dynamic interaction between internal dispositions and external environmental influences. When students possess physical and psychological readiness and are supported by a conducive family and school environment, their interest in learning is likely to increase. Conversely, unfavorable internal conditions or unsupportive environments may diminish motivation and reduce engagement. Therefore, understanding the multifaceted determinants of learning interest is essential for designing instructional strategies that promote active participation and meaningful educational experiences.

Students Perceptions

Student perception is a crucial cognitive process that determines how learners interpret and give meaning to the information they receive through their senses, influenced by their prior experiences, knowledge, and socio-cultural backgrounds (Brooks, 1985; Azwar, 2011). In education, perception plays a key role in shaping students' understanding, motivation, and engagement in the learning process. Positive perceptions toward learning environments and materials encourage active participation and higher academic achievement, while negative perceptions can reduce interest and hinder learning (Arikunto, 2010; Hergenhahn, 2009). Students' self-perceptions, including their confidence and sense of competence, also affect how they approach academic tasks, influencing intrinsic motivation and learning persistence (Santrock, 2011).

Several factors influence students' perceptions, including personal experiences, emotional states, cognitive abilities, and external factors such as teaching methods and social or cultural environments. Supportive teachers, engaging learning materials, and a positive classroom climate tend to strengthen favorable perceptions, while stress or low confidence can distort them. In the context of textbook use, perception can be assessed through indicators such as ease of access, comfort, clarity, attractiveness, and flexibility.

Students generally view traditional textbooks as more focused and conducive to concentration because they are free from digital distractions and provide a tangible reading experience that enhances emotional connection (Hartley, 2018; Carr, 2010). On the other hand, digital textbooks are perceived as more practical and interactive, offering accessibility, multimedia features, and engaging content that enriches understanding (Liu, 2005). However, excessive screen use can cause physical discomfort, such as eye strain or fatigue (Sheppard, 2018). Therefore, students tend to appreciate both formats depending on their learning needs and situations. In conclusion, students' perceptions of traditional and digital textbooks are generally positive, as both contribute to increased learning motivation and engagement, making the integration of both media a potentially effective approach in modern education.

METHOD

This study applied a quantitative descriptive design to investigate students' perceptions of using traditional and digital English textbooks in learning activities. The data were collected through a questionnaire distributed after students completed six meetings of English lessons that used both types of textbooks. The participants consisted of 29 students from class XII-1 of SMA Negeri 9 Tana Toraja, who were selected using cluster random sampling. The questionnaire contained 15 statements based on five indicators of perception: ease of access, comfort of use, clarity of presentation, attractiveness of design, and learning flexibility. Each item was rated using a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Before its administration, the questionnaire was validated by experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure consistency. The collected data were analyzed descriptively using SPSS to calculate the mean and standard deviation. Students' perception levels were categorized into four levels, very high, high, moderate, and low based on the total score obtained. The analysis aimed to describe the overall tendency of students' perceptions and to interpret how these perceptions reflected their engagement and motivation in learning English through both traditional and digital textbooks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings from pre-observation and post-observation reveal that students in class XII.1 of Sman 9 Tana Toraja, after using traditional and digital English books, can improve their interest in learning. This is based on indicators that have been determined by researchers in the observation instrument table. The results are as follows:

Data Analysis for Traditional Textbooks

This is the table of students' classification:

Tabel 1. Classification Students' Perceptions

Score Range	Category	Perceptions use traditional books	
		Students	%
81-100	Very High	4	14
61-80	High	25	86
41-60	Moderate	0	0
<40	Low	0	0
TOTAL		29	100

The results of the questionnaire analysis showed that students had a positive perception of the use of traditional English textbooks in the learning process. The data indicated a mean score of 44.38

with a standard deviation of 4.896, placing the majority of students in the “high” category. Specifically, 4 students (14%) were classified as having “very high” perceptions, while 25 students (86%) were in the “high” category. These findings demonstrate that students viewed traditional textbooks as useful and supportive learning resources that helped them stay focused and organized during lessons. Many students expressed that printed materials were easier to follow and allowed them to understand the lesson content more clearly without technological distractions. In addition, the physical form of the traditional textbook provided a sense of comfort and familiarity, which encouraged students to engage consistently with the learning material.

Data Analysis of Digital Textbooks

This is the table of students' classification:

Table 2. Classification Students' Perceptions

Score Range	Category	Perceptions use digital books	
		Students	%
81-100	Very High	15	52
61-80	High	14	48
41-60	Moderate	0	0
<40	Low	0	0
TOTAL		29	100

Regarding the use of digital English textbooks, students also expressed a positive perception, as shown by a mean score of 48.17 with a standard deviation of 5.795. The classification results revealed that 15 students (52%) were in the “very high” category and 14 students (48%) were in the “high” category. This indicates that digital textbooks were perceived as engaging and supportive of students' motivation to learn English. Students reported that the interactive features of digital books, such as videos, hyperlinks, and images, made the learning process more interesting and enjoyable. The flexibility of accessing materials anytime and anywhere also contributed to a more independent learning experience. Furthermore, the visual design and multimedia content of digital textbooks were perceived to enhance students' enthusiasm, helping them to better understand and connect with the lesson. These results show that students perceived digital textbooks as an innovative and stimulating medium that could increase their interest and participation in English learning activities.

The findings of this research revealed that both traditional and digital English textbooks significantly influenced students' learning interest; however, this section focuses on interpreting students' perceptions of each medium based on their responses. The discussion connects the results to previous studies and relevant theories of learning motivation and media use to provide a deeper understanding of how students perceive traditional and digital textbooks in enhancing their interest in English learning.

Traditional Textbooks

The findings of this study indicate that students' perceptions of the use of traditional English textbooks were generally positive. This suggests that printed learning materials remain effective in supporting students' engagement and interest in English learning. Students perceived traditional textbooks as practical tools that provide clear explanations and structured content, allowing them to follow lessons systematically. The tactile experience of handling a printed book, such as turning pages and highlighting key information, helped students focus better and stay attentive during class activities. These results align with the statement of Dewi and Santoso (2021), who noted that printed materials encourage concentration and provide a sense of stability for learners who prefer a physical reading experience. Therefore, traditional textbooks continue to serve as valuable learning resources that foster discipline, comfort, and sustained attention in the classroom, which are key aspects in developing consistent learning interest.

Digital Textbooks

Similarly, students demonstrated strong positive perceptions toward the use of digital English textbooks, reflecting the growing acceptance of technology-based learning tools. The results showed that students enjoyed learning through digital media because of its interactive features and flexibility. The inclusion of multimedia elements such as videos, animations, and hyperlinks allowed students to explore materials more deeply and made learning English more engaging. These findings are consistent with Prasetyo (2020) and Aini and Hidayah (2020), who found that digital learning media can significantly enhance motivation and participation through multimedia-based interaction. The ability to access materials anytime and anywhere was also highlighted as a major benefit that supports self-paced learning and increases students' sense of autonomy. Hence, digital textbooks not only improve comprehension but also enhance students' enthusiasm and enjoyment in learning English.

Overall, these findings highlight that students perceive both traditional and digital textbooks as beneficial in different ways to enhance their learning interest. The positive perceptions toward both types of media indicate that students are adaptable to various forms of instructional materials when the content and presentation are engaging. Understanding these perceptions provides valuable insight for educators in selecting and integrating learning media that align with students' needs and preferences, ultimately fostering greater motivation and active participation in English learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that students held positive perceptions toward both traditional and digital English textbooks as learning media. Traditional textbooks were perceived as effective in providing structured, clear, and comfortable learning experiences that supported students' focus and sustained their attention during lessons. The physical form of printed books gave students a sense of stability and familiarity, which encouraged consistent engagement in learning activities. These perceptions indicate that traditional textbooks remain valuable for developing discipline and maintaining concentration in the learning process.

Meanwhile, students' perceptions of digital textbooks reflected high enthusiasm and acceptance of technology-based learning. The interactive features, multimedia elements, and flexible access offered by digital textbooks created a more dynamic and motivating learning environment. Students considered digital books to be practical, engaging, and helpful in improving their understanding and interest in English learning. These perceptions highlight that digital textbooks contribute not only to knowledge acquisition but also to students' intrinsic motivation and autonomy in learning.

In conclusion, students viewed both types of textbooks positively, recognizing the advantages of each in enhancing their learning interest. The findings imply that integrating both traditional and digital media in English instruction can accommodate diverse learning preferences and foster a more engaging, effective, and motivating learning atmosphere. Educators are therefore encouraged to balance the use of printed and digital materials to optimize students' perceptions, participation, and overall learning outcomes.

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