

# THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS READING OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS IN DARMA AGUNG UNIVERSITY:

*A Survey Based on Different Personal Attributes and Environmental Factors*

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## ABSTRACT

The problems lies in this study are (1) how is the attitude towards reading of English Department students in Darma Agung University? (2) How is the attitude towards reading of English Department students in University of Darma Agung by the factors of (a) sex, (b) class type, (c) father's education level, (d) mother's education level, and (e) financial income level? After administered questionnaire of attitude towards reading by Gomleksiz (2004) to 46 students of English Department in Darma Agung University, there are findings found. First, the attitude towards reading of English Department students in Darma Agung University is more positive for the average score of the 46 students is 143, 5 by the condition of the highest score is 172 and the lowest score is 111. Second, personal attributes and environmental factors are determine differences, the male students is more positive in attitude towards reading by the average score of 145,4 than the female students by the average score of 142,6. In Class types, morning class students are having more positive attitude towards reading by the average score of 147 than the evening class by the average score of 138,4. Fathers' and mothers' education level is also determining differences. However, mothers' education level is affect linearly to the students attitude towards reading; the higher the mothers' education level the mores positive the students' attitude towards reading, but fathers' education level is not affect the students attitude towards reading linearly. The last of the environmental factors, financial income level is linearly affect the students' attitude towards reading; the higher the students' financial income level the more positive their attitude towards reading.

Keywords: Attitude towards reading, Survey, Personal Attributes, Environmental factors.

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols for the intention of deriving and constructing meaning from a text which will produce a comprehension (Marpaung, M: 2011). The complex cognitive process of reading arise difficulties which is also affect by several factors. In foreign and second language learning, there are factors affect someone to read or avoid reading something. Day and Bamford (1998) highlighted two main factors affected reading in second language learning; attitude and motivation. Attitude is one

main factor affected the process of reading in foreign and second language learning.

Attitude towards reading is a system of feelings related to reading that causes an individual to approach or avoid a reading situation (Alexander et al, 1976). Attitude towards reading is also an emotional response, it is the primary reason most readers read and probably also the primary reason most non-readers do not read (Mathewson, 1994). However, attitude also has an evaluative aspect, a disposition and tendency to react in two ways (1) positively and (2) negatively to the object of attitude. In conclusion, attitude is the way someone's think or behave.

Students' attitude towards reading is becoming a central concern to both educators and society at large. It is concluded in that way, since one of the main factors in determining the students' success in learning language is their attitude towards reading (Ghazali, Siti N et al: 2009). And moreover, Candlin and Mercer on 2001 explaining that a success or failure to be a speaker in any language and even learning the context of any foreign language is mainly determine by their attitude towards reading. Furthermore, most of the researches show that the success in reading skills is closely correlated to the attitude towards reading (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000; Wigfield and Asher, 2002; Morgan and Fuchs, 2007). In other words it is said that students' attitude towards reading are directly affected the reading performance itself.

Attitude towards reading is important to be described at least for two reasons. Firstly, attitude affects the level of skill ultimately attained by an individual by influencing such things as engagement and practice. Secondly, poor attitude may cause an individual to choose not to read when other options exist, whether the individual is a struggling reader or a fluent reader (Kear et.al 1995). Students' attitude towards reading is affected by several influences, and factors are things that affected attitude towards reading.

Parker, Cinthya T (2004) defined some factors affected students attitude towards reading, they are: (1) age, (2) sex, (3) Family background, (4) teaching methods and material, (5) reading habits and (6) reading ability level. In this article, students' attitude towards reading is described by several factors of (1) sex, (2) grade level, (3) father's education level, (4) mother's education level, (5) Financial income level, and (6) class type.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### A. Attitude Towards Reading

Senemoglu (2004) defined attitude as an acquisition of internal situation which gives any affects on the selection of behaviour. It is concluded that attitude is a cognitive emotional and sentimental manner which can affect someone's decision of doing something or not doing something.

Still as a psychological issue, several researches (Mc. Kenna, Kear, & Elisworth, 1995, etc) defined attitude into three components, they are (1) cognitive, (2) emotional, and (3) behavioural. The component of emotional is the emotional reaction towards the attitude, cognitive component is made of ideas and believes towards the attitude's objects, while behaviour component is the real action towards the attitude.

A research of Sainsbury (2004) emphasize reading education by two fundamental objectives (1) reading skill and (2) positive attitude towards reading. Positive attitude towards reading is one main objective of any reading lesson in class. On the other hand, attitude towards reading defined in some ways, attitudes towards reading are simply defined as someone's feeling about the reading itself. Attitude towards reading is morely an interest to read something, it is a feeling of reading or avoid to read a book. In the same line, Mc. Kenna, Kear, and Elsworth (1996) defined attitude towards reading as a system of feeling related to reading, which can lead someone to approach or avoid any reading situation. Even Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) defined attitude towards reading as someone's nature towards reading as an activity. It is concluded, attitude towards reading is a nature system of feeling which can lead someone's interest in reading and whether to approach or avoid reading activities.

## **B. FACTORS AND COMPONENTS OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS READING**

Along the reading research development, there are several models which tried to approach the factors of attitude towards reading. Firstly, it Mc. Kenna (1995), this explanation about factors of attitude towards reading is the earliest which is mainly influenced by Fishbein, Ajzen, and Mathewson. Mc. Kenna approach defined three factors which are interrelated in attitude towards reading (1) individuals reading ability, (2) past reading experience, and (3) the lure of other activities. Secondly, it is Mathewson (1994) defined three factors in attitude towards reading (1) a conglomeration of feelings, (2) action readiness, and (3) beliefs.

Thirdly, Ajzen and Fishbein were theorized attitude towards reading is emphasized in 'beliefs'. Ajzen and Fishbein proposed two types of beliefs as the factors in attitude towards reading, they are (1) descriptive beliefs; emphasized personal experience due to reading activity as one condition could affect attitude towards reading. Descriptive beliefs is also scoped the way someone applied inferential process in taking conclusion in any life experience and information in reading activity. As a conclusion, descriptive beliefs is a factor in attitude towards reading which is emphasized in thinking capacity, (2) Personal beliefs; it is related to societal norms related to reading activity, Ajzen and Fishbein explained that as positive as reading valued then the more positive attitude towards reading will be created in peoples' life. Moreover, Kear, Mc. Kenna, and Elsworth (1996) explained that the development of attitudes towards reading over time is as a result of three factors (1) normative beliefs, (2) beliefs about the outcome of reading, and (3) specific experience in reading. Normative beliefs are the people views about reading. Living

in a society or group of people or even have a friendship with positive value in reading will derive someone to have the same positive value or views in reading, and it is finally affecting someone's attitude towards reading. Beliefs about the outcome of reading are the expectation of what reading activity can affect someone. Someone who beliefs reading can give more than just information has different attitude towards reading than someone who don't believe it. Specific experience is how reading has interrelated to someone's life. Kubis (1996) justifies that students who were read to when they were children will have more positive attitude towards reading than they who weren't.

In conclusion, there are three basic components which is concluded to be the basic factors of attitude towards reading. Kear, Mc. Kenna and Elsworth (1995) defined them into (1) **beliefs**; individual harbours' belief to the object, (2) **behavioural** intension about the object, and (3) **feelings**; individuals' feelings related to any reading experience.

## **C. PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

Above, it has been mentioned the factors may affect attitude towards reading, they are (1) age, (2) sex, (3) Family background, (4) teaching methods and material, (5) reading habits and (6) reading ability level (Parker, Cinthya T: 2004). In the same line, Garret (2000) suggest personal attributes and environmental factors which may affect attitude towards reading, they are ability, achievement, self-concept, home environment, instructional practices and special programs, gender, interest, and testing intelligence.

Based on the explanation of Parker. C (2004), the more mature someone the more positive he/she in reading. Sex is also affected attitude towards reading, based on a survey in elementary level, girl is more positive in reading than boy. Reading ability level is also very important in affected attitude towards reading, the more fluent

someone in reading the more positive he/she is in reading. Those age, sex, and reading ability level are personal attributes which are affected attitude towards reading.

However, family background is also affected attitude towards reading, one factor which is determined the positive or negative attitude towards reading is reading experience, and it is very related to someone family background. In the same line with family background, a habit of reading is also build in a home. Teaching method and material is also a supported factor, it is said teacher who can conduct a good teaching method and deliver a good teaching material can create a positive attitude towards reading in students life. Family background, reading habit, and teaching method and material are some environmental factors which are also affect attitude towards reading.

#### **D. POSITIVE – NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS READING**

Attitude towards reading is measured in two degrees (1) positive attitude towards reading and (2) negative attitude towards reading. Mc. Kenna (1996) defined positive or negative attitude towards reading are based on two important things

- (1) kind of reading to be performed and
- (2) the purpose of reading to be performed.

Positive attitude towards reading must inspire positive reading experiences. Walberg and Tsai defined several factors that affected positive attitude towards reading among adolescents, they are:

1. Believing of the importance of reading
2. Enjoying reading
3. Having a high self-confidence as a reader, and
4. During reading, having a home environment, where verbal communication takes place regularly.

Partin (2002) in Subashini Anamalai (2013) explained a study on the relationship between attitudes toward reading and its relationship with home environments, reported that a positive reading attitude of students is significantly related to and fostered by the following literary environment such as being read to as a child, parental interest in their child's reading, having books around the home, receiving books as gifts, and possessing a library card. Positive reading attitudes is also correlated significantly with having friends who like to read and with whom they can discuss and recommend books.

As a conclusion, positive and negative attitude towards reading are degree of a system of feeling in evaluating or considering related to express behaviour in approaching or avoiding reading something. The positive and negative attitude towards reading depends on the kind and purpose of the reading, where positive attitude towards reading supported by several positive home environments. Positive attitude towards reading is also believed as a bridge to a better reading habit and academic achievement.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This study is a descriptive qualitative study because this study aimed to describe the readers' attitude towards reading which is a social phenomena. The questions lies in this study are three questions as follows:

1. How is the attitude towards reading of English Department students in University of Darma Agung?
2. How is the attitude towards reading of English Department students in University of Darma Agung by the factors of (a) sex, (b) class type, (c) father's education level, (d) mother's

The instrument of collecting the data is a questionnaire of M.N Gomleksis (2004) which is consists of 30 statements with 6 subscales. This questionnaire is education level, and (e) financial income level? administered to 46 English Department of Darma Agung University by permission. The

following is the summary of the respondents of the questionnaires:

| Class Type |    | Sex |    | Father's Education Level |    |    |    |     | Mother's Education level |    |    |    |     | Financial income level |    |    |   |
|------------|----|-----|----|--------------------------|----|----|----|-----|--------------------------|----|----|----|-----|------------------------|----|----|---|
| Mo         | E  | M   | L  | Un                       | El | JS | SS | Col | Un                       | El | JS | SS | Col | VI                     | L  | M  | H |
| 19         | 27 | 11  | 35 | 3                        | 12 | 7  | 21 | 3   | 3                        | 20 | 11 | 10 | 2   | 2                      | 21 | 17 | 6 |
| 46         |    | 46  |    | 46                       |    |    |    |     | 46                       |    |    |    |     | 46                     |    |    |   |

Table 3.1. The Subjects Distribution

Abbreviations:

Mo : Morning

E : Evening

M : Male

F : Female

Un : Uneducated

El : Elementary School

JS : Junior High School

SS : Senior High School

Col : College

VI : Very Low

L : Low

M : Moderate

H : High

factors of (a) sex, (b) class type, (c) father's education level, (d) mother's The instrument of collecting the data is a questionnaire of M.N Gomleksi (2004) which is consists of 30 statements with 6 subscales. This questionnaire is education

level, and (e) financial income level? administered to 46 English Department of Darma Agung University by permission. The following is the summary of the respondents of the questionnaires:

| No | Statement   |
|----|---|
| 1  | I don't like reading  |
| 2  | I don't have a habit of reading   |
| 3  | I think reading is boring   |
| 4  | I find reading is unnecessary   |
| 5  | I hate reading books  |
| 6  | I don't like reading because I can't read well                                  |
| 7  | I don't read any books  |
| 8  | I like to read books in my free time  |
| 9  | I believe that the importance of reading is not sufficiently grasped            |
| 10 | I believe I can be a good reader  |
| 11 | I find it necessary to read   |
| 12 | I want reading clubs to be created  |
| 13 | I find it unnecessary to read a newspaper                                       |
| 14 | I believe that newspaper have a wide range o influence                          |
| 15 | Provides ease of expression to read emotions                                    |
| 16 | I love reading foreign classics   |
| 17 | Reading can affect people and the world better                                  |
| 18 | Book reading gives the habit of quick thinking                                  |
| 19 | Reading increases our mental capacity   |
| 20 | I love read Indonesian Classic  |
| 21 | Reading develops our world of imagination                                       |
| 22 | Reading creates multifaceted thinking skills                                    |
| 23 | Improves the ability of reading, analyzing, synthesizing and interpreting books |
| 24 | Once reading opens the doors of unknown worlds                                  |

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 25 | Reading different kinds of nooks affects our perspective on life        |
| 26 | We can make a connection between past and present through reading       |
| 27 | I'm picky about books   |
| 28 | I believe that reading can improve our vision                           |
| 29 | I want to have a library of my own                                      |
| 30 | I believe that reading skills has a positive effect on success in exams |

Table 3.2. Questionnaire of Attitude towards Reading Taken from M.N. Gomleksiz (2004)

The 30 statements of Gomleksis questionnaire are distributed into two, 21 statement of positive attitude towards reading and 9 statement of negative attitude towards reading. In determining the positive and negative attitude towards reading, the subscales are scored into 6.5.4.3.2.1 by the condition of the higher the score meant the more positive the

attitude, in other words in scoring the statement of the negative attitude ( 9 statements) the scoring must be reverse into 1,2,3,4,5,6. By the system of the scoring the most positive score of attitude towards reading is 180 and the most negative attitude towards reading is 0. The following are statements of the questionnaire:

## DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

### A. The Data

After distributing the questionnaire of recapitulation of the students' questionnaire Gomleksis (2004), the following are the result.

| No | Attributes and Factors |            |                          |                          |                        | Scores |
|----|------------------------|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------|
|    | Sex                    | Class Type | Father's Education Level | Mother's Education Level | Financial Income Level |        |
| 1  | F                      | M          | Junior School            | Elementary               | Moderate               | 146    |
| 2  | F                      | M          | Elementary               | Elementary               | Low                    | 111    |
| 3  | F                      | M          | Uneducated               | Elementary               | Low                    | 156    |
| 4  | F                      | M          | College                  | Elementary               | Low                    | 159    |
| 5  | F                      | M          | Junior School            | Junior School            | Low                    | 153    |
| 6  | M                      | M          | College                  | Elementary               | Low                    | 148    |
| 7  | M                      | M          | Senior School            | Junior School            | Moderate               | 140    |
| 8  | M                      | M          | Junior School            | Elementary               | Low                    | 148    |
| 9  | F                      | M          | Senior School            | Junior School            | Low                    | 158    |
| 10 | F                      | M          | Senior School            | Junior School            | Moderate               | 140    |
| 11 | F                      | M          | Junior School            | Elementary               | High                   | 157    |
| 12 | F                      | M          | College                  | College                  | Low                    | 161    |
| 13 | F                      | M          | Junior School            | Junior School            | Low                    | 132    |
| 14 | F                      | M          | Elementary               | Junior School            | Low                    | 138    |
| 15 | F                      | M          | Senior School            | Senior School            | Low                    | 162    |
| 16 | M                      | EV         | Elementary               | Elementary               | Low                    | 139    |
| 17 | M                      | EV         | Elementary               | Elementary               | Low                    | 155    |
| 18 | F                      | EV         | Senior School            | Senior School            | High                   | 147    |
| 19 | F                      | EV         | Junior School            | Elementary               | Low                    | 131    |
| 20 | F                      | EV         | Elementary               | Elementary               | High                   | 141    |
| 21 | M                      | EV         | Elementary               | Elementary               | High                   | 123    |
| 22 | F                      | EV         | Senior School            | College                  | High                   | 150    |
| 23 | F                      | EV         | Senior School            | Senior School            | Low                    | 138    |

|  |   |    |               |               |          |               |
|--|---|----|---------------|---------------|----------|---------------|
| 24   | F | EV | Senior School | Senior School | High     | 168           |
| 25   | F | EV | Junior School | Junior School | Low      | 134           |
| 26   | F | EV | Elementary    | Elementary    | Moderate | 120           |
| 27   | F | EV | Senior School | Junior School | Very Low | 117           |
| 28   | M | EV | Senior School | Senior School | Moderate | 154           |
| 29   | M | M  | Elementary    | Elementary    | Moderate | 142           |
| 30   | F | M  | Senior School | Elementary    | Moderate | 126           |
| 31   | F | M  | Elementary    | Junior School | Moderate | 149           |
| 32   | F | M  | Senior School | Senior School | Very Low | 127           |
| 33   | F | M  | Elementary    | Uneducated    | Low      | 142           |
| 34   | F | M  | Senior School | Senior School | Moderate | 153           |
| 35   | F | M  | Elementary    | Elementary    | Moderate | 157           |
| 36   | M | M  | Senior School | Junior School | Moderate | 172           |
| 37   | F | M  | Senior School | Elementary    | Moderate | 123           |
| 38   | F | M  | Senior School | Elementary    | Moderate | 164           |
| 39   | F | M  | Senior School | Senior School | Moderate | 140           |
| 40   | F | M  | Senior School | Senior School | Moderate | 166           |
| 41   | F | EV | Senior School | Senior School | Moderate | 129           |
| 42   | F | EV | Senior School | Junior School | Low      | 134           |
| 43   | F | EV | Elementary    | Elementary    | Low      | 139           |
| 44   | F | EV | Senior School | Elementary    | Low      | 132           |
| 45   | M | EV | Uneducated    | Uneducated    | Low      | 142           |
| 46   | M | EV | Uneducated    | Uneducated    | Moderate | 136           |
| <b>Average Score of Attitude towards reading</b> |   |    |               |               |          | <b>143,56</b> |

Table 4.1. The Data Recapitulation

Abbreviation:

M: Male

F: Female

M: Morning

EV: Evening

## DATA ANALYSIS

The recapitulation table above presents us some meaningful points:

1. The average attitude towards reading score of English department students of Darma Agung University is in **positive degree**, that is **143, 56** of 180 most positive score supposed to be.

2. **The most positive score is in the score of 172** by a male student of Morning Class type, from a father graduated from
3. **The lowest score is in the score of 111** by a female student of Morning Class type, from a father graduated from elementary school and a mother graduated from elementary school too, with a low level of financial income.

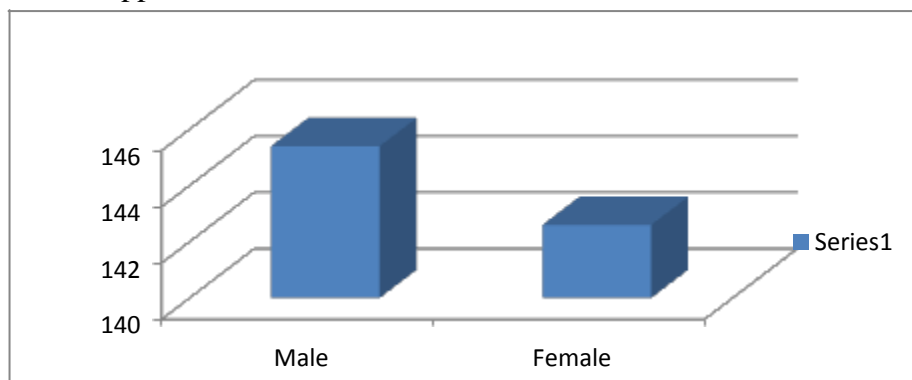


Chart 4.1. Data Based on Sex Personal Attribute

4. The 46 students are in 11 of male students and 35 of female students, here is the description of attitude towards reading based on sex personal attribute. The chart above telling us that male students are having more positive attitude towards reading by the average score of 145, 4 which is higher than the

female students by the average score of 142,6.  
 5. Based on the Class Type there are 27 students of Morning class type and 17 students of Evening class type. Here is the description of the students' attitude towards reading based on the class types.

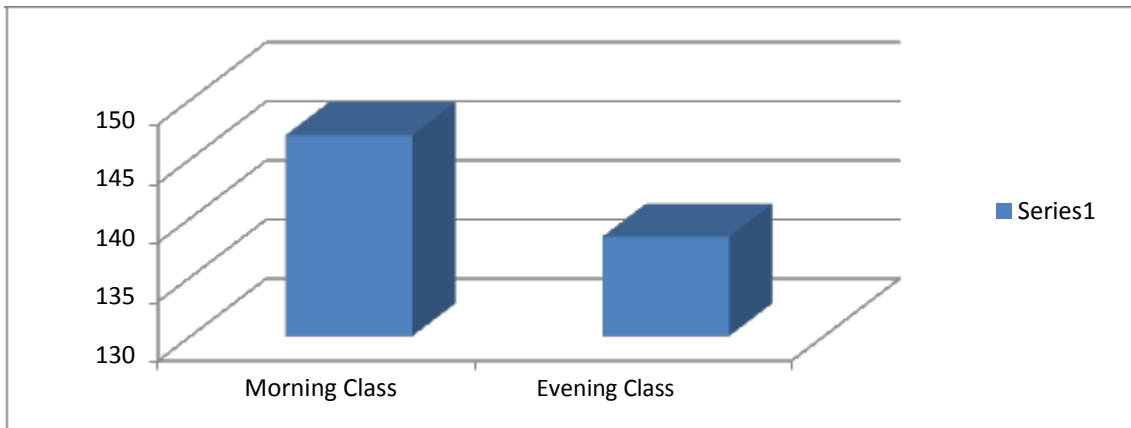


Chart 4.2. Data Based on Class Types

The chart above telling us that Morning Class Students are having more positive attitude towards reading by the average score of 147 which is higher than students of Evening Class by the average score of 138,4. In conclusion, students of morning class is having more positive attitude than students of evening class.

Agung University is distributed into 5 groups; (1) Uneducated father, (2) Graduated from Elementary School, (3) Graduated from Junior High School, (4) Graduated from Senior High School, and (5) Graduated from College/ University. Here is the description of students' attitude towards reading based on the father's education level.

6. Based on the father's education level, English Department students of Darma

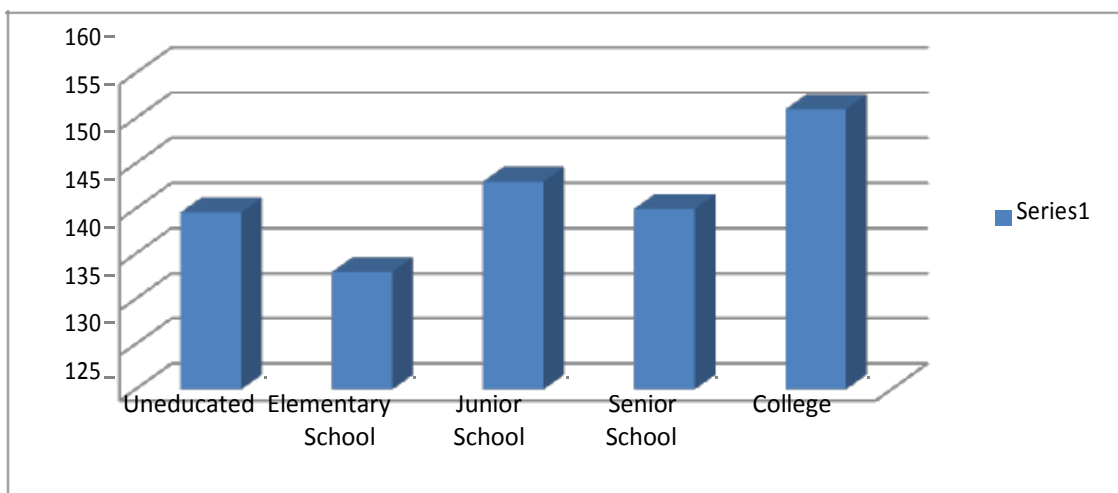


Chart 4.3. Data based on Fathers' Education Level



The chart above telling us that father's education level is not consistent affect the students' attitude towards reading, it is concluded in that way since the uneducated father show higher average score of students' attitude towards reading, by the average score of 144,6 which is higher from the average score of students' attitude towards reading the their father graduated from Elementary school by the average score of 138. Furthermore, students of their father is graduated from Junior high school is having higher average score of attitude towards reading of 148 higher than students whose their father is graduated from Senior high school with the average score of 145

but students whose their father is graduated from college or university is consistent be the highest score with the average score of 156 attitude towards reading.

7. Based on mother's level of education, the students is distributed in 5 groups, they are (1) Uneducated 3 students, (2) Elementary School 20 students, (3) Junior High School 11 students, (4) Senior High School 10 students, and last (5) College/ University 2 students. Here is the description of students' attitude towards reading based on their mother's education level.

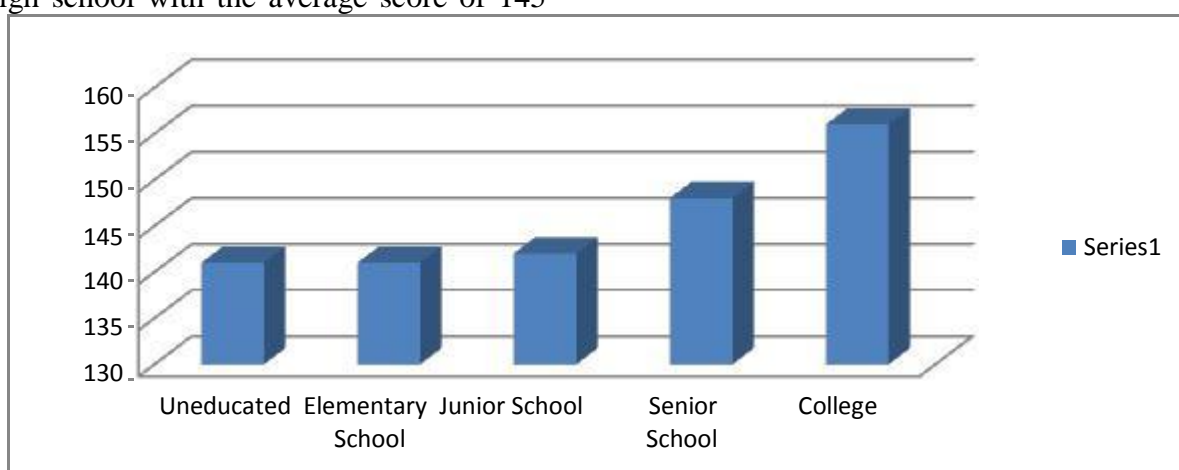
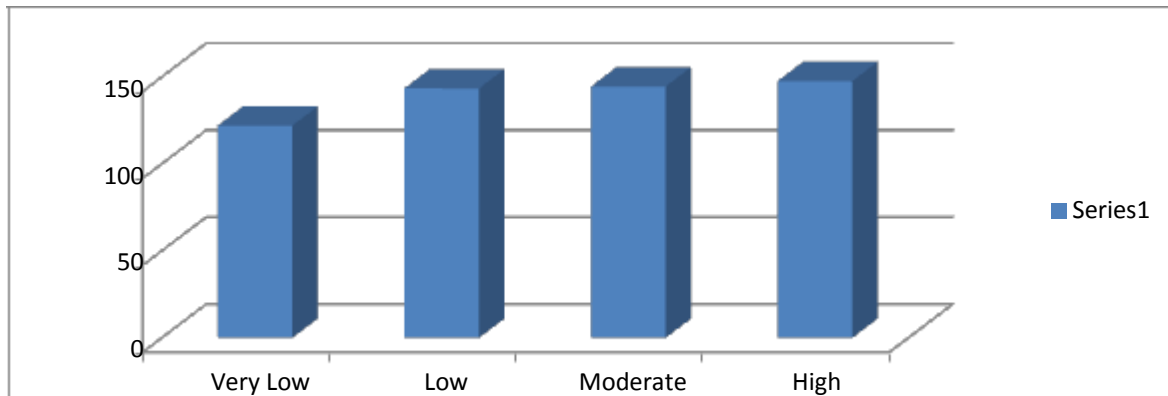


Chart 4.4. Data based on Mothers' Education Level

The chart above shows a clear relationship between the students' attitude towards reading and the students' mother education level. Unlike the father's education level to the attitude towards reading of the students which is not showing a linear relationship, mother's education level is linear to the students' attitude towards reading. By the chart, it can be concluded that the higher the mother's education level the more positive the students' attitude towards reading. Started from the uneducated mother the students' attitude towards reading is the lowest average score as it is 141, then the students whom their mother is graduated from elementary school is also the same as the uneducated mother, it is 141 as the average score. Next, students whose their mothers graduated from junior high school is higher

than the previous group with the average score of attitude is 142, then students whose their mother is graduated from senior high school is higher than the previous with the average score of the attitude is 148, and last students whose mother is graduated from college or university is having the highest average score of attitude towards reading, it is 156.

8. Based on the financial income level, there are 4 groups of students; (1) very low financial income level 2 students, (2) low financial income level 21 students, (3) moderate financial income level 17 students, and (4) high financial income level 6 students. Here is the description of the students attitude towards reading based on their financial income level.



The chart above shows that the higher the financial income level, the more positive the attitude towards reading. The average score of 144,5 is higher than the female positive attitude average score of 142,6.

Chart 4.5. Data based on Financial Income Level

The chart above is telling us the linear relationship between students financial income level to their attitude towards reading. It is said that the higher the students' financial income level the more positive their attitude towards reading. The chart shows us, students with very low financial income level is the lowest average score of attitude towards reading in 122 then higher is the students with low financial income level which is in 143,4, continued by the students with moderate

financial income level average score is 144,5, and the last is the students with high financial income level is the most positive attitude towards reading, it is 147,6.

9. After getting the result of the survey based on the students' personal attribute and their environmental factors, here the comparison of the affection for all of the personal attribute and environmental factors.

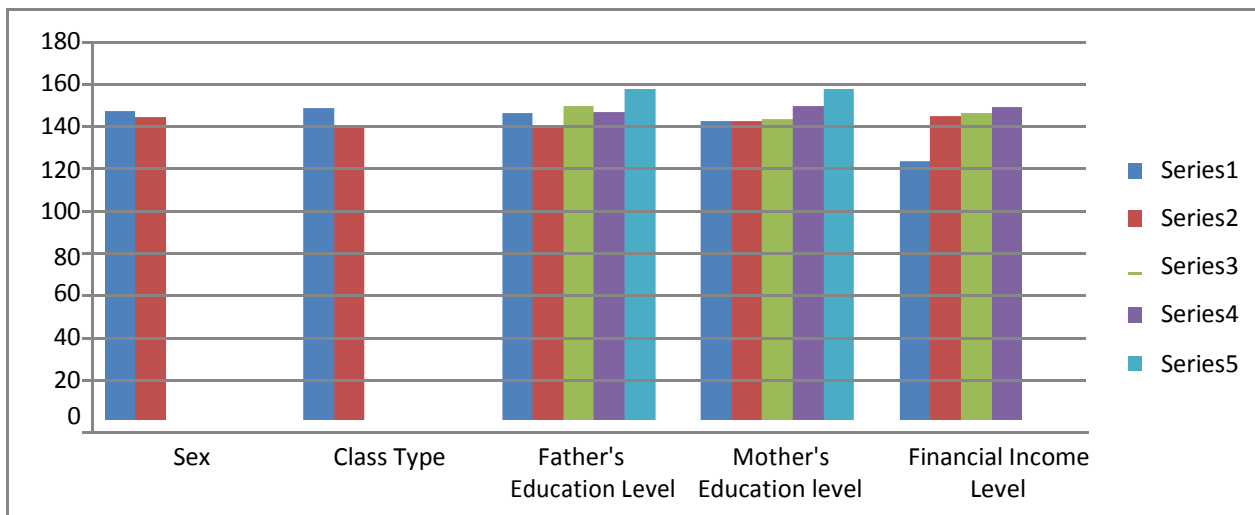


Chart 4.6. Data Recapitulation based on all attributes and factors

From the chart above, there are 3 important conclusions made: a. Personal attributes factors are do determine difference in students' attitude towards reading. b. The

personal attribute in this study is only in part of sex, which showing more positive attitude towards reading for Male than Female. c. The environmental factors in this

study are class type, fathers' education level, mothers' education level, and financial income level. For these four factors, it is only fathers' education level which not showing any linear correlation to the students' attitude towards reading.

## CONCLUSION

Day and Bamford (1998) highlighted two main factors affected reading in second language learning; attitude and motivation. Attitude is one main factor affected the process of reading in foreign and second language learning. Garret (2000) suggest personal attributes and environmental factors which may affect attitude towards reading, they are ability, achievement, self-concept, home environment, instructional practices and special programs, gender, interest, and testing intelligence.

After administered questionnaire of attitude towards reading by Gomleksiz (2004) to 46 students of English Department in Darma Agung University, there are findings are as follows:

1. The attitude towards reading of English Department students in Darma Agung University is more positive for the average score of the 46 students is 143,5 by the condition of the highest score is 172 and the lowest score is 111.
2. Personal attributes and environmental factors are determine differences, the male students is more positive in attitude towards reading by the average score of 145,4 than the female students by the average score of 142,6. In Class types, morning class students are having more positive attitude towards reading by the average score of 147 than the evening class by the average score of 138,4. Fathers' and mothers' education level is also determining differences. However, mothers' education level is affect linearly to the students attitude towards

reading; the higher the mothers' education level the more positive the students' attitude towards reading, but fathers' education level is not affect the students attitude towards reading linearly. The last of the environmental factors, financial income level is linearly affect the students' attitude towards reading; the higher the students' financial income level the more positive their attitude towards reading.

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