

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher presents some theories and literature reviews related to this study. This chapter presents reading, reading purpose, teaching and learning reading for vocational high school, problems in teaching and learning reading, narrative text, computer assisted language learning (CALL), webtoon, and previous studies.

#### A. Reading

Reading, alongside writing, speaking, and listening, is a fundamental English language ability which acts as the foundation for learning and communication. It is an intricate cognitive process involving interpreting information to be able to derive meaning (Grabe & Stoller, 2021). The ability to read engages multiple cognitive and perceptual systems, including language processing, visual and orthographic recognition, working memory, attention, motor coordination, and higher-level comprehension (Andreola & Scaini, 2020).

Several factors influence reading skills, including individual aspects such as metacognitive awareness and interest in reading, family-related factors like economic, social, and cultural background, and school-related elements such as instructional time and classroom discipline (Karaman, 2022; Liu et al., 2022). Reading goes beyond mere word recognition; it involves constructing meaning from the text by integrating personal experiences and contextual clues. As a crucial skill for academic and personal development, reading contributes significantly to vocabulary expansion and pronunciation, which, in turn, enhance other language

skills such as speaking and writing.

Reading requires beyond simply interpreting letters, words, and sentences; it also involves thorough understanding and being able to extract specific information and knowledge from text. There are two main forms of reading: extensive and intensive reading. Extensive reading is defined as reading vast amounts of material for general comprehension and enjoyment, emphasizing fluency and vocabulary acquisition (Mason & Krashen, 1997). In contrast, intensive reading aims to develop students' ability to understand information in detail, enhance vocabulary, and develop sentence structure (Ala & Derequito, 2022). Saba and Noreen (2020) highlight the importance of extensive reading in language acquisition, noting that it enhances vocabulary, semantic knowledge, fluency, and overall comprehension while fostering a positive attitude toward reading (Larhmaid, 2025).

## **B. Reading Purpose**

The purpose of reading differs according on the reader's goals, context, as well as needs. Academic, professional, and leisure reading are the three broad categories of reading (Smith and Hammond, 2021). Each type serves distinct functions, contributing to knowledge acquisition, skill development, and personal enrichment.

These different objectives require various degrees of understanding and cognitive work. Barret (1976) developed a renowned taxonomy that classifies reading comprehension into stages in order to better understand how readers comprehend texts according to their intended use. The three categories of

understanding included in this taxonomy are literal, inferential, and critical, which are connected to distinct reading objectives. Literal comprehension is the ability to comprehend explicitly expressed facts in a text, often for a brief time. For inferential comprehension, on the other hand, the reader needs to draw connections between textual clues and previous knowledge in order to grasp meanings that are implied but not explicitly stated. This kind of reading serves the purpose of understanding the author's aim or for determining predictions. Whereas critical comprehension involves determining the text's quality, reliability, and coherence, which are crucial when reading to acquire analysis or judgment. Depending on their reading objectives, readers have to engage multiple stages of thought, according to Barrett's theory. Suhaila et al. (2025) supports up this argument by claiming that having clear reading objectives aids in guiding students to use the right methods and develop deeper comprehension.

Academic reading involves processing information from textbooks, research articles, and scholarly journals. It is essential for students and researchers, as it helps in critical thinking, knowledge expansion, and comprehension of complex theories. Academic reading requires higher-order cognitive skills, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of texts (Grabe & Stoller, 2021). Additionally, strategies such as skimming, scanning, annotating, and summarizing are commonly used to enhance academic reading efficiency.

Professional reading pertains to interpreting work-related documents such as manuals, reports, business correspondence, and industry regulations. This type of reading is crucial for employees and professionals, as it enables them to acquire

technical knowledge, follow protocols, and stay updated with industry trends (Smith and Hammond, 2021). For vocational students, professional reading is particularly important because it prepares them for real-world work environments. Studies have shown that exposure to industry-related texts improves students' readiness for employment and enhances their ability to interpret complex documents in their respective fields (Lyu et al., 2024; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Recreational reading, often referred to as leisure reading, involves engaging with literature, fiction, and other forms of creative writing. It is essential for developing imagination, creativity, and emotional intelligence. Research suggests that students who engage in regular recreational reading demonstrate improved empathy, reduced stress levels, and enhanced language skills (Krashen, 2022). Moreover, digital media, including webcomics and webtoons, have emerged as popular recreational reading materials, particularly among younger generations. These forms of reading not only serve entertainment purposes but also contribute to language exposure and vocabulary development (Kim, 2023).

For vocational students, aligning reading materials with their career goals is essential in making reading more meaningful and practical. Utilizing technical documents, case studies, and industry-specific materials enhances comprehension and engagement. Vocational students benefit from contextualized reading materials that directly relate to their fields of study, such as engineering blueprints, hospitality service guidelines, or business case reports. Lyu et al., (2024) and Wigfield & Guthrie (1997) emphasize that understanding the purpose of reading significantly improves students' motivation, increasing their engagement and willingness to

participate in reading sessions.

By recognizing the different purposes of reading and incorporating them effectively into educational curricula, teachers can create tailored tactics to assist students improve their reading comprehension and general literacy skills.

### **C. Teaching and Learning Reading for Vocational High School**

Teaching reading in vocational high schools presents unique challenges and opportunities. Unlike general academic institutions, vocational schools require reading materials that are relevant to specific fields such as engineering, hospitality, and business (Nation, 2001). Vocational education necessitates a tailored approach that integrates practical and theoretical knowledge to ensure students acquire industry-specific competencies. Deepening the integration of industry and education in vocational colleges requires strengthening enterprise participation, improving teaching staff practical abilities, and establishing an information exchange platform (Guo, 2023; Zhang, 2025). To address these needs, effective instructional strategies include contextualized learning, which integrates real-world materials such as manuals, blueprints, and case studies to make reading more relevant and applicable. Interactive techniques, such as discussions, role-playing, and collaborative projects, encourage active participation and comprehension (Zitha et al., 2023). Additionally, technology integration plays an essential role in leveraging digital tools as well as interactive materials to increase engagement and accommodate varied learning styles.

Recent studies suggest that vocational students benefit from differentiated instruction that caters to their specific learning needs. Differentiated learning

technology improves the quality of training for higher education students, as it focuses on individual students' personal characteristics and professional needs, enhancing their interest and motivation to study (Campbell et al., 2022). Repurposing neural systems for vocal language, visual processing, and attentional regulation are all part of acquiring the ability to read (Church and Fletcher, 2021). Implementing scaffolding techniques, such as guided reading and structured peer discussions, helps students navigate complex texts with greater confidence. Furthermore, it has been discovered that adaptive reading programs, which modify content difficulty according to learners' competency levels, enhance comprehension and retention (Jáquez-Pérez & Villa-Maciel, 2021; Tomlinson, 2021). By implementing these strategies, teachers can establish an inclusive and encouraging reading atmosphere that promotes literacy growth in vocational high schools.

#### **D. Problem in Teaching and Learning Reading**

Several challenges hinder effective reading instruction in vocational education. One major issue is lack of motivation, as many students struggle to engage with traditional reading materials that may not be relevant to their interests or career paths (Smith and Hammond, 2021). Unlike students in general academic settings, vocational students may prioritize hands-on skills over reading comprehension, making it difficult for educators to foster a strong reading culture. This issue is exacerbated by the limited availability of reading materials specifically designed for vocational fields, making students feel disconnected from the texts they are required to read.

Limited vocabulary is another significant barrier, as students with weak

vocabulary foundations often face difficulties in comprehension and fluency (Maharani, 2021). Limited word knowledge prevents them from fully understanding texts, making it difficult to grasp key ideas and concepts. Vocational students, in particular, may face difficulties with industry-specific terminology, which can be highly technical and unfamiliar. Without adequate support, such as glossaries or context-based learning strategies, students may find it difficult to grasp essential concepts needed for their future professions.

Additionally, insufficient teaching strategies can impede learning, especially when educators rely on outdated methods that do not accommodate diverse student needs. Vocational students have a variety of learning demands, which may not be satisfied by traditional approaches that emphasize rote memorization or solitary reading activities. Many teachers are untrained in scaffolding or differentiated instruction, resulting in a generic approach that fails to assist struggling readers (Tomlinson, 2021).

Resource constraints also present a challenge, with limited access to books, digital tools, and qualified educators affecting reading instruction quality. Macaruso and Prescott (2020) found that vocational schools implementing blended learning approaches, which combine traditional and digital resources, improve student reading comprehension scores. Addressing these issues requires the integration of modern educational technologies, engaging teaching strategies, and industry-relevant reading materials to enhance student learning outcomes.

#### **E. Narrative Text**

Narrative text is a type of communication through words or speech that tells

a story and frequently includes important features such characters, settings, storylines, conflicts, and resolutions. It is one of the most engaging text types, commonly found in literature, folktales, and digital media (Derewianka, 2020). Narrative texts are an essential genre in language learning and greatly aid in the growth of understanding, critical thinking, and cultural knowledge (Mar and Ta, 2021; Navazeni, 2017; Khoir and Rohmana, 2024). Through storytelling, readers are exposed to various linguistic structures, new vocabulary, and contextualized grammar, making it an effective medium for language acquisition (Nunan, 2021). In vocational high schools, where reading instruction must align with students' professional aspirations, narrative texts serve as an engaging tool to foster literacy skills. They encourage students to analyze characters, identify themes, predict story developments, and relate narratives to personal experiences, which strengthens both analytical and inferential reading abilities.

Furthermore, research indicates that the integration of narrative texts in reading instruction can enhance motivation and engagement among learners. Hwang and Lee (2022) found that relatable themes and emotionally engaging content increase the likelihood that students will interact with reading materials. Personal relevance in narrative reading is crucial for maintaining audience interest, with emotional valence and thematic saliency playing key roles in the process (Kuzmičová and Bálint, 2019). The effectiveness of narrative texts can be further amplified through digital storytelling methods, such as webtoons and interactive fiction. Webtoons, in particular, combine text with visual elements, making stories more accessible and appealing, especially for reluctant readers. Additionally,

interactive fiction allows students to actively participate in the story, fostering deeper comprehension and retention (Son and Liang, 2020; Matiychak and Petrenko, 2024). Teachers may create a dynamic reading environment that fosters creativity, problem-solving abilities, and an appreciation for storytelling as a communication tool in addition to improving language competency by integrating narrative literature into the vocational high school curriculum (Portnova and Valero, 2020; Khoir et al., 2024; Halizah and Rohmana, 2024).

#### **F. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)**

Computer Assisted Language Learning, commonly known as CALL, refers to the use of computer-based technologies and digital tools to support and enhance the process of language learning and teaching. CALL includes a broad range of digital tools that are intended or used to support language learning, such as websites, apps, software, and online platforms (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). As one of the foundational frameworks in the field of educational technology, CALL has significantly shaped the way language teachers integrate digital media into their classroom instruction. The primary goal of CALL is to provide learners with more interactive, engaging, and accessible language learning experiences that go beyond what traditional printed materials can offer.

Y. Luo (2024) and Z. Luo (2023) highlights that learner engagement and cognitive load management have significantly improved with the introduction of multimedia and interactive material in CALL deployment through interactive software, online courses, and mobile applications. In the context of EFL education, CALL plays an important role in exposing students to authentic language use

through digital environments, which supports vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and overall language proficiency (Nathir Ghafar et al., 2025).

CALL has undergone multiple phases of development, ranging from basic computer-based drill exercises to more integrative and communicative methods that use multimedia and the internet. Mahajan (2022) traces this development from drill and practice systems based on mainframes in the 1960s to more advanced tools based on natural language processing that serve as interactive language tutors. In its early stages, CALL focused primarily on repetitive practice and grammar exercises delivered through computer programs. However, as technology advanced, CALL expanded to include a broader range of interactive and communicative activities.

Lolita et al. (2020) found that computer-assisted learning gave students the chance to explore their English skills by interacting directly with digital content individually, in pairs, or in groups, resulting in more active involvement during the learning process. This shift reflects a growing recognition that language learning is most effective when learners are actively engaged with meaningful and contextualized content. More recently, the scope of CALL has further expanded to include mobile-assisted language learning, with Jeong (2022) finding that the incorporation of mobile applications into language learning fosters learner motivation and makes learning more sustainable and enjoyable compared to conventional instructional methods. In vocational high school settings, where students are expected to develop both language proficiency and digital literacy, the integration of CALL-based approaches provides a practical and relevant learning

experience that aligns with the demands of the modern workplace.

Furthermore, research has shown that the use of CALL in language classrooms can significantly improve student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. Nathir Ghafar et al. (2025) found that students generally benefitted from CALL, with participants reporting increased motivation, improved language skills, and greater access to diverse learning materials. The use of digital platforms and multimedia resources within a CALL framework can also cater to different learning styles, making language learning more accessible and enjoyable for a wider range of students. Additionally, Alshaye (2021) demonstrated that digital storytelling, as one form of CALL implementation, significantly improved critical reading skills and critical thinking skills among learners in a quasi-experimental setting, suggesting that digitally mediated reading activities can produce measurable improvements in comprehension outcomes.

Furthermore, Bahari et al. (2025) found that the integration of CALL elements in language learning positively influenced learner motivation, leading to greater involvement and active participation in language learning activities. In this regard, Webtoon, as a digital comic platform that combines visual storytelling with written text and is accessible through both website and mobile application, falls naturally under the umbrella of CALL. Its use in the EFL reading classroom represents a practical application of CALL principles, as it leverages digital technology to provide students with an engaging and contextually rich reading experience that supports comprehension and language development.

## **G. Webtoon**

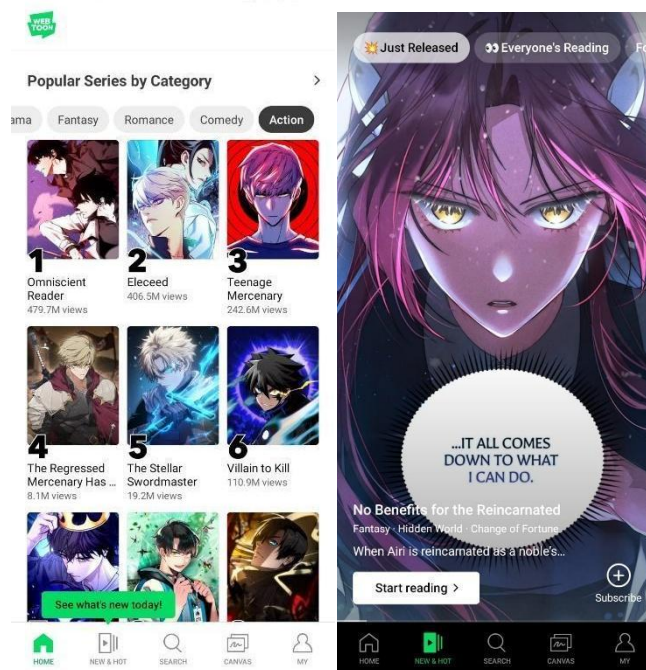
Webtoon, as a medium in South Korea, has blown up in regions outside the Southeast Asia region, especially among the younger audiences. The term "Webtoon" refers to online comics and is a combination of the words "web" and "cartoon". Webtoon initially appeared in the early 2000s on Korean online portal sites (e.g., Naver and Daum), which made vertical-scrolling comics for digital devices available for free (Lee, 2015). Webtoons are digital comics that are typically released digitally as chapters with interactive features, multimedia components, and a vertical scrolling structure that might improve reader comprehension and emotional engagement (Dar and Rahman, 2023).

Webtoon's role extends beyond entertainment; it serves as a platform to express artistic ideas and cultural exchange as well as a media to learn from other art forms. With various genres such as romance, fantasy, action, stories starting from slice of life, Webtoons cater to readers of all generations and help users to build reading habits by using digital devices. As Webtoons are interactive and engaging, it can be considered potential educational devices, especially in language learning, as visual and textual elements are combined for better comprehension and engagement.

Webtoons can be accessed via the official website at <https://www.webtoons.com/en/> or by downloading the Webtoon app from the Play Store or App Store, making it widely available for readers across different platforms. Webtoon app offers a clean, easy-to-use interface that helps users, especially students and young readers, to explore stories comfortably. When users

open the app, they land on the Home screen, where popular Webtoon series are displayed according to genres like drama, fantasy, romance, comedy, and action. Each genre shows the most-read titles, such as Omniscient Reader, Eleceed, and Teenage Mercenary, with view counts reaching hundreds of millions. This helps new readers quickly find the most talked-about and well-loved stories. There's also a New & Hot section that highlights recently released or trending Webtoons, making it easy to stay updated with what's popular.

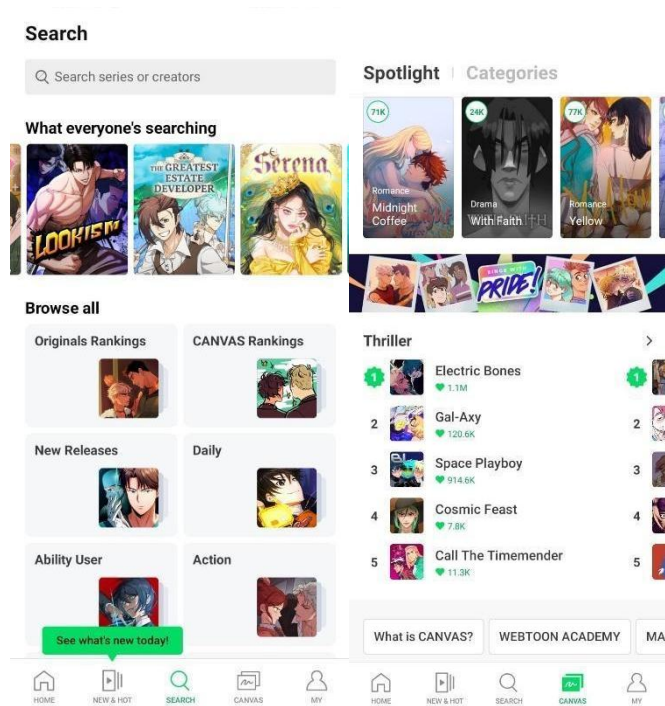
Picture 2.1: Home screen and New & Hot section



For those who want to find something specific, the Search menu is very helpful. Readers can type in the name of a series or a creator, and suggestions will appear immediately. The app also shows what other people are currently searching for under the section “What Everyone’s Searching,” which acts as a window into the latest reading trends. Below that, users can browse through various categories like Originals Rankings, CANVAS Rankings, New Releases, Daily, Ability User,

and Action. These categories are useful for both first-time readers and returning users looking for something new or genre-specific.

Picture 2.2: Search menu and Canvas feature

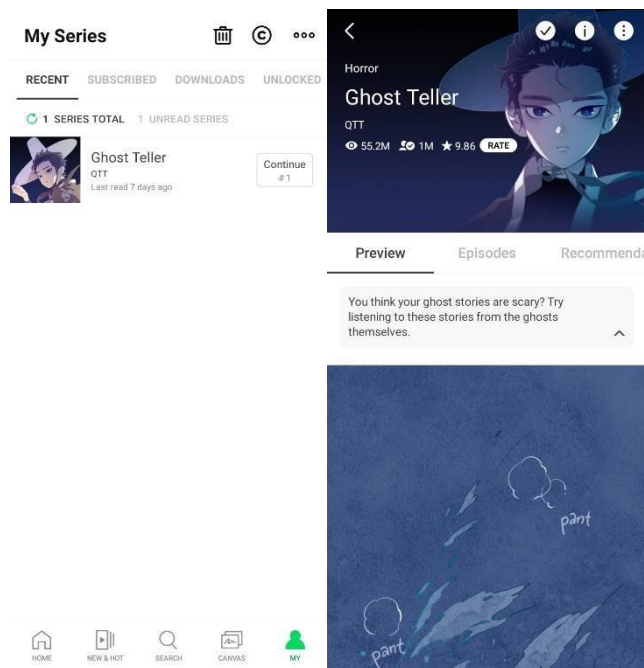


Webtoon also supports independent creators through its CANVAS feature. This is where non-professional artists can publish their own stories and build their own audiences. In the CANVAS tab, users can explore different genres and see what's trending in the community. For instance, in the Thriller category, stories like Electric Bones, Gal-Axy, and Space Playboy are ranked by popularity. There's also a Spotlight area that features special Webtoons picked by the editors, usually for their storytelling quality or relevance to seasonal themes and social movements.

The My menu is where users manage their personal reading lists. Here, they can see which Webtoons they've recently read, subscribed to, downloaded for offline reading, or unlocked. It helps readers continue where they left off without

having to search again. This menu keeps everything organized, making it easier for users to enjoy multiple series over time. When a reader clicks on a specific Webtoon, they are taken to a detailed page about that series. For example, the series Ghost Teller shows information like how many views it has, how many people are following it, and the average rating given by readers. There are three main tabs: Preview, Episodes, and Recommendations. The Preview gives a short summary of the story, Episodes lists all the available chapters, and Recommendations suggests similar stories the reader might enjoy. This layout helps readers decide if they want to start reading a series and often encourages them to discover more stories along the way.

Picture 2.3: My menu and Detailed page



## H. Previous Studies

Prior research has been conducted on the use of Webtoon in educational

settings, particularly in relation to reading comprehension. The first study was conducted by Hamiru et al. (2023) entitled "The Effect of Reading Comics via Webtoons on Senior High School Students' Reading Comprehension: A Case Study" published in the Journal of Language Education and Educational Technology. This study aimed to investigate the impact of using Webtoon comics compared to conventional instruction on reading comprehension among Class X IPA students at SMAN 2 Baubau, while also examining the role of gender in the results. The sample comprised 72 students selected via purposive sampling, and data were gathered using a 40-item multiple-choice test and analyzed through descriptive statistics and two-way ANOVA. The results showed no significant main effect of the Webtoon group on reading comprehension ( $p = 0.367 > 0.05$ ), although a significant interaction effect between gender and group was found ( $p = 0.02 < 0.05$ ). These findings underscore the importance of selecting appropriate reading media and tailoring instructional methods based on student characteristics. The similarity between this previous research and the current study is that both employ a quasi-experimental approach comparing a Webtoon group with a conventional instruction group to measure reading comprehension. The difference is that Hamiru et al. (2023) found no significant effect of Webtoon on reading comprehension and additionally examined the variable of gender, while this research focuses on narrative text comprehension among vocational high school students using ANCOVA analysis.

The second study was conducted by Widiyarti et al. (2021) entitled "'I Don't Understand English Reading': Utilizing Webtoon as an Edutainment Medium to

Foster Students' Reading Comprehension" published in *Silampari Bisa*. This study investigated the use of Webtoon as an edutainment medium to improve students' reading ability with a particular focus on narrative text at a vocational high school in Majalengka. The research employed a quasi-experimental design with 33 students of Class X TKL/A as the experimental group and 36 students of Class X TKL/C as the control group. A multiple-choice test was used as the research instrument, and the independent t-test showed that the t-count was higher than the t-table ( $2.019 > 2$ ), meaning the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The findings revealed that the mean score of the experimental class that utilized Webtoon was higher than the control class that used printed narrative text only, confirming that Webtoon is effective as an edutainment medium to foster students' reading comprehension of narrative text. The similarity between this previous research and the current study is that both use a quasi-experimental design comparing Webtoon and printed text as media, and both focus specifically on narrative text at the vocational high school level. The difference is that Widiyarti et al. (2021) used an independent t-test for data analysis, while this research employs ANCOVA to control for students' prior ability through pre-test scores, providing a more precise measurement of the treatment effect.

The third study was conducted by Erya & Pustika (2021) entitled "Students' Perception Towards the Use of Webtoon to Improve Reading Comprehension Skills" published in the *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*. This study investigated whether Webtoon could increase students' interest and motivation in reading comprehension, with respondents being English Education

students at Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia. The study employed a descriptive approach using perception-based instruments to gather data on students' responses toward the use of Webtoon in reading activities. The results indicated that students were more interested and motivated to improve their reading comprehension skills when using Webtoon, suggesting that the platform's combination of visual content and engaging language effectively supports reading engagement. The similarity between this previous research and the current study is that both recognize Webtoon as a beneficial medium for improving reading comprehension skills in an EFL context. The difference is that Erya and Pustika (2021) focused on students' perceptions using a descriptive qualitative approach at the university level, while this research employs a quantitative quasi-experimental design to measure the actual effectiveness of Webtoon on reading comprehension scores at the vocational high school level.

The fourth study was conducted by Asmara (2021) entitled "The Implementation of Extensive Reading Using LINE Webtoon to Enhance Students' Reading Comprehension in Narrative Story" published in *RETAIN: Research on English Language Teaching in Indonesia*. This study investigated the implementation of extensive reading through LINE Webtoon to enhance students' reading comprehension of narrative texts, as well as how students responded to its implementation. The study employed a descriptive-qualitative approach by observing the teaching and learning process in an online class of 36 high school students, with data collected through observation checklists, field notes, questionnaires, and interviews with seven selected students across two meetings.

The results showed that the implementation of extensive reading using LINE Webtoon could enhance students' understanding of narrative stories, with students agreeing that reading text with pictures made it easier for them to understand the story's context even when they encountered unfamiliar words. The similarity between this previous research and the current study is that both focus on the use of Webtoon to improve reading comprehension of narrative texts in a high school EFL setting. The difference is that Asmara (2021) implemented an extensive reading approach using a descriptive-qualitative method, while this research uses a controlled quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test measurements to quantitatively measure the effectiveness of Webtoon on reading comprehension.

The fifth study was conducted by Hartati et al. (2023) entitled "Webtoon Comic Media to Improve Reading Comprehension for Students with Hearing Impairment in Special Primary Schools" published in the ASEAN Journal of Community and Special Needs Education. This study aimed to determine whether the use of Webtoon comic media could improve the reading comprehension ability of students with hearing impairment, who typically struggle with understanding abstract words in texts. The study employed an experimental method with a one-group pre-test post-test design involving five students with hearing impairment, with data collected through a Google Form containing ten comprehension questions. The results showed that the use of Webtoon comic media improved reading comprehension skills, as evidenced by score increases across all students. The improvement occurred because students with hearing impairment were helped to understand the sequence of stories through the visual support provided by the

Webtoon comic. The similarity between this previous research and the current study is that both examine the effectiveness of Webtoon as a visual-based medium for improving reading comprehension. The difference is that Hartati et al. (2021) focused on students with hearing impairment in a special primary school setting with a very small sample of five students, while this research involves 70 regular tenth-grade EFL students in a vocational high school using a more robust quasi-experimental design with ANCOVA analysis.

The sixth study was conducted by Harpain et al. (2022) entitled "Analyzing Student Perception on Using Webtoon as a Learning Medium for Reading Comprehension" published in the International Journal of Educational Studies in Social Sciences. This study sought to investigate students' perceptions concerning the use of Webtoon as a learning aid for reading comprehension among high school students in Indonesia, employing a qualitative approach with questionnaires and interviews as data collection tools. The findings revealed a prevailing positive inclination among students toward integrating Webtoon into their reading practices, measured across various indicators such as interest, experience, emotional response, and the nature of perceptions. The majority of students held a favorable view of using Webtoon for reading exercises, reporting that engaging with Webtoon during reading activities was conducive to heightening their comprehension and fostering familiarity with vocabulary. The similarity between this previous research and the current study is that both recognize Webtoon as a promising medium for supporting reading comprehension in an EFL classroom context. The difference is that Harpain et al. (2022) focused solely on students' subjective perceptions using a

qualitative approach, while this research goes further by measuring the actual quantitative effect of Webtoon on reading comprehension scores through a quasi-experimental design with ANCOVA analysis.

The seventh study was conducted by Tomaso et al. (2024) in a study investigating the use of Webtoon comic application as a reading material to improve students' reading comprehension in a Professional Reading Class of an English Education Study Program. The study employed Collaborative Action Research as the method, with data collected through tests and interviews involving students in the academic year 2023/2024. The criteria of success were set at 70% of students reaching a score of 75. The results showed that 75% of students reached the minimum score of 75, with score distributions ranging from 75 to 90, indicating a clear improvement in reading comprehension after the use of Webtoon comic application as reading material. Students' responses toward the use of Webtoon were notably positive, describing the experience as fun, enjoyable, and interesting, and reporting that it engaged their motivation in reading. The similarity between this previous research and the current study is that both highlight the effectiveness of Webtoon as a reading medium and emphasize its positive impact on student motivation and reading engagement. The difference is that Tomaso et al. (2023) employed Collaborative Action Research focusing on university-level students in a professional reading class, while this research uses a quasi-experimental design with ANCOVA analysis targeting tenth-grade vocational high school students to measure the statistical effect of Webtoon on narrative text reading comprehension.