



Analyzing the Determinants of Students' Reading Interest in the CANDIL Digital Library Application

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore how students' psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness, can be met or hindered in using the CANDIL (Maca Dina Digital Library) application, using the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) approach. The method used is qualitative with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The results showed that the autonomy aspect tends to be fulfilled even though it is limited by the variety of collections, the competence aspect is still constrained by features that -are confusing for some students who use the CANDIL. It can also be seen that the relatedness aspect is still not maximized due to the lack of interaction space between users. In conclusion, although the CANDIL application has provided easy access and some support for reading interest for students using the CANDIL, the fulfillment of the three psychological needs has not been maximized. This shows that strategies to increase interest in reading in the digital era do not simply rely on adequate technology, but must also consider psychological or motivational factors that can affect the experience and increase interest in reading for users.

Keywords: digital library; digital application; digital collection; self determination; psychology need; user experience

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in the way people access information and reading materials (Spjeldnæs & Karlsen, 2024). Students, as part of the academic community who need references and information for learning and to broaden their knowledge, must be able to adapt to technological developments (Tan et al., 2021). Digital library applications such as CANDIL (Maca Dina Digital Library), provided by the Regional Library and Archives Office (Dispusipda), are an innovation that facilitates practical and flexible access to reading materials through digital devices (Ilmiyah, 2023). This platform is designed to meet the needs of a generation of users who are increasingly familiar with technology and want easy access without space and time

limitations. However, even though access to reading materials is becoming more open, the reading interest of Indonesians in general is still relatively low and has not shown a significant increase.

There have been several previous studies, including a study ([Rosyidah & Dewi, 2024](#)) entitled Analysis of Library User Satisfaction with the Implementation of the CANDIL Application at DISPUSIPDA West Java. The approach used was a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative research type. Data collection in this case consisted of raw data from research results such as observations, interviews, documentation, and field notes. The results showed that the majority of users felt that CANDIL had facilitated access to library collections and increased reading interest through digital platforms. In other words, users were satisfied with the CANDIL application despite the existing obstacles.

Another study conducted by ([Rahma et al., 2023](#)) with the title "User Perspectives on the Use of the CANDIL Application as a Support for Digital Library Services" used a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data collection was carried out using observation, interviews, and literature study techniques. The results of this study show that this application makes it easier for the digital generation to access information, although some users still encounter obstacles in its use, such as an uncomfortable reading display and some features that do not function properly.

Furthermore, in a study conducted by ([Mardiah, 2023](#)), this study discusses Reading Interest in Indonesia: Systematic Literature Review. This study uses a systematic literature review method to examine the factors that influence reading interest in Indonesia and solutions to increase it. The results show that factors such as facilities, family education, reading technology, family economy, and motivation play a significant role in people's reading interest.

Although digital reading materials continue to be developed, this condition still raises questions about what factors hinder or support reading interest in the context of using digital applications ([Chang et al., 2023](#)) such as CANDIL. To date, there have been quite a number of studies discussing the technical aspects of applications, but studies on user experience, especially from a psychological and reading motivation perspective, are still very limited. Understanding the user experience is very important to determine how users' psychological needs are met or hindered while using the application, thereby providing a more comprehensive picture of the factors that influence reading interest in the digital age ([Zhang et al., 2021](#)).

In analyzing users' intrinsic motivation, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan is a relevant framework ([Marberlantina et al., 2025](#)). This theory emphasizes the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs, namely autonomy (freedom to choose reading material and reading methods), competence (the feeling of being able to understand and master reading material), and relatedness (the feeling of personal connection in the context of reading) ([Rahmayanthi et al., 2022](#)). Looking at the efforts made to increase reading interest in the digital era, one of which is through the CANDIL application that offers practical access for users, including students, in reality, it does not show a significant increase in user reading interest. This shows that in increasing reading interest, it is not enough to only provide technology or digital platforms, but it is also necessary to fulfill the psychological needs of users ([Mustapha et al., 2022](#)).

Therefore, in this article, the author will identify the obstacles experienced by CANDIL-using students in fulfilling their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which affect their reading interest, as well as the supporting factors that help fulfill these psychological needs among CANDIL-using students so that they can optimally increase their reading interest in the digital era. Using Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the author will explore the obstacles and supporting factors of reading

interest among students who use the CANDIL application, so that the results can help develop more effective digital literacy improvement strategies that are in line with the psychological needs of users.

Unlike previous studies, this study will specifically discuss from the psychological perspective of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to analyze in depth how basic psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness, can be factors that hinder or support reading interest among students who use the CANDIL platform. This approach provides a more specific focus on intrinsic motivation and the subjective experiences of users, whereas previous studies have focused more on user satisfaction and general perceptions of the application. Thus, this study not only assesses the effectiveness of the application in terms of service or access, as in previous studies, but also reveals the dynamics of intrinsic motivation that play a role in supporting or inhibiting digital reading interest among students. Therefore, this study is expected to provide new insights into understanding the dynamics of digital reading motivation in the era of digital libraries, particularly through the CANDIL platform.

This study aims to explore how psychological needs, such as autonomy (freedom to choose reading material and reading methods), competence (feeling of being able to understand and master reading material), and relatedness (feeling of personal connection in the context of reading) can be fulfilled or hindered in students' reading experiences on the CANDIL application, thereby providing a more comprehensive picture of the factors that influence reading interest in the digital era. By looking at it from the perspective of librarians and users, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges in increasing reading interest amid technological advances and changes in the literacy behavior of today's digital society.

Theoretically, this study is expected to serve as a reference in the context of fulfilling users' psychological needs by integrating Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to understand the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs in the context of digital reading through the CANDIL platform. Practically, this research is expected to serve as a reference for CANDIL administrators and related parties in designing strategies to increase reading interest, thereby supporting the optimization of public reading interest in the digital era.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive quantitative method supported by qualitative data. According to (Billa & Savira, 2023), descriptive quantitative is a method that examines the state of a group of individuals, a set of conditions, objects, thought systems, or types of current events. The main data was collected through a closed questionnaire that produced quantitative data in the form of percentages, tables, and graphs, which were used to describe the patterns and trends of CANDIL application user behavior in a systematic and measurable manner. The analysis focused on processing numerical data to present a clear and objective statistical picture of user experiences and perceptions. To complement this, the study also collected qualitative data through open interviews with Dispusipda librarians. This interview data served to enrich the primary data and provide context for the quantitative results, as well as insight into the application's features.

In the data collection process, this research was conducted on several subjects, namely two West Java DISPUSIPDA librarians who followed the development of the CANDIL application and several students who used the CANDIL application, both within and outside the DISPUSIPDA environment. This research was conducted at the Regional Library and Archives Office (DISPUSIPDA) of West Java Province, located at Jl. Kawaluyaan Indah II No.4, Jatisari, Kec. Buahbatu, Bandung City, West Java. The

data collection techniques in this study included observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Observations were conducted directly at the research location to obtain a real picture of the use of the CANDIL application in the context of digital library services. Interviews were conducted with two librarians from the West Java Regional Library and Archives Office (DISPUSIPDA) to explore in-depth information related to the development, management, and experience of using the CANDIL application.

Meanwhile, questionnaires were compiled in the form of written questions and distributed to application users, both within and outside DISPUSIPDA, through social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter/X, with the aim of reaching respondents from diverse backgrounds. All data obtained was then analyzed and compiled systematically. This analysis process aimed to process the data into structured and relevant information so that it could answer the research questions. The final results of this analysis became the basis for drawing conclusions and compiling the overall research findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the questionnaire obtained from CANDIL application users and interviews with two Dispuspida librarians, it was found that most respondents were familiar with the CANDIL application, although their level of involvement in using the application varied. The data shows that 55.3% of students actively use the CANDIL application as a source of information and reading material for their needs, 21.1% have stopped at the application download stage or, in other words, have not used it at all, and 15.8% have reached the account creation stage, while the rest are only aware of the application without using it as a source of information. These findings indicate that the existence of the CANDIL application has not been able to encourage users from among students to be fully active in searching and reading consistently.

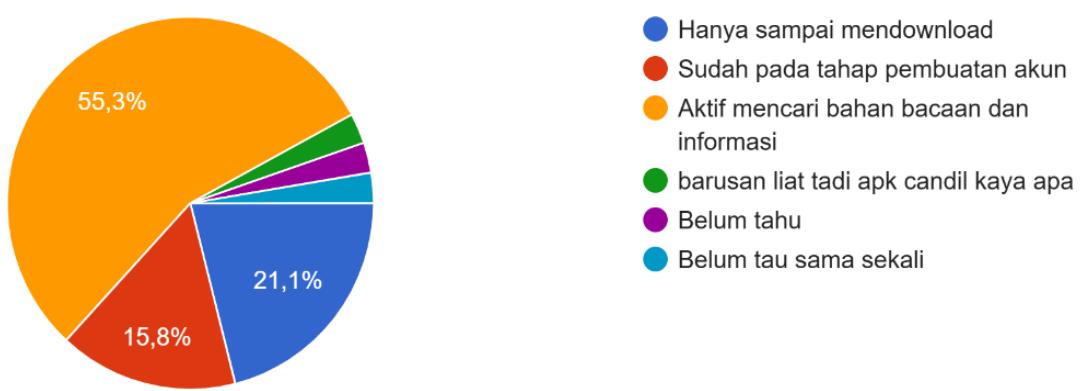


Figure 1. Level of utilization of the CANDIL application by users

It can be seen that the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness among students who use the CANDIL application are still uneven or varied.

Autonomy (User Freedom in Choosing Reading Material)

The data shows that the need for freedom in choosing reading material or the aspect of autonomy among students who use the CANDIL application is considered to be sufficiently fulfilled. Active users who search for information generally feel free to choose reading material according to their interests, especially since the CANDIL application also provides a recommendation feature that is

often considered helpful and makes it easier for users to access the desired reading material. However, in some cases based on user experience, the freedom to choose reading materials is often considered limited because the available collection is monotonous, incomplete, or lacks variety. As a result, some CANDIL users tend to choose other digital library applications that are considered more up-to-date and interesting.

This proves that the freedom to choose reading material in the CANDIL application is still superficial and not yet ideal, because the reading choices available in the application still seem limited, lack variety, and do not meet all the interests of students from various disciplines. In this context, the aspect of autonomy is not only related to freedom of choice, but also to the diversity of choices themselves. If the choices are limited, it will indirectly limit users in expressing their desires and needs. This is in line with Deci and Ryan's 2000 view of Self-Determination Theory in (Rahmayanthi et al. 2022), which states that autonomy will be optimal when a person has control over their choices and access to various alternatives of desired information, because if only limited choices are available, that control is merely an illusion.

This argument is also reinforced by findings from interviews with two Dispusipda librarians, who admitted that application development and collection expansion are highly dependent on budgets and cooperation with publishers. Currently, the collection available on the CANDIL application is a collaboration with Kubuku, and the librarians stated that one of their efforts to increase the number of visits and active users of the application is to collaborate with Gramedia Pustaka. This effort is considered to be something that will attract users to visit and search for reading material on the application due to a more varied, more popular, and more sought-after collection (Taufik & Yogi, personal communication, June 12, 2025).



Figure 2. Level of user freedom in choosing reading material

Thus, the aspect of autonomy for students in using the CANDIL application can be said to be quite good, but it still needs to be improved in terms of content variety to better support freedom in choosing reading material and broader information exploration for students as active and passive users.

Competence (User Ability and Ease of Accessing the Application)

The majority of CANDIL application users find this application easy to use. As many as 44.7% of respondents stated that it was very easy and immediately understandable when they first tried it, while 39.5% felt that it was quite easy, even though it required a little adaptation. Only a small number of respondents felt that they needed guidance or even experienced confusion when using the application.

These findings indicate that the competence aspect of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) has been sufficiently fulfilled, with most users feeling capable and confident in operating the CANDIL application. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), the need for competence is one of the main factors that drives a person's intrinsic motivation to engage in an activity, including the use of digital applications. When users feel capable and efficient in using the application, they will be more motivated to continue using it independently.

In addition, this is also in line with the principle of usability proposed by Nielsen (2012), based on the findings (Rahma et al., 2023) which emphasize the importance of ease of use and efficiency in digital application design. Therefore, even though the CANDIL application has met the competency needs of most users, the development of supporting features such as tutorials or usage guides is still necessary so that all user segments, including beginners, can enjoy an optimal and inclusive experience.

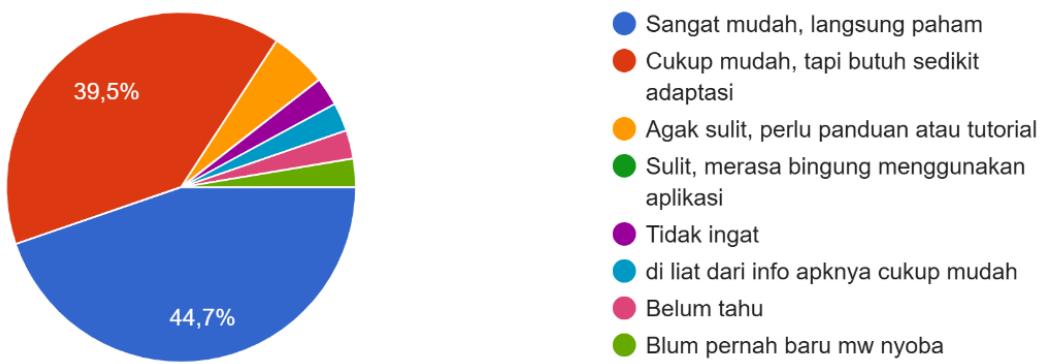


Figure 3. Level of user experience with the CANDIL application

Relatedness (Interconnection Between Users)

The aspect of relatedness or sense of connection with the reader community in the CANDIL application appears to be weak when viewed from the user experience. Only 26.3% of users feel that they are part of the community, namely users who actively share their reading material on social media or with other people they feel close to. This percentage shows that social connectedness in reading is not yet a dominant experience among the majority of users. Reading is still mostly positioned as a personal, private, and individual activity, rather than a social practice that involves the exchange of experiences or knowledge. In fact, as many as 18.4% of users are unaware that there is a reader community within the CANDIL application, which indicates that the aspect of literacy socialization has not been optimally managed, both in terms of features and communication strategies used by the application managers. This shows a gap between the potential of digital applications as a collaborative space and the reality of their use, which tends to be passive and isolated.

The absence of interaction features, discussion forums, or spaces for sharing experiences among fellow readers in the application not only limits user expression but also reinforces the impression that reading on CANDIL is an activity that takes place in a closed space, disconnected from the broader social context. In this context, the application fails to build a literacy ecosystem that connects users horizontally as part of a living and mutually influential community. In fact, as mentioned by (Utami et al., 2015), the aspect of relatedness is an important element in efforts to increase reading interest, because interactions built through discussions, exchanges of information, and experiences between users can foster a sense of belonging and intrinsic motivation to continue reading. When this

dimension is ignored, the application loses an important opportunity to encourage users' emotional and social engagement in literacy activities.

Within the framework of user motivation and engagement theory, the aspect of relatedness is also often associated with the basic human need to feel connected to others, as explained in the self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan. When this need is not met in the context of using literacy applications, users are likely to lose enthusiasm, feel disengaged, and ultimately not remain active readers for long. This is important to note, given that the trend of literacy digitization should not only focus on content distribution, but also pay attention to how to build meaningful social connections among its users. Therefore, the weakness of the relatedness aspect in the CANDIL application cannot be viewed as a technical problem alone, but as a fundamental issue in the design of the user experience that needs to be reviewed immediately.

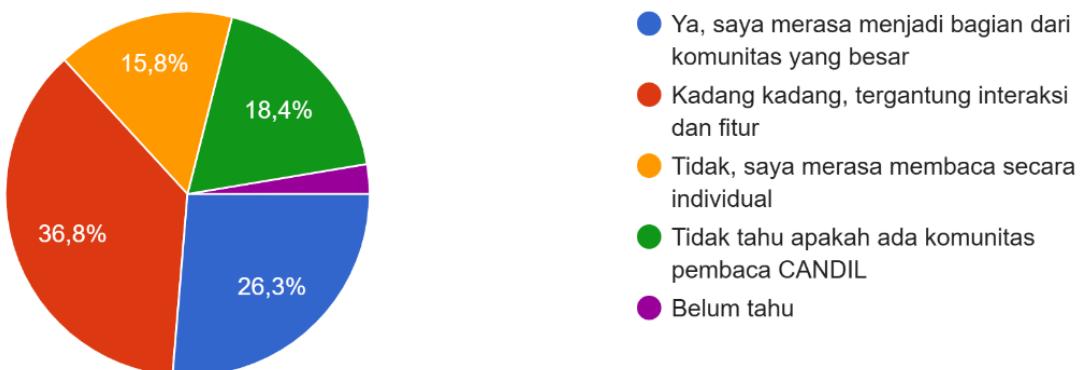


Figure 4. Level of connectedness among CANDIL app users

The Relationship Between SDT Theory and Its Implications for Digital Reading Motivation

In the context of digital reading, the three main aspects of self-determination theory (autonomy, competence, relatedness) play interrelated roles in shaping users' intrinsic motivation. Autonomy provides students with the space to choose their reading material and determine how they want to read, so that the greater the freedom they feel, the stronger their intrinsic drive to continue searching for and using digital reading sources. Competence relates to the extent to which users feel capable of understanding and mastering the application's features. When an application is easy to use and also supports the information search process, it will increase confidence and encourage continuity in choosing reading material. Meanwhile, Relatedness contributes through a sense of social connection where interaction, recommendations, or reader communities can make reading activities feel more meaningful.

These three aspects reinforce each other; freedom of choice is more effective when supported by adequate technical capabilities and a sense of connection with the digital reading environment. Thus, optimal fulfillment of Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness is key to forming strong, sustainable, and intrinsically motivated digital reading. Meanwhile, failure of an application or digital environment to support any of these three aspects can significantly weaken the overall motivational process of users.

Factors Supporting Reading Interest

These findings indicate that there are several factors that support reading interest among students who use the CANDIL application, which also shows the interaction between the psychological needs of users and digital services, including:

1. Ease of access.

Technology certainly serves as a medium that provides convenience, and the world of libraries is no exception. Users can access the CANDIL application using their personal gadgets anytime, anywhere, and in any condition without having to spend time and energy to come directly to a physical library. This is certainly an important value for someone who has limited time and limited access to library services. This ease of access is one of the important factors in fostering an interest in reading, because if users feel that the CANDIL application is easy to operate, their intensity in accessing the application on an ongoing basis will increase, and this will certainly trigger the growth of users' interest in reading, which will develop naturally (Rizkyana et al., 2021).

2. Features that are responsive to user needs

The features provided by the application also serve as additional support, for example, the reading recommendation feature that can be customized to user preferences. This feature makes most users feel connected or cared for as users when using the application. This feature not only provides convenience for users in the search process but also encourages users to continue exploring other readings, even beyond their initial interests. This plays a role in fostering a sense of autonomy or freedom to choose reading material according to personal preferences without coercion. Unconsciously, this application stimulates users to increase their personal interest in reading or simply to gradually broaden their reading horizons. The findings (Setiadi, 2021) also reinforce the research results, which basically state that a digital library must implement features that are responsive to user needs in order to encourage service optimization, because this will be one of the factors in increasing reading interest through digital media.

3. External motivation

Most users stated that they were motivated to use this application because of recommendations from someone else and academic obligations.



Figure 5. Level of support for the use of the CANDIL application

This shows that external motivation, particularly encouragement and pressure, plays an important role in increasing the reading interest of students who use the CANDIL

application. According to (Fitrotnissa & Lathifah, 2018), when motivation from others arises in a person, it will create a strong drive to fulfill their personal needs.

4. Diverse reading materials accompanied by sufficient free time

One of the factors that increase reading interest, according to (Hermawan et al., 2020), is the role of libraries in becoming a source or provider of reading materials for users who need them. User satisfaction in selecting and accessing reading materials, coupled with ample free time, also supports the reading interest of students who use the CANDIL application. Users who are aware of the availability of interesting collections and the freedom to choose collections according to their needs, coupled with sufficient free time, tend to continue exploring the application's content until they find various reading materials that interest them.

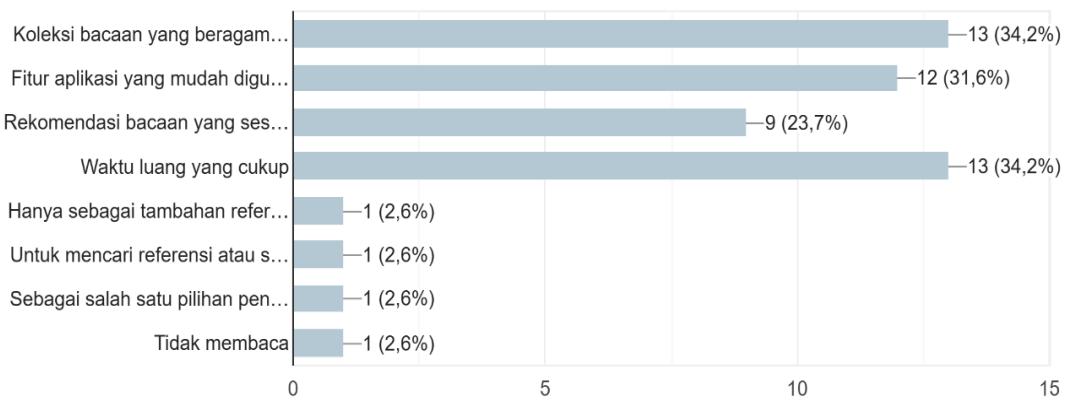


Figure 6. Level of support for user reading search

This situation will become a habit, which consciously becomes a supporting factor for increasing user reading interest in the long term.

Factors Hindering Reading Interest

In addition to supporting factors, these findings reveal various factors that hinder reading interest among students who use the CANDIL application, including technical, psychological, and structural aspects of the CANDIL application management system itself, such as:

1. Lack of free time

Half of the respondents stated that lack of free time plays an important role in inhibiting the increase in reading interest among students who use the CANDIL application. This is because even if someone is interested in reading, if they are stuck in a situation where they do not have the time, reading to increase their interest in reading will become the lowest priority compared to other more urgent activities. This also creates psychological barriers, because reading is no longer considered a basic need, but only an additional option to fill the void.

2. Limited collection

Based on the findings, many users feel that the types of reading material available on the CANDIL app tend to be monotonous and do not meet the criteria of the genres or topics they are interested in, especially for popular collections that are trending among young

people. This can certainly make users feel bored and unfulfilled in terms of their information needs, which will ultimately lead to a decrease in the frequency of their visits to the app in the future.

3. Technical obstacles

The unstable and uneven quality of the internet network, especially for users in areas with limited technological infrastructure, is a frequently encountered obstacle, which often hinders their progress in achieving something (Agustiani & Wicaksono, 2021). This obstacle is also used as a reason by some people to continue using manual methods and reject technology. Moreover, because the CANDIL application does not yet provide offline access, cost limitations are also a major reason why users do not want to open the application to actively search for information. This is certainly not in line with the important role of a digital library, where ease and convenience in accessing information are always advantages (Winastwan & Fatwa, 2021).

4. Application features that are unsupportive and confusing

Some users consider the features provided by the CANDIL application to be insufficient and rigid, making it visually unattractive, with confusing navigation. This directly has a significant impact on the fulfillment of the competence aspect, making users feel less confident to explore the readings and other features. If this aspect is not fulfilled, the tendency for users to not access and continue reading activities will continue to increase.

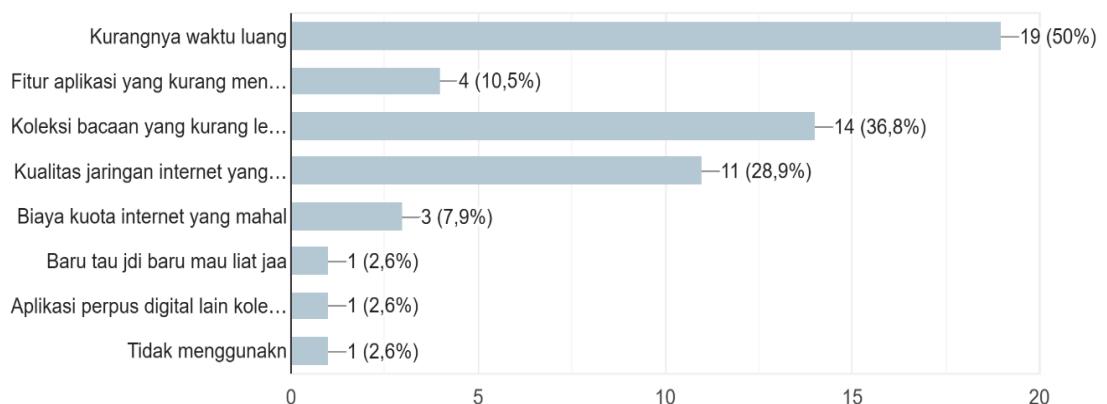


Figure 7. Factors inhibiting users' interest in reading

Based on statistical data, the percentage of students who are users of the CANDIL application is less than 250 people. And based on the results of interviews with Dispusipda librarians, only 25% of the total number of students are active users. This indicates that students who are only visitors dominate the number of students who actively search for reading materials. This is concrete evidence of the unfulfilled psychological needs based on Self-Determination Theory, namely the aspects of autonomy, competence, and relatedness based on students' reading experiences on the CANDIL application.

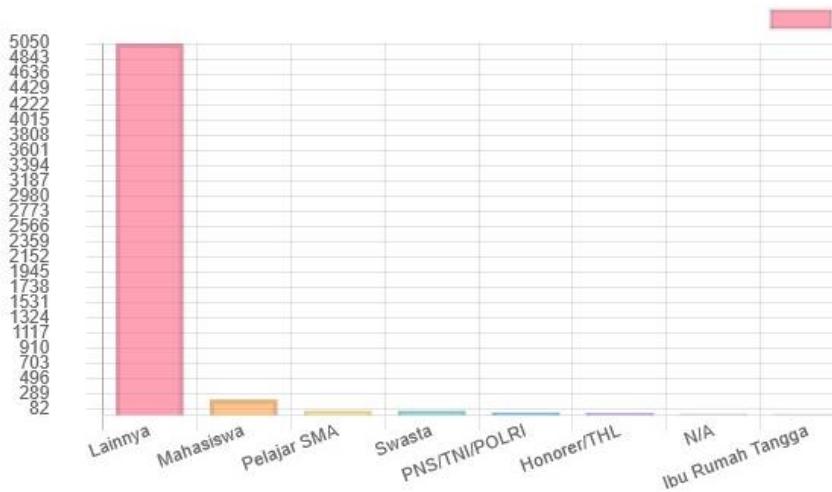


Figure 8. Percentage of students using the CANDIL application as of January 2024-2025

However, to address these shortcomings, the CANDIL application managers and Dispusipda librarians themselves continue to make various efforts to improve the user reading experience in order to fulfill these three psychological aspects in the future, with the aim of increasing the reading interest and literacy of application users, both among students and others. Among the strategies used by librarians to increase reading interest through the CANDIL application are:

1. Promoting the CANDIL application by providing knowledge about digital literacy, starting from the academic environment to providing guidance to the District and City Library Services regarding increasing technology-based reading interest. This is in line with the theory (Maisarah et al., 2025) which states that digital libraries must focus on promotion and digital literacy.
2. Providing direct guidance in the field to the community about literacy and information technology in the form of digital libraries such as CANDIL provided by Dispusipda, with the hope that in between their busy schedules, the community can take the time to increase their knowledge, which will gradually increase their interest in reading.

4. CONCLUSION

The experience of students in using the CANDIL (Maca Dina Digital Library) application shows that the fulfillment of psychological needs described in Self-Determination Theory still varies and is not yet fully optimal. The aspect of Autonomy is relatively fulfilled because students feel they have complete freedom in choosing and accessing reading materials, even though they are still hampered by limited collections. Similarly, in terms of competence, most students are able to use the application well and quickly, although some users still experience technical obstacles and a lack of guidance that hinders feature optimization. Meanwhile, the aspect of relatedness does not appear to be optimally fulfilled due to the lack of interaction between users in the application, which ultimately creates the perception that reading on the CANDIL application is an individual activity without any connection to the reading community.

These results confirm that increasing interest in digital reading does not only depend on ease of access to technology, but also on fulfilling the psychological needs of users that affect their intrinsic motivation. Compared to previous studies that focused more on technical aspects and user satisfaction, this study provides a new contribution by highlighting the psychological and motivational aspects of students in the context of using digital library applications. Thus, the CANDIL application has the

potential to become a more effective and inclusive digital literacy platform if its use is directed towards fulfilling users' psychological needs, such as increasing social interaction and features that support continuous reading motivation.

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