Fostering Motivation in Avid and Reluctant Readers through XReading
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Extensive Reading World Congress 7

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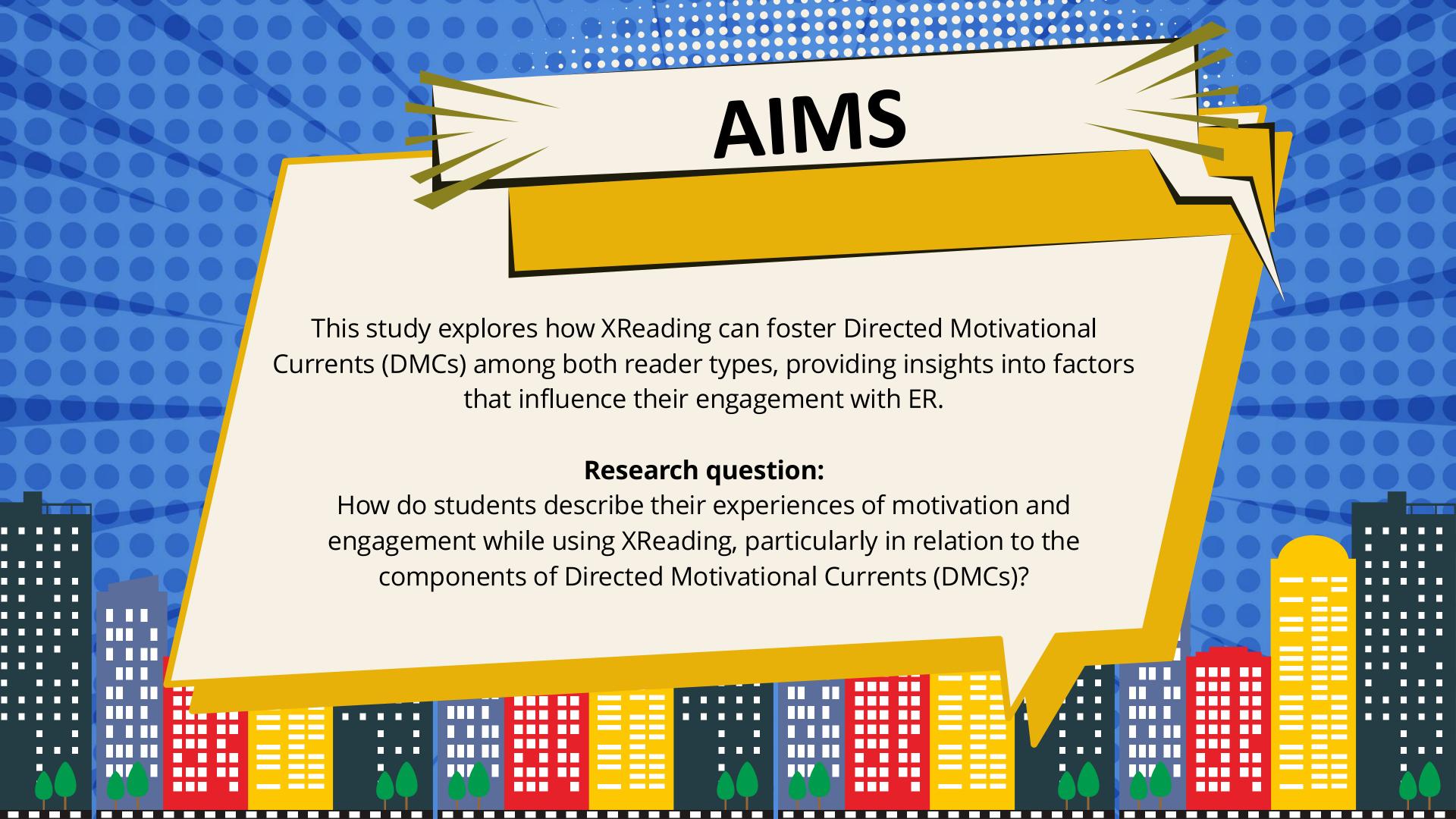
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INTRODUCTION

Extensive Reading (ER) has been widely recognized for its benefits in enhancing reading comprehension and motivation (Day and Bamford, 2004). With the growing integration of technology in ER programs, digital reading platforms such as XReading have emerged as valuable tools for engaging learners. While previous research has largely focused on the experiences of highly motivated readers, studies comparing avid and reluctant readers remain scarce.

AIMS

This study explores how XReading can foster Directed Motivational Currents (DMCs) among both reader types, providing insights into factors that influence their engagement with ER.

Research question:
How do students describe their experiences of motivation and engagement while using XReading, particularly in relation to the components of Directed Motivational Currents (DMCs)?

METHODS

Research design:

Mixed-methods approach

Participants:
- Students Cohorts 2022 to 2024
- Study program: English Language Education (ELE) & English Language and Literature (ELL)
- Survey: 2022 (N=180), 2023 (N=210), 2024 (280)
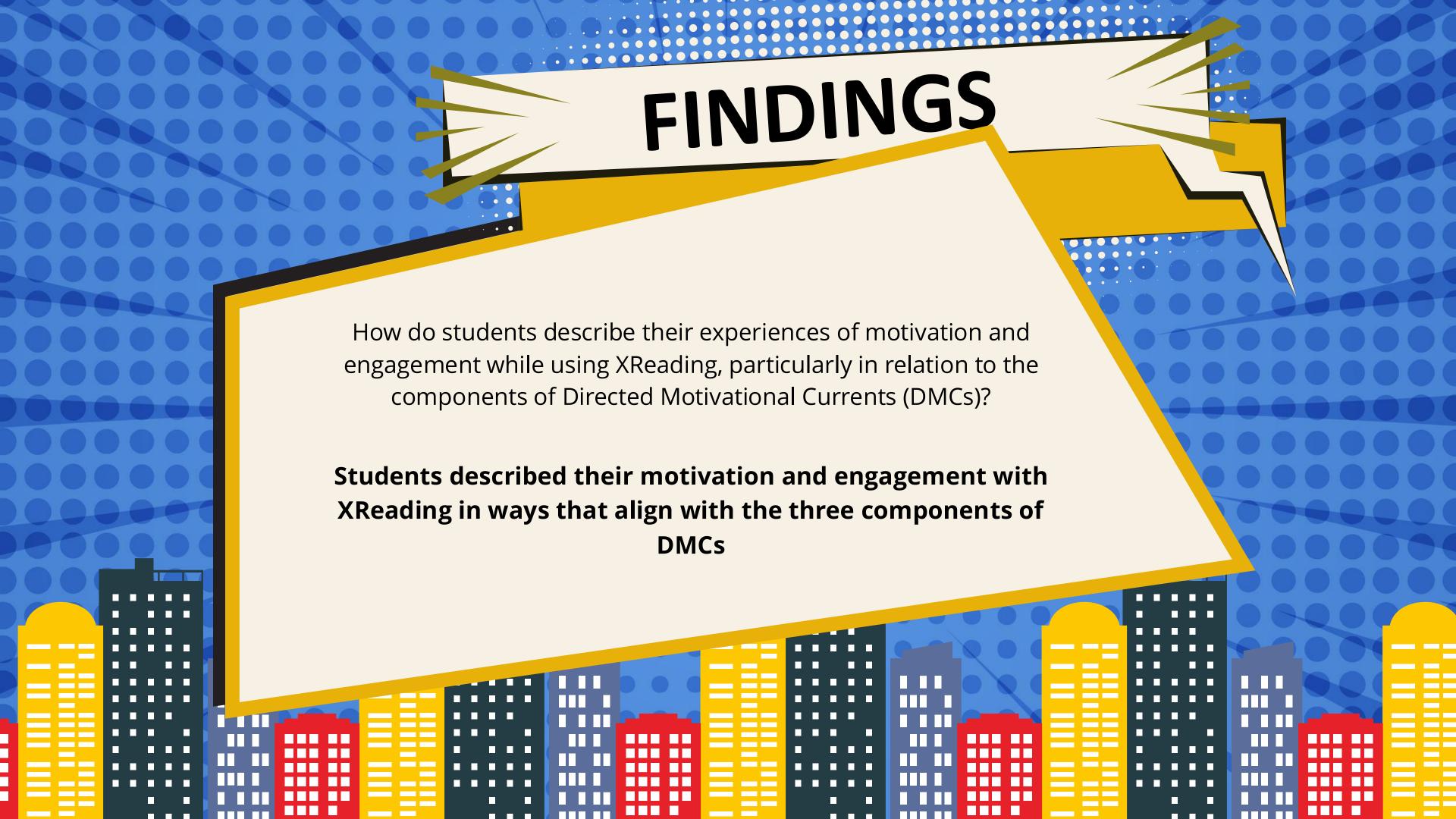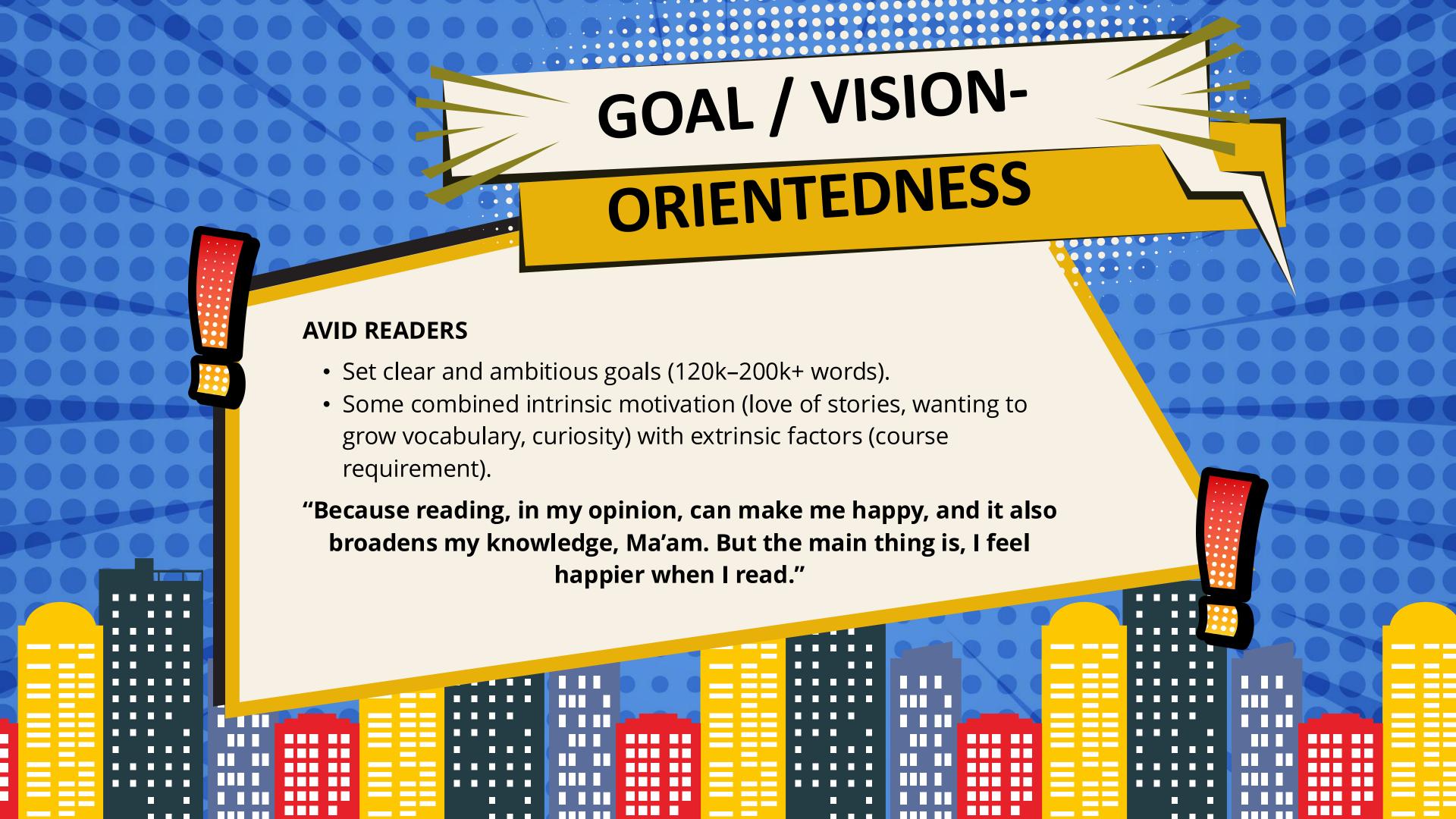- Interview: 3 reluctant readers (RR1, RR2, and RR3) and 4 avid readers (AR1, AR2, AR3, and AR4)

METHODS

Category:
Reluctant Readers (0-40,000 words)
Moderate Readers (40,001-80,000 words)
Avid Readers (80,001-120,000 words) or more

FINDINGS

How do students describe their experiences of motivation and engagement while using XReading, particularly in relation to the components of Directed Motivational Currents (DMCs)?

Students described their motivation and engagement with XReading in ways that align with the three components of DMCs

GOAL / VISION-ORIENTEDNESS

AVID READERS

- Set clear and ambitious goals (120k–200k+ words).
- Some combined intrinsic motivation (love of stories, wanting to grow vocabulary, curiosity) with extrinsic factors (course requirement).

"Because reading, in my opinion, can make me happy, and it also broadens my knowledge, Ma'am. But the main thing is, I feel happier when I read."

GOAL / VISION-ORIENTEDNESS

RELUCTANT READERS
- Aimed to meet only the minimum required target (around 120k), and some even fell short (~98k).
- Orientation leaned toward extrinsic drivers (teacher's requirement, avoiding penalties) rather than personal vision.
- They often lacked long-term or self-set goals beyond the course.

"Yes, Ma'am. Because there's also a target, right? So it makes me feel motivated."
"Because my reading is usually different from what's in XReading. So my preference is different, and I can't be too consistent."

SALIENT FACILITATIVE STRUCTURE
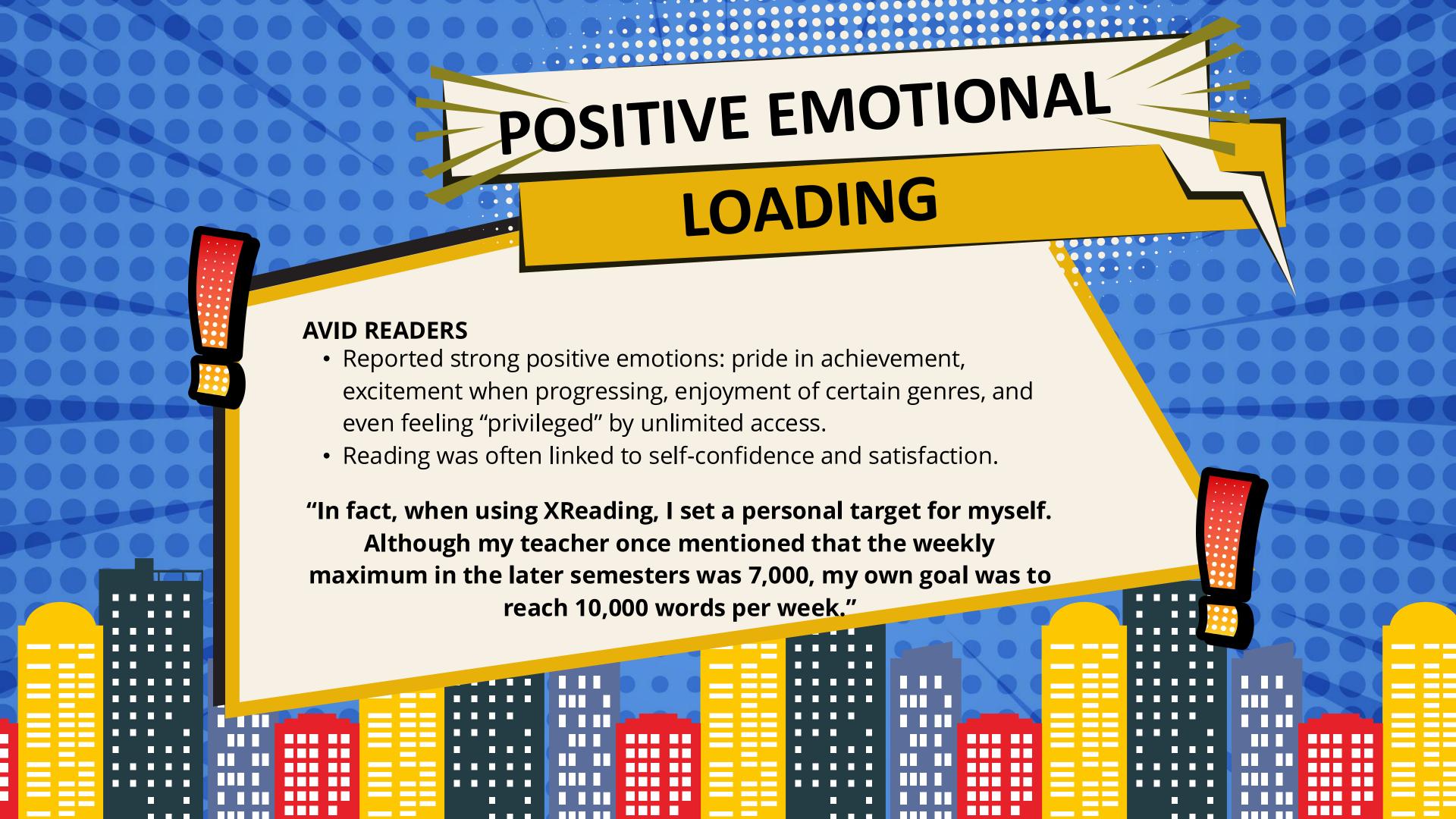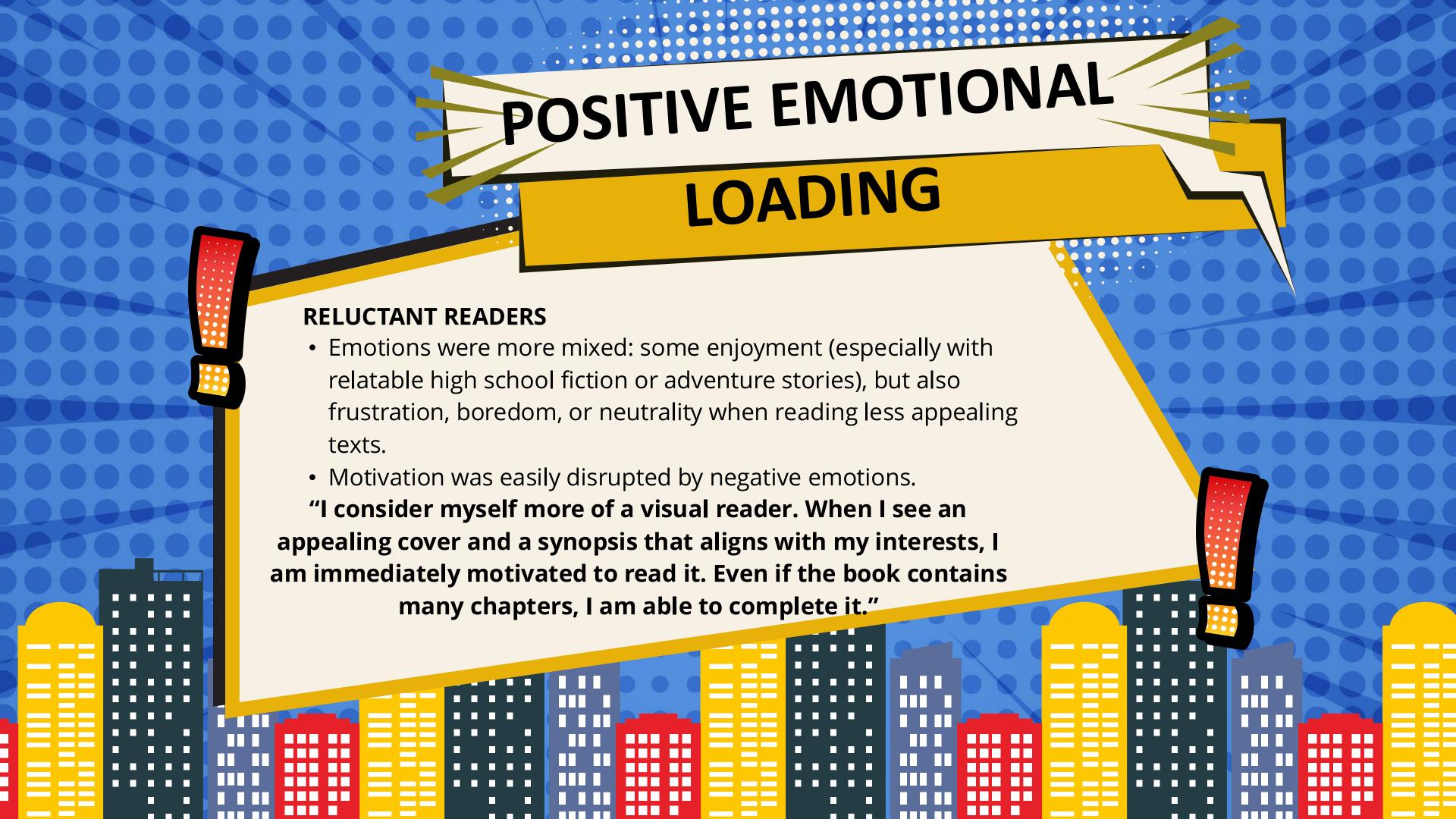
AVID READERS

- Took advantage of XReading features: progress tracking, graded levels, genre choice, audio support, and quizzes.
- Developed strategies to sustain reading (choosing genres they enjoyed, using audio to avoid boredom).
- Found the structure motivating and sustaining.

Firstly, the leveled feature is very helpful because it allows the vocabulary difficulty to be adjusted according to our preferences. This is particularly useful since classic English stories, such as Hamlet, are quite difficult in their original form, but XReading provides simplified versions with more accessible language. Secondly, the availability of audio support is also beneficial, as it enables me to listen to the story while simultaneously doing other activities."

SALIENT FACILITATIVE STRUCTURE

RELUCTANT READERS
- Also valued quizzes and genre variety, but were more easily discouraged (complaints about the platform layout, boredom if stories felt irrelevant).
- Used structure reactively, not proactively (e.g., relying on quizzes but not setting a routine).

"Since my personal preference is fiction, I usually focus on that genre and directly select books from the fiction section."

POSITIVE EMOTIONAL LOADING

AVID READERS
- Reported strong positive emotions: pride in achievement, excitement when progressing, enjoyment of certain genres, and even feeling "privileged" by unlimited access.
- Reading was often linked to self-confidence and satisfaction.

"In fact, when using XReading, I set a personal target for myself. Although my teacher once mentioned that the weekly maximum in the later semesters was 7,000, my own goal was to reach 10,000 words per week."

POSITIVE EMOTIONAL LOADING

RELUCTANT READERS

- Emotions were more mixed: some enjoyment (especially with relatable high school fiction or adventure stories), but also frustration, boredom, or neutrality when reading less appealing texts.
- Motivation was easily disrupted by negative emotions.

"I consider myself more of a visual reader. When I see an appealing cover and a synopsis that aligns with my interests, I am immediately motivated to read it. Even if the book contains many chapters, I am able to complete it."

DISCUSSION

Core Features of DMCs

Both references emphasize that DMCs are defined by:

- Goal/vision-orientedness
- Salient facilitative structure (clear pathway, routines, progress checks)
- Positive emotionality

Avid readers displayed internalized goals, proactive structure use, and positive emotions (matching the three defining features), while reluctant readers showed weaker versions of these (Dörnyei, Muir, & Ibrahim, 2014; Başöz & Gümüş, 2022).

DISCUSSION

Internalization of Goals
- Başöz & Gümüş (2022) found that DMCs require a well-defined and personally meaningful goal or vision to sustain intense motivation, though sometimes vision may be absent

- Muir's framework (as reviewed in Sak, 2021) stresses goal/vision orientation as foundational

Avid readers set personal goals vs. reluctant readers having externally imposed goals is consistent with this research.

DISCUSSION

Structural Supports / Facilitative Pathway
- A salient facilitative structure (start/end points, routines, progress checks) is described as essential in sustaining DMCs
- Avid readers proactively used XReading's structures (e.g., tracking, levels) while reluctant readers were more reactive fits this theoretical expectation.

Emotional Engagement
- Positive emotionality is highlighted as a defining feature of DMCs, providing enjoyment and sustaining momentum
- Avid readers maintained strong positive emotions, while reluctant readers' emotions fluctuated, which is in line with this.

DISCUSSION

Points of Contrast or Refinement

- Vision not always necessary--Some studies show DMCs can occur even without a vivid future vision (Henry, Davydenko, & Dörnyei, 2015; Sak, 2021)
- If some reluctant readers lacked vision but still showed bursts of motivation, this nuance would be important.
- Triggers and initial conditions-- Başöz & Gümüş (2022) found triggers such as negative emotion, opportunities, or external pressure could spark DMCs.
- Reluctant readers may still experience short-lived triggers without long-term sustainment.

CONCLUSION

Avid readers: clear personal goals, proactive use of structural supports, and strong positive emotions → sustained DMCs

Reluctant readers: externally imposed goals, limited or reactive structural use, and fluctuating emotions → weaker and less sustainable DMCs.

while XReading has the potential to foster DMCs, its effectiveness depends on how learners internalize goals, utilize the platform's facilitative structure, and experience emotional engagement.

IMPLICATIONS

Practical implications

- University Leaders/Policy Makers: Support flexible ER targets, invest in digital platforms, and embed motivational pedagogy.

- Teachers: Scaffold reluctant readers, leverage XReading features, and highlight emotional rewards.

- Future Research: Compare contexts, investigate motivational triggers, track sustainability, and explore the role of personality.

IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical Implications

- Extends Directed Motivational Currents (DMC) to digital ER contexts.

- Shows varied intensity of DMC dimensions between avid and reluctant readers.

- Highlights external triggers vs. internalized goals in sustaining motivation.

For Future Research

- Extend this study across different programs or institutions to see if patterns of avid vs. reluctant readers are consistent.
- Explore what specific events (teacher encouragement, peer influence, digital features) launch motivational currents among reluctant readers.
- Longitudinal research could track whether digital ER motivation persists after the course ends, especially for reluctant readers.
- Following Sak (2021), future work could examine how learner personality traits shape the likelihood of experiencing strong DMCs.

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