Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance in English among Grade Seven Learners

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Abstract

Most students struggle with their comprehension when it comes to reading. Learners are lacking the necessary reading skills in dealing with their problems in reading comprehension. The study determined the Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance in English among Grade 7 Learners. This study employed a Quantitative non-experimental-descriptive correlational research design where the researcher developed and validated instruments utilized to gather data from 195 Grade 7 learners purposively sampled. The findings of the study revealed that the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance in English of the Grade 7 learners of Balibago Integrated High School – Extension was rejected. The hypothesis confirmed that there is no significant moderator of Grade 7 learners' profile to the reading comprehension and academic performance in English is rejected specifically in learners' profile in terms of sex. However, in terms of socio-economic status, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant moderator of Grade 7 learners' profile to the reading comprehension and academic performance in English is accepted. After being tabulated, the research showed that in Grade 7 learners, there was a substantial correlation and effect between students' reading comprehension and academic performance in English Grade 7. It was discovered that the greater the learners' reading comprehension, the better the students' academic achievement. The teacher may focus on the student's reading comprehension because it indicated impacts on the learners' academic success.

Introduction

Reading is essential since it is among the most critical skills that an English learner must understand. One of the language abilities that is essential for academic achievement is reading. Reading comprehension has been deemed a prerequisite for both academic and personal achievement, according to Rohde (2015). Reading is the most crucial skill to learn at every level in the field of education. A person will struggle to learn Harpine if they haven't had good reading skills when they were little (2016). Reading comprehension is seen as one of the essential requirements for success Broek & Espin (2012).

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During the pandemic, comprehension in reading remains a crucial issue in the Philippine educational system. Many students struggle with reading, making it essential for effective learning and utilizing knowledge efficiently. Effective reading comprehension is crucial in all aspects of learning, especially in the current COVID-19-era home learning environment.

The ability to comprehend what the reader reads is called reading comprehension; it is when the reader can integrate what they understand. Knowing the meaning of words, being able to infer a word's meaning from its context, being able to follow the arrangement of a passage, and recognizing antecedents and references are all essential skills for effective reading comprehension. The ability of an individual to comprehend text in their minds is determined by their skill and ability to process information. This ability is the foundation for student academic achievement in school and, indeed, throughout life.

In many nations around the globe, reading comprehension in English is essential for academic success Hellerstein-Yehezkel, (2017). It involves reading texts and deciphering them using the reader's mental representations, or schema. Despite the importance of reading, it is still the most difficult area to be emphasized in the educational system especially since our students are in the New Normal setting where there is no direct contact with the teachers. Learners should have the goal of understanding what they are reading. Learning will not be successful for students who are unable to read correctly and comprehend what they read Kerubo (2014). One of the most challenging tasks that people may undertake is reading comprehension, according to Kendeou et al (2016).

To facilitate the K–12 Basic Education Program's execution, the Department of Education (DepEd) continuously upholds its obligation to produce responsible, productive people who possess the fundamental skills and capacities for lifelong learning. Schools across the nation are tasked with assisting students in improving their reading skills to turn every learner into a proficient reader. However, these attempts are still insufficient according to the most recent national assessments of student learning.

National assessments reveal that many grade students struggle with early language, literacy, and numeracy standards. Low achievement in English, Math, and Science is due to gaps in reading comprehension, with underachievers struggling to comprehend English word problems. Reading proficiency is the most important area for improvement.

As reading is a necessary ability for all curricular areas, it is necessary to increase each learner's reading proficiency and to promote a reading culture to close the gaps mentioned above. As a result, difficulty with reading comprehension can be a concern for any student studying English and may affect their understanding as well as academic performance in English. Under the foregoing description, the primary goal of this research was to enhance and strengthen reading comprehension through the utilization of a teacher-created reading comprehension exam in the locality which measured the level of reading comprehension among learners.

Objectives of the study

This research aimed to determine the relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance in English among Grade 7 learners with demographic profile as moderator. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:
1. Demographic profile of the Grade 7 learners of Balibago Integrated High School - Extension in terms of sex and their socio-economic status.
2. Reading comprehension level in English of the Grade 7 learners of Balibago Integrated High School – Extension based on the teacher-made reading comprehension test.

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3. Academic performance level in English of the Grade 7 learners of Balibago Integrated High School – Extension as of 4th grading period.
4. The significant relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance in English of the Grade 7 learners of Balibago Integrated High School – Extension.
5. Learners' profiles significantly moderate the relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance in English.

Methodology

The study used quantitative non-experimental-descriptive correlational research to analyze demographic profile, reading comprehension, and academic performance in English among Grade 7 learners in Balibago Integrated High School Extension. It used stratified sampling and Cochran's formula.

This study employed the Stratified Proportional Random Sampling Technique. This sample strategy was appropriate to utilize in this study because the target respondents were only limited to students in Grade 7.

The study utilized Learner's Packet (LEAP) modules and a survey questionnaire with a 45-item teacher-made reading comprehension test. Validators were issued letters to review the test, which was checked, reviewed, and validated by Balibago Integrated High School's Head Teacher in English and other teachers. The study is divided into three parts: determining respondents' profiles, assessing reading comprehension, and evaluating academic performance. The results of the tests and fourth written output and performance tasks were used as a basis for evaluating Grade 7 learners' English academic performance.

The researcher conceptualized the study title, gathered literature, and developed a problem statement. They submitted a letter to Santa Rosa City's Division Office, obtained endorsement, and obtained permission from the principal and Grade 7 English teachers. The researcher administered the test and survey to selected respondents through various methods, including online and offline distribution.

The following statistical tools were employed: Frequency and Percentage Distribution, Mean and Standard Deviation, the academic performance of the respondents in English was utilized by the learners' identified written output and performance task/s score as of the 4th grading learners in English, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Hierarchical Regression Analysis.

Results and Discussion

1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Monthly Salary Income of Grade 7 Learners' Parents
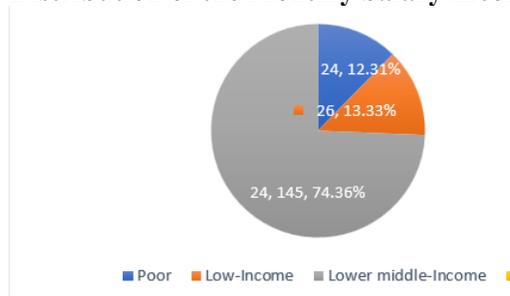
Figure 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Monthly Salary Income of Grade 7 Learners' Parents

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It can be gleaned that the majority of the respondents' parents belong to the Low-income class with a monthly income salary of, 082 to P24, 145 (74.36%; n=145) while some of the respondents' parents with a monthly income salary of P24,145 to P48,318 belong to Low middle-income class (13.33%; n=26). A small portion of respondents' parents belongs to the Poor class with a salary not less than P12, 082 (12.31%; n=24).

2. Reading Comprehension Level of the Respondents

Table 1
Reading Comprehension Level of the Respondents

Reading Comprehension	Mean	SD	Descriptive Interpretation	No. of items
Decoding	7.49	2.12	Excellent	9
Vocabulary	5.71	2.27	Fairly Good	10
Relatingbackgroundknowledge	4.66	0.81	Excellent	5
Inferencing	3.13	1.65	Fairly Good	6
Getting the Main Idea	3.43	1.50	Good	5
Sequencing of events	3.49	1.44	Good	5
Predicting Outcome	3.81	1.78	Good	5

As shown in Table 1, the results reveal that the respondents' outstanding performance was decoding (M = 7.49, SD = 2.12) and relating background knowledge (M = 4.66, SD = 0.81) as their performance was described as Excellent level. However, respondents' weakest points in the reading comprehension test were building vocabulary (M = 5.71, SD = 2.27) and inferencing (M = 3.13, SD = 1.65) as their performance was illustrated as Fairly Good level. The descriptive analysis reported that the respondents' performance levels in reading comprehension were good, particularly in getting ideas (M = 3.43, SD = 1.50), sequencing of events (M = 3.49, SD = 1.44), and predicting events (M = 3.81, SD = 1.78).

The table shows that Grade 7 learners have high scores in decoding and related background knowledge, with excellent descriptive interpretation. However, their scores in decoding are more dispersed than in related background knowledge, indicating better consistency. Reading comprehension is also good, with lower scores for main ideas, sequencing events, and predicting outcomes. Vocabulary and inferencing skills are low, suggesting low scores in these areas. The development of a successful reader is regarded to involve noting details, sequencing events, getting the main ideas, and predicting outcomes (De Peralta,2014: Yabes, 2016).

The respondent's reading comprehension required literal vocabulary and interpretive inferencing. English teachers should emphasize these skills for effective comprehension. Learners must develop reading abilities by decoding, deepening vocabulary, relating background knowledge, inferencing, sequencing, understanding main ideas, and predicting outcomes.

Teachers must take the initiative to check students' comprehension so that students will learn and have a strong interest in learning in English. Teachers must take an effort to assess students' comprehension so that they are enthusiastic about learning English. Students learning effectiveness can

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be considerably improved by their desire to know and get knowledge. Learners would obtain higher results if they were aware of this and actively engage in self-learning activities Mugan et. al (2012).

3. Academic Performance Level of Grade 7 Learners

Table 2
Academic Performance Level of Grade 7 Learners

Academic Performance	Mean	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
Written Output	51.41	18.84	High
Performance Task	48.56	20.28	Low

Legend: Very High - 75.00-100.00, High - 50.00-74.99, Low - 25.00-49.99, Very low 0.00-24.99

As presented in Table 2, the findings revealed that the two components of the academic performance of the respondents have different numerical results. The respondents performed better in written output (M = 51.41, SD = 18.84) compared to their performance task (M = 48.56, SD = 20.28). The learners were able to achieve high-level performance in written output. However, the learners' performance task was described as low level.

This suggests that the respondents are performing differently in terms of academic performance; in addition, it must be noted that learners' scores in performance tasks are lower compared to written output which has a higher percentage when it comes to the pointing system of the Department of Education based on the DepEd Order No. 031, s. 2020 Interim Guidelines for the Assessment and Grading in Light of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan. The Department of Education orders that written output has 40% of assessment components, while performance tasks have 60%. Grade 7 learners demonstrate essential knowledge through tasks and activities, such as identifying words, answering questions, and using graphic organizers.

Performance tasks are 60% of students' grades, requiring learners to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and ability through activities like outline creation, dialogue, tables, and personal responses.

It manifested that the Grade 7 learners got high scores in written output but failed to show or apply what they know to real-life situations as from the given data above. Since the Performance task has a higher percentage compared to written output it means that the Academic Performance of Grade 7 learners is low.

Reading skills are very important to Grade 7 learners since it is a way for them to understand the lesson also to apply what they know to real-life situations. Learners' academic performance improved as they improved their understanding and application of the lesson. In nursing school, students who have greater English reading comprehension skills are more likely to succeed academically since (Ponshe, 2013) found a link between reading ability and academic achievement.

Reading comprehension is crucial for students' success in school, requiring various techniques and abilities. Engaging in learning is essential for comprehension, which impacts academic performance. Teaching students to understand, apply, and be successful learners is crucial for high academic achievement.

4. Test of Significant Relationship between Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance of the Learners

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As shown in Table 3, reading comprehension in terms of decoding has a positive and significant relationship with respondents' academic performance (rs = 0.310, p < 0.01). Likewise, reading comprehension concerning vocabulary has a positive and significant relationship to the respondents' academic performance (rs = 0.266, p < 0.01). Similarly, the analysis of the data revealed that reading comprehension as to relating background knowledge has a positive and significant relationship to the academic performance of the learners (rs = 0.325, p < 0.01), Also, the empirical results stated that reading comprehension in respect of inference has a positive and significant relationship to the academic performance of the learners (rs = 0.215, p < 0.01). Moreover, reading comprehension regarding getting the main idea has a positive and significant relationship to the academic performance of the learners (rs = 0.213, p < 0.01). In addition, the results reported that reading comprehension based on sequencing has a positive and significant relationship to the academic performance of the learners (rs = 0.253, p < 0.01). Furthermore, the inferential results observed that reading comprehension in connection with predicting outcomes has a positive and significant relationship with the academic performance of the learners rs = 0.286, p < 0.01). The positive correlation coefficients indicate that when the learners perform better in reading comprehension tests and target a better level of reading comprehension skill, they achieve better and more desirable academic performance.

Table 3
Test of Significant Relationship between Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance of the Learners

Pairs of Variables	r-value
Reading Comprehension (Decoding) and Academic Performance	0.310**
Reading Comprehension (Vocabulary) and Academic Performance	0.266**
Reading Comprehension (Relating Background Knowledge) and Academic Performance	0.325**
Reading Comprehension (Inference) and Academic Performance	0.215**
Reading Comprehension (Getting the Main Idea) and Academic Performance	0.213**
Reading Comprehension (Sequencing) of Events and Academic Performance	0.253**
Reading Comprehension (Predicting Outcomes) and Academic Performance	0.286**

It might be argued that reading more leads to the reader's prior knowledge and experience growing and that this improvement in prior knowledge and experience results in better reading comprehension abilities. The efficient acquisition of knowledge and content by learners is referred to as reading comprehension enhancement. As a result, students who read more will be able to attain better academic results. (Bharuthan 2012, p. 1) claims that one of the most important academic tasks that students must do is reading. It shows that there was a strong correlation between the English language proficiency of Grade 7 students at Balibago Integrated High School and reading comprehension. Students' academic performance might enhance if their reading comprehension was automatically increased. Nonetheless, no research disproves the link between reading comprehension and academic success. There is a connection between reading and academic success, according to all prior studies on the subject.

Academic performance has a positive and significant relationship with respondents' academic performance in English. It was discovered that when the learners perform better in reading comprehension tests and target a better level of reading comprehension skills, they achieve better and more desirable

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academic performance. The level of students' academic success increases with their reading comprehension. To test the hypothesis that sex significantly moderates the relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance of the learners, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted.

6. Hierarchical Regression Analysis of the Moderation of Sex on the Relationship between Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance

Table 4
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of the Moderation of Sex on the Relationship between Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance

Step	R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	df1	df2	Sig. ΔF
Step 1						
Reading Comprehension	0.145	0.145	16.255	2	192	< 0.01
Sex						
Step 2						
Reading Comprehension						
Sex	0.163	0.019	4.226	1	191	<0.05
Interaction term (Reading Comprehension and Sex)						

*Significant at p< 0.05;**Significant at p< 0.01; (b)coefficient = -4.510; t-value = -2.056

Table 4 illustrates the hierarchical regression analysis of the moderation of sex on the relationship between reading comprehension and the academic performance of the learners. In the first step, learners' average scores on reading comprehension tests and their sex were included. These variables accounted for a significant amount of variance in the academic performance of the learners, $R^2 = 0.145$, F (2, 192) = 16.26, p < 0.01. To avoid possible problematic high multicollinearity with the interaction term, the variables are centered and an interaction between the learners' reading comprehension and their sex was established. In the second step, the interaction term between the learners' reading comprehension and their sex was added to the regressional model, which accounted for a significant proportion of the variance $\Delta R^2 = 0.019$, $\Delta F(1,191) = 4.23$, b = -4.510, t(191) = -2.056, p < 0.05. The examination of interaction showed that as females' reading comprehension level increases, their academic performance level also increases. On the contrary, when males get low reading comprehension levels, they get low academic performance levels. The results revealed that learners' profiles specifically their sex significantly moderate reading comprehension and academic performance.

Gender is employed in this study to differentiate only between the two sexes, boys and girls. Most studies show that girls are more successful readers than boys (Lynn & Mikk, 2009; Rogiers et al., 2020; Solheim & Lundetrae, 2018). Additionally, according to certain studies (Rutter et al., 2004; Moll, Kunze, Neuhoff, Bruder, & Schulte-Körne, 2014), men are more likely than women to experience reading difficulties. In contrast, Torppa, Eklund, Sulkunen, Niemi, and Ahonen (2018) discovered that reading performance between boys and females is comparable (apart from fluent reading). It manifested that the null hypothesis that there is no learner profile significantly moderates the relationship in terms of sex between reading comprehension and academic performance in English is accepted. Therefore, the learners' profile in accordance with their sexes significantly moderate their reading comprehension and academic performance.

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To test the hypothesis that socio-economic status significantly moderates the relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance of the learners, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was employed.

7. Hierarchical Regression Analysis of the Moderation of Socio-economic Status on the Relationship between Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance

Table 5
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of the Moderation of Socio-economic Status on the Relationship between Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance

Model	R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	df1	df2	Sig. ΔF
Model 1 Reading Comprehension Socio-economic Status	0.146	0.146	16.449	2	192	< 0.01
Model 2 Reading Comprehension Socio-economic Status Interaction term (Reading Comprehension and Socio-economic Status)	0.151	0.005	1.044	1	191	> 0.05

*Significant at p< 0.05;**Significant at p< 0.01; (b)coefficient = -1.914; t-value = -1. 022

Table 5 shows the hierarchical regression analysis of the moderation of socio-economic status on the relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance of the learners. In the first model, learners' average scores in reading comprehension tests together with their socioeconomic status were contained. These variables accounted for a significant amount of variance in the academic performance of the learners, $R^2 = 0.145$, F (2, 192) = 16.45, p < 0.01. The variables were centered and an interaction between the learners' reading comprehension and their socio-economic was generated to avoid issues of high multicollinearity with the interaction term. In the second block, the interaction term between the learners' reading comprehension and their socio-economic was included to the regressional model, which accounted for an insignificant percentage of the variance $\Delta R^2 = 0.005$, $\Delta F(1,191) = 1.04$, b = -1.914, t(191) = -1.022, p > 0.05. The assessment of interaction revealed that the socio-economic status of the learners does not moderate their reading comprehension and academic performance.

According to Rogiers et al. (2020), it is getting more and harder to understand how socioeconomic status affects students' reading behavior and performance as the student body in schools becomes more and more diverse. The mother's education level, the father's education level, and the home amenities are considered as qualities at the student level. Moreover, students' socioeconomic status was related to reading literacy scores and metacognitive approach choice, according to Lee and Wu (2013). Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds also had better learning outcomes and used more metacognitive strategies.

According to (Callan et al. 2017), family socioeconomic, school socioeconomic, and metacognitive methods are all related to reading success. In contrast to the studies above the table manifested that the socio-economic status of the learners does not moderate on their reading comprehension and academic performance. The null hypothesis that there is no learner profile significantly moderate the relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance in English is accepted.

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Conclusions

The null hypothesis stating that there is no relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance in English of the Grade 7 learners of Balibago Integrated High School-Extension is rejected.

The null hypothesis stating that there is no significant moderator of Grade 7 learners' profile to the reading comprehension and academic performance in English is rejected specifically in learners' profiles in terms of sex.

In terms of socio-economic status, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant moderator of Grade 7 learners' profile to the reading comprehension and academic performance in English is accepted.

Recommendations

The present study's findings suggest that learners' comprehension of the reading material is important since it impacts or influences their academic achievement. Some recommendations were given:

1. Teachers may utilize a teacher-made test to identify the learners' strengths and weaknesses in terms of reading skills based on the study's findings.
2. Teachers may help students become aware that increasing their reading comprehension can help them improve their academic performance.
3. Teachers may plan and conduct a program that deals with reading comprehension strategies, and methods that will improve student's reading skills through the teacher's precious love and time to the learners.
4. Future researchers may conduct a study focusing on the relationship between students' reading comprehension and their academic performance in English.

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