



READING COMPREHENSION LEVEL OF GRADE 6 STUDENTS: BASIS FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AMONG SELECTED SCHOOLS IN CARMEN DISTRICT

Shemaiah M. Concepcion¹, Marciano B. Melchor, EdD, PhD, DPA ²

¹ Student, Graduate School, The Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc.

² Faculty, Graduate School, The Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc.

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the reading comprehension level of students in the selected public elementary schools of Carmen District, Davao del Norte Division. It also investigated the significant difference in the factors influencing the reading comprehension of students when analyzed by school category. With the use of purposive sampling, 156 public elementary teachers were selected as the respondents. Utilizing the descriptive survey method, the data collated were analyzed through the use of Mean and ANOVA. Results revealed that the extent of the reading comprehension level of students was moderately evident. Furthermore, it was found that there was no significant difference on the extent of the reading comprehension level of students when analyzed by the school category. It signified that teachers from big schools, medium schools and small schools category had no significance difference in perceiving the reading comprehension level of their students. Based on the findings, it was suggested that the higher officials in the Department of Education, school heads, and teachers may work together to intensify and strengthen the reading comprehension of the students based on their needs. An intervention scheme in mastering the art of reading with focus on strategies for enhancing comprehension skills.

KEYWORDS: Reading comprehension, descriptive research, Davao del Norte Division, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Comprehension is considered as the essence of reading as it accounts for the process that supports effective extraction of meaning from a written passage. Modern literacy standards require that the students can self-modify, self-manage and self-monitor as a means to become strategic readers who can select information from the text, develop rational and incorporate critical reflection on the text while reading. In this instance, the students are required to be provided with an extensive range of reading and writing activities that include effective reading comprehension techniques (Alghonaim, 2020). The practice of effective reading comprehension techniques is essential to enhance the extent of comprehension among students and thus, language instructors are required to implement adequate reading strategies to improve comprehension and facilitate critical thinking in understanding complex texts (Alenizi, 2019; Ismail & Tawalbeh, 2015). However, students nowadays have a hard time in comprehending text.

In India, reading comprehension is a great challenge for kids. Students' inability to understand what they read, especially in English, is caused by a number of things. Indian children lack both these skills as their mother tongue is different from English. They are not exposed to an English-speaking environment, which results in poor reading comprehension of the English language. Apparently, several reasons were identified behind poor reading comprehension skills among Indian students. Reading is closely linked with speaking and listening. Indian students are not exposed to either of these skills. Also, illiterate parents are helpless in helping their wards learn reading skills. Other than that, children have not learned to communicate in the English language. The saddest part is that teachers are not properly trained to teach in English.

In the Philippines, the reading comprehension among students has been a problem. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Results from PISA 2018 revealed that reading is among the areas that fifteen-year-old



students in the Philippines scored lower than those in majority of the countries and economies that participated in PISA 2018. The country's average reading score was 340 score points, on a par with that of the Dominican Republic. No country scored lower than the Philippines and the Dominican Republic. In fact, the Philippines shared a significant rate of low performers among all PISA-participating countries and economies. That is, 80% of the Filipino students did not reach the minimum level of proficiency in reading. Their poor scores in English, Mathematics, and Science are attributed to the students' lack of ability in basic reading and comprehension (Tomas et al., 2021).

In the Division of Davao del Norte Division, teachers observed that students had difficulty in comprehending text. Students were struggling to comprehend new information if they lacked the necessary background knowledge or foundational concepts related to the subject matter. They also showed insufficient vocabulary to understand and connect ideas, especially when reading more complex texts. They had poor reading skills, such as decoding, fluency, and phonemic awareness issues, which made it challenging for them to grasp the content of written materials. These were believed to have been attributed by poor study habits, time management, and note-taking techniques.

However, the mentioned circumstances were solely observed, as the researcher had not encountered any existing study focusing on the reading comprehension level of the students within the local context. Given this scenario, the researcher was driven to examine the influencing factors affecting the reading comprehension level of the Grade 6 students specifically within the public elementary schools of Davao del Norte Division. Moreover, the objective was to craft an intervention program considering the identified factors leading to poor reading comprehension.

This endeavor offered valuable insights to policymakers in formulating policies, programs, interventions, projects, and activities that can encourage all school leaders and teachers in crafting concrete means to capacitate the students in reading. Additionally, the researcher intended to present this study in various local, national, and international forums, with the ultimate goal of publishing it in a journal indexed by Scopus.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was a quantitative research approach specifically descriptive research. The purpose of quantitative research is to attain greater knowledge and understanding of the social world. Researchers use quantitative methods to observe situations or events that affect people. Quantitative research produces objective data that can be clearly communicated through statistics and numbers (Williams, 2021).

Meanwhile, descriptive research is used to describe the current status or circumstance of the factor being studied. Researchers using this method do not generally begin with a hypothesis. Rather, they develop one after collecting the data. Variables are not manipulated in this type of research and researchers do not use the law of probability. Survey research with large data sets falls into this design category. In descriptive research, the researcher has no power to control over the variables in the study. It simply aims to describe the nature of the involved variables (Korrapati, 2016; William, 2016).

In this undertaking, quantitative research specifically descriptive research was the most appropriate since it only intended to explore the factors influencing the reading comprehension of Grade 6 learners. Furthermore, it also aimed to find out the intervention strategies that would reinforce the reading comprehension of the learners.

Respondents and Sampling

The respondents of the study were the 156 public elementary teachers in the selected schools of Davao del Norte Division. Determining the number of sample size was aligned to the claim of Statistic Solutions (2020) stating that the sample size needed for the one-way ANOVA, testing for differences on one independent variable with two groups, is 128, the same as the independent samples t-test. The sample size relied with the number of groups in the independent variable, but for the independent variable with 3 groups, 156 or approximately 52 per group. Since the respondents were categorized into three groups in accordance with the school category, then the 156 respondents were followed. With this, each group had 52 representatives.



In the selection of the respondents, purposive sampling was used. A purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. Purposive sampling is different from convenience sampling and is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. This type of sampling can be very useful in situations when you need to reach a targeted sample quickly, and where sampling for proportionality is not the main concern (Crossman, 2019).

As to the inclusion and exclusion criteria is concern, all public school elementary teachers in Davao del Norte Division were given an equal opportunities to be part of the study. Apparently, those elementary teachers in the private schools and outside Davao del Norte Division were not considered. Each school category was well-represented. There were teachers who were from small, medium, and big category. The participation of the respondents in this study was voluntary. Hence, the respondents were given the prerogative not to participate or withdraw anytime in the conduct of the study. To ensure non-discrimination, the respondents could choose not to disclose their names in the questionnaires and their answers were treated with high confidentiality.

Research Instruments

This study utilized an adapted questionnaire. The instrument was about the reading comprehension level of the learners. It enlightened the direction of the study.

Reading Comprehension. The study made use of an adapted research questionnaire from Rojas (2022). Items were modified to suit to the needs of the present investigation. The survey consisted of 27 items. It considered seven factors, namely: background knowledge (1-4), vocabulary knowledge (1-4), reading fluency (1-3), making inferences (1-4), home environment (1-4), social environment (1-4), and cultural environment (1-4). Respondents rated the items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Each statement elicited the respondents' perception on the reading comprehension of the learners. The alpha coefficient for the 27 items is .75, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

The questionnaire was modified, refined, and contextualized to the local setting. For construct validity, there were expert validators who evaluated the contents of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

For more comprehensive interpretation and analysis of the data, the following statistical tools were utilized. *Mean*. This was used to measure the extent of the reading comprehension level of the learners.

ANOVA. This was utilized to determine the significant difference on the extent of the reading comprehension level of the learners when analyzed by the school category.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presented in this chapter are the findings based on the results of data gathered, the conclusions drawn from the findings and the recommendations for consideration.

Findings

The main focus of the study was to determine the extent of reading comprehension level of Grade 6 students. It also aimed to determine the significant difference on the reading comprehension level of Grade 6 students when analyzed by school category. The study was conducted in the elementary schools in Davao del Division. There were one hundred fifty six (156) elementary teachers who participated in this study. Descriptive method of research was used in this study utilizing adapted research instrument. The said instrument was validated by the panel of experts and subjected to pilot testing before it was made ready for administration. Mean and ANOVA were the statistical tools used in analyzing the data. The hypothesis raised in this study was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The major findings of the study were the following: the extent of factors influencing the reading comprehension is 2.83 which is moderately evident. Specifically, big school category has an overall mean of 2.82, 2.82 for medium school category, and 2.86 for small school category. The breakdown of mean scores across different school categories further provides valuable insights, indicating that small schools tend to have a slightly higher mean score for the



factors influencing reading comprehension compared to medium and big school categories. This finding implies a need for targeted support and improvements in the factors influencing reading comprehension, particularly for medium and big school categories, to further strengthen the factors influencing reading comprehension.

It was found out that there is no significant difference in the factors influencing the reading comprehension of Grade 6 students when analyzed by school category since its t-value is 2.83 and the p-value of 0.00 is lower at the 0.05 level of significance, implying that all Grade 6 students as perceived by the elementary teachers regardless of the school type have the same extent of factors influencing reading comprehension. Apparently, the hypothesis of no significant difference on the extent of factors influencing reading comprehension was rejected.

The results reveal a significant finding regarding the factors impacting reading comprehension among Grade 6 students, irrespective of school category. With a t-value of 2.83 and a p-value of 0.00 below the 0.05 significance level, it suggests that there is no discernible variance in these factors across different types of schools. This implies that elementary teachers perceive all Grade 6 students to be influenced by the same factors when it comes to reading comprehension. Consequently, the hypothesis positing no significant difference in these factors is rejected, shedding light on the uniformity of these influences among students at this educational level.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered: The extent of factors influencing the reading comprehension of Grade 6 students is oftentimes evident in terms of social environment. On the other hand, background knowledge, making inferences, and cultural environment are fairly evident. On the other hand, vocabulary knowledge, reading fluency, and home environment are rarely evident. This concludes that the extent of factors influencing the reading comprehension vary according to its dimensions. As a whole, factors affecting students' reading comprehension as perceived by the teachers are fairly evident.

Meanwhile, the results imply that there is no significant difference in the factors influencing the reading comprehension of Grade 6 students when analyzed by school category suggesting that students from big, medium, and small schools have the same extent of factors influencing reading comprehension registering a p-value of .000 which is less than .05 in the level of significance. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The study's findings validate Yang's (2016) assertion that various factors significantly influence students' reading comprehension. These factors encompass situational, individual, and other elements. Situational factors encompass diverse aspects such as classroom setting, teaching methods, and tasks, which have a substantial impact. Discrepancies exist between the learning strategies employed by students in classroom settings versus natural environments.

Furthermore, Yang (2016) underscored the role of learning strategies in enhancing students' academic performance, including reading comprehension. Factors such as the reader's background, classroom tasks, and employed strategies are pivotal. Reading stands out as a paramount method for acquiring a second language, albeit a complex process influenced by numerous factors. The reader's background, classroom tasks, and strategies employed remain pivotal during the reading process, where various strategies are employed to facilitate comprehension.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered based on the conclusions of the study:

The higher officials in the Department of Education may focus on enhancing support systems addressing the dimensions where factors influencing reading comprehension are less evident, particularly vocabulary knowledge, reading fluency, and home environment. Strategies may be devised to strengthen these areas, ensuring students receive adequate resources and support to improve their reading skills. Additionally, it is crucial to provide professional development opportunities for teachers to deepen their understanding of these dimensions and equip them with effective instructional techniques to address these specific needs. Collaborative efforts between schools, families, and communities may also be encouraged to create a conducive environment for fostering reading comprehension skills among Grade 6 students, ultimately enhancing their overall academic performance.

Moreover, school heads may prioritize initiatives aimed at strengthening the dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, reading fluency, and home environment, where factors influencing reading comprehension are found to be less



evident. This may involve implementing targeted interventions such as dedicated vocabulary-building programs, fluency exercises, and initiatives to engage parents in supporting reading activities at home. Additionally, school heads may encourage ongoing collaboration among teachers to share effective instructional strategies and best practices for addressing these specific needs.

Teachers may focus on addressing the dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, reading fluency, and home environment to enhance Grade 6 students' reading comprehension. Implementing targeted strategies such as vocabulary-building activities, fluency exercises, and fostering partnerships with families to create supportive home reading environments can effectively bolster these areas. Additionally, teachers may continue to leverage the evident factors such as social environment, background knowledge, making inferences, and cultural environment in their instructional approaches to further enhance students' reading comprehension skills.

Lastly, future researchers may consider delving deeper into the dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, reading fluency, and home environment to gain a comprehensive understanding of their impact on Grade 6 students' reading comprehension. Exploring these areas further through qualitative and quantitative methods may provide valuable insights into the specific mechanisms at play and help identify effective interventions to address any deficiencies.

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