

Students' Reading Motivation and Comprehension Skills

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ABSTRACT: This research investigated how students' motivation to read correlates with their reading comprehension skills, focusing on first- and second-year students enrolled in the Education course, the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) programs at Southern de Oro Philippines College for the School Year 2024-2025. The researchers employed a descriptive correlational research design with content analysis, along with a questionnaire to assess students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for reading, and the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) to evaluate their comprehension skills across different levels: literal, interpretive, inferential, and critical. The study involved 96 students through a stratified random sampling. Data were analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Results showed that students have high intrinsic and moderate extrinsic motivation for reading. They performed best in understanding literal texts but struggled with critical comprehension involving higher-level thinking. Notably, a significant correlation existed between reading motivation and comprehension, indicating that while students were good at grasping basic information; however, they found it challenging to critically analyze and evaluate the material they read. The findings suggested that only extrinsic motivation like rewards positively associated with reading comprehension. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers may balance praise and grades with making reading enjoyable to improve motivation and comprehension skills.

KEYWORDS: comprehension, extrinsic, intrinsic, motivation, reading

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a cornerstone of academic success and lifelong learning, providing access to new vocabulary, innovative ideas, and critical knowledge. It is especially essential for students as it supports their intellectual growth and empowers them to reach educational milestones. However, many students face challenges in understanding written materials, which can hinder their ability to comprehend complex texts and achieve their academic goals. One crucial factor that influences students' ability to comprehend reading materials is motivation. The desire to engage with texts, driven by either internal or external factors, can significantly impact how well students understand what they read. Therefore, understanding the role of motivation in reading is vital for designing effective instructional strategies that help students reach their full potential in reading comprehension.

For students majoring in English, reading plays a particularly pivotal role in language acquisition and skill development. As noted by Huy (2022), reading enhances vocabulary and provides students with the knowledge necessary to excel in their chosen field. Wulan and Nugrahani (2023) explain that reading motivation is shaped by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal drive to read, fueled by personal interest, intelligence, ability, and engagement, while extrinsic motivation comes from outside influences, such as peers, teachers, or the learning environment. These motivations are powerful forces that encourage students to read, often without external pressure, and are essential to the development of strong reading comprehension skills.

Reading is not solely essential for acquiring knowledge, but it enhances writing skills, keeps updated with trends, and develops critical thinking. Comprehending what we read requires skills in interpreting and grasping the significance of various texts and it is a cognitive process that strengthens memory, focus, and vocabulary. Previous studies, such as those by Fitriyah (2021) and Nacario et al. (2022) have found strong correlations between students' intrinsic motivation and their reading comprehension abilities. For example, seventh-grade students with higher levels of intrinsic motivation demonstrated stronger reading comprehension skills, while pre-service teachers showed a deep intrinsic drive to read, motivated by their desire to learn a second language.

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Despite existing findings, there has been limited research on the connection between intrinsic reading motivation and reading comprehension abilities. This gap has instigated this study to investigate the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation and comprehension skills. Studying these aspects aims to understand how students' enthusiasm for reading influences their understanding of written texts, particularly concerning comprehension skills, which are classified as literal, interpretive, inferential, and critical comprehension levels. The results of this research will provide valuable insights into how motivation affects reading comprehension, thereby guiding educators in developing targeted interventions to improve students' reading skills.

This study was anchored on the Motivation Crowding Theory (MCT) of Albert Bandura. The motivation theory combines intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic motivations are affected by rewards such as money or feedback, while intrinsic motivations originate from the joy of the activity itself (Huang et al., 2024). This theory proposes that people have intrinsic and extrinsic motivation sources that lead their attention to reading.

This study investigated reading motivation as the independent variable, particularly intrinsic and extrinsic, in which intrinsic motivation originates within an individual. In contrast, extrinsic motivation involves engaging in an activity for an external reward. This theory helps to understand why people do things by looking at both their inner feelings and the outside world. By applying this theory, it will uncover how both internal and external motivations influence students' interest in reading.

Reading comprehension skills serve as the dependent variable. It is the individual's own ability to understand the text using critical thinking by identifying what can be categorized as literal, interpretive, inferential, and critical levels of comprehension. By focusing on these aspects, it aims to gauge participants' proficiency in understanding written material and how it correlates with their levels of interest in reading.

A previous study by Wang et al. (2020) involving 522 seventh to ninth graders in Eastern China showed how both intrinsic and extrinsic factors of reading motivation influence reading success. The results pointed that the intrinsic motivation driven by curiosity and personal interest strongly enhances reading performance. In contrast, extrinsic motivation, which relies on external rewards such as grades, is detrimental to reading success. A different study by Bakkaloğlu and Pilten (2023) examined fourth graders to investigate the link between the motivation in reading and the confidence in comprehending texts. The outcomes showed that intrinsically motivated learners tend to have higher self-efficacy, positively associated with their reading comprehension abilities. A last study pointed out that the learners with higher intrinsic motivation have more potential to partake in reading regularly, enhancing their comprehension skills. Conversely, students driven by external incentives tend to read less and struggle with reading task (Kanonire et al., 2022).

In summary, the theories and arguments served as the foundation of this study formed the basis of this research regarding the connection between students' reading motivation and their ability to comprehend reading material. This suggests that both internal and external motivations influence individuals' behavior. The study focused on understanding how students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for reading affect their comprehension abilities.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study used a correlational approach to analyze the connection between reading motivation and comprehension skills of the BEED and BSED first-year and second-year learners of Southern de Oro Philippines College. Correlational research enables the prediction and explanation of relationships among variables, allowing researchers to measure two or more variables to investigate the extent of their interrelation (Seeram, 2021). This research design was instrumental in identifying the degree of the connection between the two variables: students' motivation to read and reading comprehension skills.

After collecting and recording the data that were gathered in the study, the following statistical tools were used. The research utilized various statistical methods to investigate the data; Mean and Standard Deviation were used to assess Problem 1, the learners' reading motivation. Problem 2, the comprehension skills. For problem 3, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was utilized to analyze the connection between the learners' reading motivation and comprehension skills.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. What is the student's reading motivation in terms of?

- 1.1. intrinsic; and
- 1.2. extrinsic?

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Table 1: Summary Table on Reading Motivation

Reading Motivation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description	Interpretation
Intrinsic	4.04	0.91	Agree	High
Extrinsic	3.40	1.03	Neutral	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.72	0.97	Agree	High

Note: 4.50–5.00 Very High; 3.50–4.49 High; 2.50–3.49 Moderate; 1.50–2.49 Low; 1.0–1.49 Very Low

Table 1 presents a summary of the data on Reading Motivation. The results indicates that participants exhibit a high level of intrinsic reading motivation while showing a moderate level of extrinsic motivation. This suggests that these students are strongly motivated to read by internal factors such as enjoyment, curiosity, personal interest, and a desire for knowledge. In accordance, Nadeem & Moin (2023) stated that intrinsically motivated students to read engage deeply with texts, resulting in greater enjoyment, increased effort, and a stronger ability to take charge of their own learning.

Problem 2. What is the students' level of reading comprehension skills?

Table 2: Comprehension skills in terms of Literal, Interpretive, Inferential, and Critical

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1. Literal	3.90	1.71	Excellent Comprehension
2. Interpretive	3.36	1.89	Excellent Comprehension
3. Inferential	2.21	1.78	Fair Comprehension
4. Critical	1.80	1.14	Fair Comprehension
Overall Mean	3.02	1.58	Good Comprehension

Note: 16-20 Excellent; 11-15 Good; 6-10 Fair; 0-5 Poor

Table 2 presents data on students' reading comprehension skills. It has overall Mean of 3.02 with SD = 1.58 indicates a good comprehension level. This means that, on average, students possess a reasonable understanding of the material they read. However, the variability indicated by the standard deviation suggests that there are differences in comprehension levels among students. While students demonstrate a strong ability to understand explicit information and draw simple connections within a text and, they struggle with more complex cognitive processes like making inferences and evaluating information critically. Nurjanah and Putri (2022) found that students generally understand the explicit and implied meanings in texts, but struggle with critical analysis. In addition, Al Roomy (2022) stated that instructional focus on developing students' ability to critically evaluate and reflect on what they read is crucial for both academic success and real-world application.

This suggest that educators should include and blend questions that demand higher-order thinking in creating lessons or examinations. Such questions should challenge students to analyze, evaluate, and create rather than merely memorize facts. Integrating higher-order thinking skills into assessments and teaching methodologies is crucial for bridging the observed deficiency in critical understanding among students (Reading Comprehension & Critical Thinking - Address Learning Gaps, 2024).

The highest Mean, 3.90 with SD = 1.71, is associated with Literal, interpreted as Excellent Comprehension. This means that students have an excellent ability to grasp explicit details and facts presented directly in the text, performing best on tasks or questions related to literal comprehension compared to the other types of comprehension being assessed. In the study of Kamagi (2020) found that the students have strong understanding the surface-level meaning of a text, such as identifying key concepts and recognizing specific words or occurrences.

The lowest Mean, 1.80 with SD = 1.14 pertains to Critical and, interpreted as Fair Comprehension. The means that students struggle with higher-order thinking skills related to reading. They may have difficulty moving beyond simply understanding the text to analyzing, evaluating, and forming their own judgments about it. According to Al Roomy (2022), students face challenges in critically evaluating and analyzing information within a text, which necessitates higher-level thinking skills such as making judgments, integrating knowledge, and providing critiques.

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Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between students' level of reading motivation and students' reading comprehension skills?

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Reading Motivation	R-value	P-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Intrinsic	0.078	0.448	Accept	Not significant
Extrinsic	0.188	0.047	Reject	Significant

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis in Reading Motivation in terms of intrinsic is not significant. The intrinsic motivation had R-value = 0.078, p-value = 0.448 which shows no association in the reading comprehension skills of the students. While the extrinsic was associated to the comprehension skills of the students with its R-value = 0.188, p-value = 0.047 which is negligible.

The outcomes indicated that intrinsic motivation is not notably linked to the comprehension skills of the learners in terms of reading. In contrast, extrinsic motivation shows a weak association with these skills. This suggests that while intrinsic motivation may not be essential for enhancing comprehension, extrinsic factors have a minimal relationship. Educators could consider emphasizing external motivators such to help improve students' reading comprehension (Harris, 2023).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study reached the following conclusions based on its findings:

1. The study found that students were motivated intrinsically to read because and they find learning enjoyable and fulfilling.
2. The results showed that students are good at understanding basic facts and details from what they read, but they struggle with deeper thinking, like analyzing or judging what they read. This suggests that students literally understanding the materials that they read and they struggle in understanding deeper meaning of the text.
3. The study found a minimal but positive association of extrinsic motivation and reading comprehension skills.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The study found that students enjoy reading for fun, and rewards such as grades. The school and teachers may improve their reading programs that address both types of motivation. Teachers may create small incentives for students, such as offering praise, certificates, or extra points for good reading performance. This approach may encourage students to put more effort into their reading.
2. The teacher may engage in activities that promote higher-order thinking skills is beneficial for students. This suggest that teachers may include variety of ways such audio and written materials including books, articles, podcast and more that shows different perspectives. By letting the students engage with different materials it may develop their critical thinking skills and curiosity to analyze the content.
3. The school may recognize students' reading achievements such giving certificate or prize for completing reading assignments or participating in reading challenge. The teacher may contribute reading assignments to the students' overall grades. By this, the school and the teacher may encourage students to read and it may develop them to love reading intrinsically and also students maybe more inclined to engage in reading.

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