

Exploring the Relationship between Reading Comprehension Skills and Academic Performance among UV-D Education Students: A Mixed Methods Study

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ABSTRACT

This mixed methods study investigates the factors influencing the academic performance of Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) students on a private HEI in the Municipality of Dalaguete, with a focus on reading comprehension. The research combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyze intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The quantitative data, collected through surveys, reveals that self-discipline, motivation, and time management have a significant positive correlation with academic performance in reading comprehension. The qualitative findings, derived from interviews, highlight the importance of teacher-student relationships, the learning environment, and external distractions in shaping academic outcomes. Results indicate that a supportive learning environment and effective teacher-student interactions enhance student engagement and comprehension, while distractions such as social media and personal issues hinder performance. The study concludes that academic success in reading comprehension is influenced by a combination of personal attributes, teacher-student dynamics, and external factors. The findings suggest that improving these factors can significantly enhance the academic performance of BEED students.

Keywords: reading comprehension, academic performance, mixed-methods study, education students, student perceptions, educational interventions

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of learning is effective reading comprehension, which influences both academic achievement and personal development. It is the foundation of educational systems, allowing students to evaluate and interpret texts from a variety of subject areas. Despite its importance, teachers continue to have difficulties in encouraging students' interest in and proficiency in this ability.

The Philippine Department of Education's (DepEd) K–12 curriculum places a strong emphasis on improving reading comprehension throughout all grade levels, reflecting the value of this skill. Higher education courses are further aligned with this objective by the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, which promotes instructional practices that encourage active learning and understanding.

Nonetheless, UNICEF's 2019 study, which found a learning poverty rate of 90.9%—a startling indication that children cannot read and comprehend simple texts by the age of 10—demonstrates that poor reading comprehension is still a major problem. Effective solutions are urgently needed in light of this situation, which is made worse by pandemic-induced learning losses (Conoza, 2022).

Reading is only one aspect of comprehension. True comprehension entails making connections between concepts, recognizing connections, and extrapolating meaning from the text as a whole, even though decoding language is essential (Duke & Pearson, 2022). Students' capacity to process information holistically is frequently hampered by issues including poor word recognition and fragmented reading strategies (Pardo, 2004). This is especially problematic in higher education, as superior comprehension abilities are necessary to meet complex cognitive demands (Cabasan, 2019).

Diverse conclusions have been drawn from research on enhancing reading comprehension. Research shows that when compared to digital materials, printed texts frequently result in improved comprehension outcomes (Tuncer & Bahadir, 2014; Spencer, 2016). Improved understanding and academic success have also been associated with environmental factors, such as parental participation (McNeal, 2015; Lipnevich et al., 2016). However, in spite of these results, a large number of college students find it difficult to complete complex understanding assignments, indicating deficiencies in the fundamental abilities acquired in previous schooling.

A significant research gap is highlighted by the scarcity of studies examining the relationship between reading comprehension and academic success at the postsecondary level. In order to ensure that college students succeed in foundational courses, Taraban, Rynearson, and Kerr (2010) stress the importance of evaluating these competencies. Eliminating this gap can help create focused tactics that improve understanding and academic performance and prepare students for the demands of college.

Theoretical Framework

Information Processing Theory and Schema Theory, two cognitive theories that together explain how cognitive processes and past knowledge affect academic achievement, serve as the foundation for this study. These ideas offer a strong basis for comprehending and enhancing learning outcomes and reading comprehension in educational settings.

George Miller developed the information processing theory in the 1950s, and it focuses on the cognitive processes—such as perception, memory, reasoning, and attention—that go into learning. It suggests that using these cognitive processes to encode, store, and retrieve information is necessary for reading comprehension. The hypothesis will direct the investigation of how students absorb information while completing reading assignments and how these processes affect their academic achievement. In particular, to ascertain their impact, pupils' cognitive abilities—such as problem-solving, memory recall, and attention span—will be evaluated.

Anderson (1977) and Rumelhart (1980) established the schema theory, which highlights how past experiences and knowledge influence comprehension. It implies that people use pre-existing mental models, or schemas, to comprehend new information. These schemas affect how people perceive and react to stimuli. Using Schema Theory, this study investigates how students' prior knowledge influences their understanding of the course material and academic performance. Students who possess pertinent past knowledge, for example, may find it easier to absorb new ideas, while those who do not may have more difficulty comprehending the subject matter.

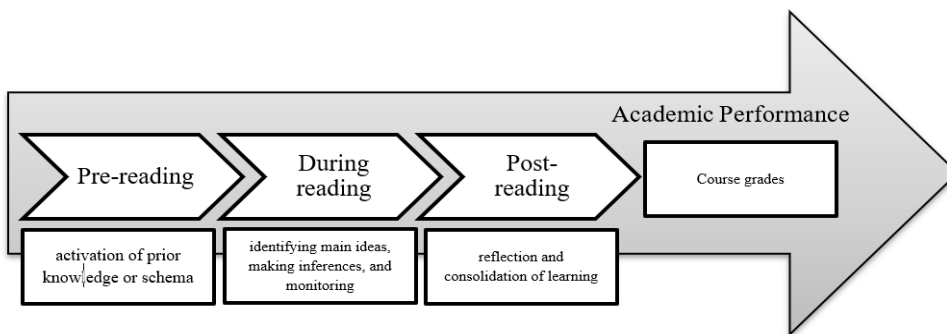


Figure 1: *Integrated Model of Schema Theory and Information Processing Theory in Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance*

The three stages of the reading process are where these theories converge:

Pre-reading Phase: According to schema theory, the reader makes predictions and makes connections between previously learned material and new information by activating prior knowledge, or schemas.

Reading Phase: According to Information Processing Theory, the reader uses comprehension techniques like inference-making and comprehension monitoring.

Post-Reading Phase: Supported by both theories, consolidation takes place as the reader considers and incorporates the knowledge they have acquired.

Schema Theory will shed light on how students view the connection between academic success and reading comprehension in the context of this study. It will also assist in determining the variables that affect these results, such as how well prior knowledge relates to the course content. Information Processing Theory, meanwhile, will offer information on the mental mechanisms that underlie.

This study hypothesizes that reading comprehension abilities have a major impact on students' academic achievement, especially in basic courses. Prior knowledge, as stressed by the Schema Theory, and cognitive processes, as described by the Information Processing Theory, both influence these abilities. Stronger cognitive skills, such as reasoning, memory, and attention, are thought to help students process, retain, and apply knowledge more effectively, which should improve their academic performance. Furthermore, pupils are more likely to successfully understand and incorporate new material if they have strong schemas or pertinent prior knowledge, which improves learning and performance. This theoretical viewpoint emphasizes how crucially cognitive processes and past knowledge interact to influence students' academic performance. Additionally, it implies that improving these mental processes and utilizing prior knowledge can serve as strategic approaches to improving learning outcomes in educational contexts.

Statement of Purpose

The objective of this study is to investigate the correlation between reading comprehension skills and academic performance among education students at the University of the Visayas, Dalaguete Campus. The research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of reading comprehension skills among UV-D Education students?
2. What is the level of students' academic performance?
3. Is there a significant relationship between reading comprehension skills and academic performance among UV-D Education students?
4. How do UV-D education students perceive the relationship between their reading comprehension skills and academic performance in core courses?
5. What factors do UV-D education students perceive as influencing their reading comprehension skills and academic performance?
6. How do UV-D education students develop their reading comprehension skills and improve their academic performance in core courses?

This study seeks to provide answers to these issues in order to shed light on the relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance and to offer suggestions for raising UV-D education students' educational results.

Limitations of the Study

There are various limitations to this study. Students' academic performance and reading comprehension may be impacted by outside factors such as their socioeconomic background, previous schooling, and personal situations. Although these elements will be taken into consideration, their impact cannot be completely eradicated. Furthermore, it is difficult to provide a strong basis for the study because there is a dearth of prior research on the connection between UV-D students' academic achievement and their reading comprehension abilities. Another drawback is the University's monthly course offerings, which have been in place since the pandemic. Due to differing course difficulties, these staggered offerings may have an impact on student performance and make it more difficult to obtain midterm scores.

Furthermore, the study's applicability to the full student population was limited because it was based on replies from 167 of the 248 targeted students. Additionally, because the study only looked at UV-D Education students, its conclusions might not apply to other groups. The results may also be impacted by the participants' willingness to share their experiences. Because the study was done during lunch, individuals might have been distracted or tired, which could have affected how well they performed on the test. Finally, the accuracy of the results may have been impacted by testing practices that generated distractions or reading difficulties, such as the use of a projector for the reading comprehension exam.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach for its investigation. In order to provide a deeper understanding of the research issue, this approach entails the sequential gathering and analysis of quantitative data followed by qualitative data (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The qualitative phase was utilized to follow up on, expand upon, or offer context for the quantitative findings in this study, with the quantitative phase receiving priority.

Multiple factors in the context of this investigation make the adoption of a sequential explanatory design imperative. First off, it makes it possible to fully comprehend more the connection between UV-D students' academic achievement and their ability to read comprehension. The researcher can get numerical data on the students' academic achievement and reading comprehension skills in the beginning phase by gathering and analyzing quantitative data.

Research Instrument

The main research tool for the quantitative phase was a 50-item multiple-choice reading comprehension exam. Perception, attention, encoding, storage, and retrieval of information were among the stages of reading comprehension that were evaluated by this exam. The purpose of the questions was to assess students' perceptual abilities, including their ability to recognize words and phrases in the text, concentrate on key information, process that information, and come up with pertinent answers. Cognitive talents and their correlation with academic success were assessed using this tool.

The researcher collected data for the qualitative phase through focus group discussions. These conversations were designed to delve deeper into the experiences and viewpoints of the children on their academic performance and reading comprehension.

Environment

The study was carried out on the Dalaguete Campus of the University of the Visayas. The University of the Visayas has a satellite campus here in Cebu City. It is situated in the city of Dalaguete, Cebu, a province in the nation's Visayas region.

Numerous undergraduate programs are available at UV-Dalaguete, including a bachelor's in elementary education, a bachelor's in secondary education with a focus on mathematics, a bachelor's in business administration with a major in human resource development management, a bachelor's in hotel and restaurant management, and a bachelor's in criminology.

Participants

In this study, a total of 167 students from the University of the Visayas Dalaguete's College of Education participated. Although 248 students were originally anticipated, only 167 provided valid and complete consent forms, which was considered sufficient for the study. The exclusion of fourth-year students from participation due to their practice teaching commitments, which also prevented them from taking midterm exams, may limit the ability to generalize the findings to the entire university student population.

Regarding the focus group discussions (FGDs), a subset of these 167 students was selected for in-depth interviews. Specifically, a total of 30 students participated in the FGDs. These participants were chosen to represent a variety of experiences and perspectives related to reading comprehension and academic performance. The FGDs were conducted in small groups, each consisting of 6-10 students to facilitate an open and interactive environment.

Data saturation was reached after conducting the FGDs with these 30 students. Saturation occurred when no new themes or insights emerged from the discussions, signaling that the collected data adequately represented the range of experiences and opinions related to the study's research questions. At this point, additional interviews were deemed unnecessary, as the information gathered provided sufficient depth to address the study's objectives and research questions.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, ensuring they understood the voluntary and confidential nature of their involvement. Consent forms were distributed and collected, and participants were given an overview of the reading comprehension tests and focus group discussions. The researcher scheduled appropriate times for data collection, ensuring a quiet, private setting for both the tests and discussions. Participants were grouped according to their respective year levels, and necessary permissions were secured from the relevant academic authorities at the university.

Quantitative data were collected through standardized reading comprehension tests administered to participants. These tests were conducted in a quiet and controlled environment to avoid external distractions. Participants were given clear instructions on how to complete the tests, with appropriate time allocated. Midterm scores from core courses were also collected through the university's student records system to gauge academic performance. For the qualitative data, focus group discussions were conducted with the participants in small groups to encourage open dialogue. These discussions were moderated to ensure that all participants had the opportunity to share their perspectives. The discussions were audio-recorded, and participants were assured of confidentiality throughout.

After data collection, the researcher transcribed the audio-recorded focus group discussions for analysis. Quantitative data from the reading comprehension tests and midterm scores were organized and stored securely for statistical analysis. The collected data were analyzed separately for each phase of the study. The researcher also followed up with participants if any clarifications were needed or if additional insights arose. Finally, participants were debriefed, thanked for their time, and informed about the next steps in the study.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Phase

During the study's quantitative phase, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data gathered from the reading comprehension tests. The participants' scores were compiled using descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions. An overview of the range of scores and the frequency of different response categories was given by these statistics. The associations between reading comprehension skill and other variables, including reading frequency, academic achievement, and parental participation, were also investigated using correlation analysis. The significance of these characteristics in participants' reading comprehension skills was determined by calculating correlation coefficients, which evaluated the direction and intensity of these associations.

Qualitative Phase

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were used to gather information throughout the qualitative phase in order to obtain a deeper understanding of participants' reading comprehension experiences. Facilitated conversations with a small group of participants were recorded on audio and transcribed for analysis. The thematic analysis framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was then used to examine the transcriptions. The actions listed below were taken:

Familiarizing with the data

The researcher transcribed the audio recordings and thoroughly read the transcripts multiple times to become deeply familiar with the data.

Generating initial codes

Initial codes were generated by identifying significant features in the data that were relevant to the research questions. The researcher highlighted key words, phrases, and concepts that appeared throughout the focus group discussions.

Searching for themes

The codes were then organized into broader themes by grouping related codes together. The researcher identified patterns and commonalities in the data that represented participants' experiences and perceptions regarding reading comprehension.

Reviewing themes

The researcher reviewed and refined the themes to ensure they accurately reflected the data. Some themes were merged or split to better represent the participants' experiences, ensuring coherence and consistency.

Defining and naming themes

Once the final themes were established, the researcher defined and named them in a way that clearly represented the key concepts and patterns emerging from the data.

Writing the report

The researcher wrote a detailed report based on the analysis of the themes, illustrating the main findings and connecting them to the research questions. The final report highlighted the significant factors affecting participants' reading comprehension, including their preferences, strategies, and self-perceptions.

RESULTS

The principal focus of this section is to explain the results of quantitative and qualitative analyses with the goal of addressing the study issues concerning the relationship between reading comprehension skills and academic performance among UV-D education students. The quantitative findings, which were informed by the Information Processing Theory, offer an examination of the students' academic accomplishment and reading comprehension levels. A deeper knowledge of how students view the relationship between their reading comprehension abilities and academic success is provided by qualitative analysis, which is influenced by Schema theory.

Quantitative Data

Table 1. Respondents' Level of Reading Comprehension Skills

Scores	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Below 20	Below Basic Level	149	89.22	1
20-29	Basic	18	10.78	2
30-39	Intermediate	0	0	4
40-44	Proficient	0	0	4

45-50	Advanced	0	0	4
	Total	167	100.00	

Table 1 presents the respondents' level of reading comprehension skills. As seen above, the scores are classified into 5, each having a specific level of comprehension. The levels range from "below basic level" as the lowest and "advanced" as the highest. The findings revealed that 89% of the respondents fall below the basic level of comprehension skills. The remaining respondents have basic level of reading comprehension skills.

Table 2. Respondents' Level of Academic Performance

Scores	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Below 75	Did not meet expectation	64	46.38	1
75-79	Fairly Satisfactory	28	20.29	2
80-84	Satisfactory	26	18.84	3
85-89	Very Satisfactory	13	9.42	4
90-100	Outstanding	7	5.07	5
	Total	138	100.00	

Table 2 shows the respondents' level of academic performance based on their midterm scores. As seen in the previous page, the level of academic performance ranges from "did not meet expectation" as the lowest and "outstanding" as the highest. The results revealed 46% of the respondents did not meet expectations in their academic performance. Ranked second, third and fourth are those with fairly satisfactory, satisfactory and very satisfactory performance, respectively. Those with outstanding performance only account 5% of the distribution.

Table 3. Relationship between Reading Comprehension Skills and Academic Performance

Standardized Coefficient	r	Degree of Relationship	p-value	Meaning	Decision
0.385	0.033	Negligible	0.701	Not Significant	Accept H ₀

This study has measured the relationship between reading comprehension skills and academic performance of students. Considering that the data involved in this study is positively skewed, spearman rho which is a non-parametric test was utilized. The level of significance was set at 5% as basis for the acceptance or rejection of the research hypothesis. The statistical test yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.033. A p-value of 0.701 was also obtained.

Qualitative Data

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data gathered from the participants of the study. The information is presented in themes together with their interpretation and implication. The presentation is organized based on the order of the research questions in the statement of the problem.

How UV-D education students perceive the relationship between their reading comprehension skills and academic performance in core courses

Satisfactory

“...Yes, kay kuan kung slow learner ka di jud ka makasabot sa basahunon ba makaapekto man jud na siya sa imong panagskwela.

Yes, maam mag lisod kog catch up maam.”

“...Yes, because it's like that (laughs). Yes, ma'am, if you are a slow learner and cannot understand what you're reading, it will definitely affect your academic performance. Yes, ma'am, it will be difficult for me to catch up.” (Transcript A, page 8, lines 251-253)

“...Naa silay relationship maam kay example mutake kag exam math ba na. Naa may problem solving maam so kung naa kay reading comprehension maam mas dakog chance nga maka answer ka. Kung wa kay reading comprehension maam kay wa sad kay problem solivng kay dili naman ka makasabot unsay gipasabot sa pangutana

“...There is a relationship, ma'am, for example, when you take a math exam. There are problem-solving questions, so if you have reading comprehension skills, there's a greater chance of being able to answer them. Without reading comprehension, you may struggle with understanding the question and its intended meaning, which will also hinder your problem-solving abilities.” (Transcript C, page 5, lines 144-146)

“...Yes. Naa silay relationship kay kung wa kay reading comprehension how come maka excel ka sa imong academic performance?”

“...Yes. There is a relationship because if you don't have reading comprehension, how can you excel in your academic performance?” (Transcript B, page 10, lines 344-347)

“...Naay relationship maam once active ka or imong reading comprehension, nay big possibility nga abtik sad ka or muexcel sad ka sa imo academic performance.”

“...There is a relationship, ma'am, that when you are active and have good reading comprehension, there is a big possibility that you will also excel in your academic performance.” (Transcript A, page 5, lines 141-143)

“...Reading comprehension og academic performance maam kay nay relationship. Mura siyag lamisa maam nga walay tiil di makabarog. Dapat naa jud na sila duha para kompleto ang lamisa”

“...Reading comprehension and academic performance have relationship. It's like a table without its legs it cannot stand. Both should present for the table to stand” (Transcript C, page 5, lines 151-154)

“...Yes, kung naa kay reading comprehension skills maam mas dali nimo masabtan mas dali nmo mabuhat ang expected gikan nimo maam”

“Yes, if you have reading comprehension skills, you can understand things more easily and accomplish what is expected of you more quickly.” (Transcript B, page 8-9, lines 281-282)

The UV-D education students' perceptions towards the relationship between their reading comprehension skills and academic performance in core courses is at most satisfactory. All students stated how their academic performance in core courses is and will be highly dependent upon their reading comprehension level. Their reading comprehension skills and academic performance is a domino effect. If you have poor reading comprehension, chances are, you will most likely have struggles in getting good grades. On the flipside, if you focus on improving your reading comprehension skills and if you are needless to say good at it, then reaching your goal of academic success will go smoothly. All of the students show satisfaction and contentment with regards to their reading comprehension skills and academic performance in core courses.

For a student to make satisfactory academic progress, one must be committed to making good enough grades and completing classes – credits, hours. And also, keep moving forward such as continued practice of measures for improving in class so as to successfully completing a degree in a time period the school has set for the students.

Factors that UV-D education students perceive as influencing their reading comprehension skills and academic performance

Intrinsic Motivations

Self-discipline

“...Time management maam. Unahon namo ang things nga easy, really important.”

“...Time management, ma'am. We will prioritize things that are easy and really important.” (Transcript A, page 8 lines 269-271)

“...Time management maam. Maglist ko sa ako buhatonun maam para ako mabuhat tanan sa timeframe para di ko mag cramming.”

“...Time management, ma'am. I will make a list of my tasks so that I can accomplish them within the timeframe and avoid cramming.” (Transcript B, page 8, lines 271-272)

“Amo istudy maam kung unsay una i-test.”

I will prioritize studying whatever will be tested first.” (Transcript D, page 5, lines 152-153)

“Ang sayun kanang makasabot ko.”

I will prioritize what's easy, something that I can understand easily.”

(Transcript B, page 7, line 235)

“Unahon ang lisod maam.”

“I will prioritize the hard or challenging subjects first.”

(Transcript B, page 3, line 242)

“Time management pud maam kay musayaw man pud ko unya studies unya maglisod kog study na kung dilia nko i-manage ako time well.”

“Time management is also important, ma'am, because I have other commitments like dancing and studying, and it becomes challenging to study if I don't manage my time well.” (Transcript B, oage 8, lines 262-269)

As what the famous American mountaineer and CEO, Jim Whittaker said, "You can never conquer the mountain. You can only conquer yourself." According to Mind Tools Content Team, self-discipline is the ability to push yourself forward, stay motivated, and take action, regardless of how you're feeling, physically or emotionally. This means that it can be seen in a person when he/she purposely chooses to pursue something that is for one's betterment. And when the person chooses to do so despite challenging factors such as distractions, hard work, or unfavorable circumstances. Self-discipline is useful in many areas of everyone's lives, in this case, in the students' academic performance.

For instance, as stated above, it is by conscious choice of the students to pursue their academic goals by managing their time and workload wisely. They also make sure to prioritize tasks based on their personal strengths and preferences so that it would be suitable for them and their study habits or strategies. Self-discipline is what pushes people to do high-quality work even if there are hindrances. It is an intrinsic

motivating factor that is helpful to students in order for them to achieve the goals that they set for themselves. It can also improve learning and enhance performance. Studies have shown that students with a high degree of self-discipline retain more knowledge than those without self-discipline. Additionally, researchers discovered that students with strong self-discipline are more careful in their tasks, which improves their performance. (Gong, Y, Rai, et. al., 2009)

Personal Disposition

“...dili mag depende maam kay kung d jud ganahan ako utok musabot dili gyud ko kasabot maam.”

“...It doesn't depend, ma'am, because if my mind is not interested, I won't understand, ma'am.” (*Transcript A, page 8, lines 265-266*)

“...dili maam useless raman sad gud kung amo pugson maam unya wa gihapon mi nasabtan.”

“...I don't force myself to study. It is also pointless if we force ourselves, we still won't understand.” (*Transcript A, page 11, lines 363-365*)

“...extrovert man ko mas maka participate man ko sa oral exams maam.”

“...I'm an extrovert, so I can participate more in oral exams, ma'am.” (*Transcript B, page 9-10, lines 318-319*)

“...dili ko ganahan mag overthink maam mudawat rako bisag unsa.”

I don't like to overthink, ma'am. I am open to accepting anything.” (*Transcript B, page 10, line 332*)

“Mag pray pud maam especially kung d ka study maam. Makahatag man nako og motivation maam og focus og guidance para ma overcome nako ang challenges sa test or even sa studies maam.”

“...I also pray, ma'am, especially when I don't feel like studying. Prayer can provide me with motivation, focus, and guidance to overcome any challenges I may face in my studies.” (*Transcript C, page 12, lines 406-408*)

“Lisod nga subject maam pero mag depende pud kay for example math. Karun nga midterm sayun ra amo topics sa math kay wa man ga involve og solving. Unya ako strategy pud maam kay study 30 minutes break og 5 minutes para dili ko ma burnout maam.”

“...it can be a difficult subject, ma'am, but it also depends. For example, in math, our midterm focused on topics that didn't require problem-solving. My strategy, ma'am, is to study for 30 minutes and then take a 5-minute break to avoid burning out, ma'am.” (*Transcript B, page 12, lines 292-293*)

Personal disposition is another theme that came up from the results of the FGD regarding the influential factors to students' reading comprehension and academic performance. As defined by the American Psychological Association, “Personal disposition is any of a number of enduring characteristics that describe or determine an individual's behavior across a variety of situations and that are peculiar to and uniquely expressed by that individual.” Basically, personal disposition is a type of distinct personality trait. This means that it is different from one individual to another.

As shown in the transcriptions above, it is evident that each student has a different disposition or outlook and approach when it comes to motivating or demotivating factors that impact their reading comprehension and academic performance. This trait is another example of sub-themes under intrinsic motivating factors because it is highly individualistic and unique.

Extrinsic Motivations

Teacher

“...yes, mas maganahan mi musabot kung ganahan mi niya maam

Yes, we are more motivated to understand if we like the teacher, ma'am.” (Transcript A, page 9, lines 282-286)

“...mas ganahan mi sa teacher maam kung di kaayo nindot og batasan pero grabe muhatag sa topic maam.”

“...we prefer a teacher, ma'am, who may not have the best attitude but provides extensive topics.” (Transcript A, page 8, lines 251-253)

“...gaganahan ko og teachers nga strikta maam kay mas makafocus ko sa topic once disiplinahan mi maam.”

“I prefer strict teachers, ma'am, because I can focus more on the topic when we are disciplined, ma'am.” (Transcript B, page 9, lines 287-294)

“...mag matter para nako maam. Kay kung ganahan ko sa maistra mag sige ko og sulod so mas makasabot ko sa iyang subject unya mapalawman pajud nako ako nahibaw-an kay makapangutana naman kog mga maayo nga questions kay komportable man ko sa maistra.”

“...that's important for me, ma'am. If I enjoy the teacher's class, I will actively participate and engage with the subject matter, allowing me to better understand it. I also feel more at ease asking relevant questions because I am comfortable with the teacher.” (Transcript C, page 8, lines 271-283)

“...muhatag og coverage maam.”

“...if the teacher gives coverage.” (Transcript D, page 4, line 130)

Under the extrinsic motivation theme is the teacher. Because the center for academics is the school, the number one person whom each and every student interacts with every day is their teacher. This is an extrinsic or external factor for the reason that it is an uncontrollable variable especially to the students.

As stated by the students, they prefer teachers who appeal to them better or to their liking. If the teacher possesses the characteristics that impress and engage the students' attention and they exude encouragement and inspiration, students are most likely to be more interested and motivated to study, participate in class, and work harder.

Environment

“...mamanage ra nako akong time kay mag tan aw sad kog K-Drama. Mas maganhan ko magtuon basta kadlawn na maam nya gikan kog tan aw og KDrama kay mainspire pud ko labi na akong gitan aw kay about school murag ma relate sad nako akong kaugalingon. Mao ni ang conditioning nako maam sa akong mind.”

“...I can manage my time because I also watch KDramas. I feel more motivated to study when it's already nighttime, ma'am, after watching KDramas because I get inspired, especially when the drama is related to school. It's like I can relate to it. That's how I condition my mind, ma'am.” (Transcript A, page 6, lines 209-212)

“...environment pud maam kay kung usahay nay family drama og ang environment maam.”

“...the environment also matters, ma'am, because if there's occasional family drama or a distracting environment, ma'am.” (Transcript A, page 9-10, lines 320-321)

“...depende kung gnhan ako utok magpamusic. Dili pud ko magstudy maam magbasa ra ko.”

“...sometimes I prefer to listen to music rather than studying, so I end up reading instead.” (Transcript A, page 8 lines 267-268)

“...kung nay music maam”

“...If there’s music.” (Transcript A, page 5, line 146)

“...ung hilom maam.”

“...if its silent.” (Transcript A, page 6, line 203)

Another sub-theme under extrinsic motivation is environment. The environment in which the student is situated when he/she is studying will most likely affect his/her overall mood and may either boost or hinder their study time.

In the abovementioned accounts, many students testified that environmental factors have great impact unto them and their motivations in studying. Some prefer studying quietly while others prefer to study with music on. Another student said that it is hard to study when there is too much noise and distractions. What these answers clearly imply is that the ambience, nature, and situation within the place that a student is at during the time that he/she is studying can affect his/her mood and performance in either a positive or negative way.

Ways that UV-D education students do to develop their reading comprehension skills and improve their academic performance in core courses

Reading Strategies

“...Studyhan nya if nay malisdan nga word kay Isearch/ unfamiliar.”

Study it if there are difficult words, then search if unfamiliar.” (Transcript A, page 7, lines 236-238)

“...approach the teacher kung nay dili masabtan.”

Approach the teacher if there’s something that is not understood.” (Transcript A, page 6, lines 187-188)

“...Basahon balik maam”

“.... Read it again.” (Transcript C, page 7, line 218)

“Research ang unfamiliar text maam kung naa nya repetition jud maam.”

“...Research the unfamiliar text, especially if there are repetitions.” (Transcript D, page 4, lines 116-117)

“Compare sa reality/real world context.”

“...Compare it to the reality or real-world context.” (Transcript D, page 4, line 298)

The first theme which came up with is reading strategies based on the answers of the students during the FGD. It is a good way for students to personally develop and improve their reading comprehension skills. By making use of these various ways such as re-reading and reviewing text, approaching teachers, and seeking help or assistance, researching, and making use of technological search tools and other informative materials, as well as using reality vs. story scheme. When a person carefully matches his/her approach to a reading material, and takes control of the reading process, he/she will learn how to get the best results from the time and effort that was put into the task.

Based on the blog of SplashLearn (2023), reading strategies as a mental process helps the reader efficiently comprehend text. In other words, they’re the tools readers use to understand what’s written on a page. Reading strategies can help students access information that is not explicitly stated. They help readers infer meaning,

make conclusions and generalize information. Reading strategies are beneficial for texts that have complex ideas and vocabulary. Students can use them to develop comprehension skills and become better readers.

Exam Preparation

“...Take down notes.” (*Transcript A, page 4, line 126*)

“...Mangayog coverage maam.”

“... Ask for exam coverage” (*Transcript B, page 9, line 298*)

“...Study maam basta hapit na”

“...Study before exam day” (*Transcript C, page 9, line 282*)

The second theme is exam preparation. Preparing for an exam is a good way to make sure that a student will be able to pass a test and achieve academic success in the long run. The most common ways are taking down notes especially the most important details, asking for the examination coverage from the teachers so that studying identified topics will be easier, and also, the most effective and classic way, studying before the day of the exam.

Examinations, tests, and assessments are forms of evaluation of a student’s academic performance level. As per TeachMint’s article, “An examination is defined as the evaluation of the understanding of the knowledge of a person.” The assessment can be done in the form of a formal test. The exam is taken in order to check the knowledge of a student in a particular subject. The exam may include a variety of questions like objective, subjective, one word, and so on. Evaluation is done on the basis of marks obtained in the exam. Different exams are conducted at different levels. The exams conducted in schools test students’ skills and knowledge of all the subjects being taught under their courses.

Time and Workload Management

“...time management maam. Unahon namo ang things nga easy, really important.”

“...time management, ma'am. We will prioritize things that are easy and really important.” (*Transcript B, page 6, lines 182-183*) a

“...time management maam. Maglist ako sa ako buhatonun maam para ako mabuhat tanan sa timeframe para di ko mag cramming.”

“...time management, ma'am. I will make a list of my tasks so that I can accomplish them within the timeframe and avoid cramming.” (*Transcript B, page 11, lines 364-368*)

“...naa jud koy strategy maam katu giingon niya nga i-take down notes unya magbutang ko og time allotment og pila ra ka minutes or oras ako ispend ana nga subject pero once ika morning palang daan ana ma-break dili nan ko ma follow ako giplano maam.”

“...I have a strategy, ma'am, as she suggested to take down notes and allocate a specific amount of time for each subject. But sometimes, I find it difficult to follow my planned schedule once the morning comes.” (*Transcript B, page 8, lines 261-268*)

“...time management pud maam kay sayaw man pud ko unya studies nya maglisod kog study na kung d nko imanage ako time well.”

“...time management is also important, ma'am, because I have other commitments like dancing and studying, and it becomes challenging to study if I don't manage my time well.” (*Transcript B, page 10, lines 327-330*)

Time and workload management is the third theme under ways that UV-D education students do to develop their reading comprehension skills and improve their academic performance in core courses. As mentioned above, students make sure to manage their time and prioritize subjects based on their strengths and weaknesses as well as listing down important details so as to be as organized as possible.

As per Hanne Keiling’s February 2023 article, there are a total of nine key time management skills and they are: organization, prioritization, goal setting, communication, planning, delegation, stress management, problem-solving, and note-taking. Most of which have been cited by the students during the focus group discussions. That is why effective time management is a very important skill to develop, especially for students. Organizing tasks day by day helps in completing work on time and ultimately results in accomplishing academic performance success.

DISCUSSION

Quantitative Results	Qualitative Themes	Interpretation
<p>Reading Comprehension Skills:</p> <p>Most respondents have below-basic reading comprehension skills.</p>	<p>Perceived Relationship Between Reading Comprehension & Academic Performance:</p> <p>Students link poor comprehension to academic struggles.</p>	<p>Poor reading comprehension aligns with students’ belief that it directly impacts academic performance.</p>
<p>Midterm Exam Scores:</p> <p>Nearly half scored below 75.</p>	<p>Factors Influencing Academic Performance:</p> <p>Students cite intrinsic (self-discipline) and extrinsic (teacher influence) factors.</p>	<p>Low midterm scores are linked to students’ recognition of factors that affect both reading comprehension and academic performance.</p>
<p>Correlation Between Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance:</p> <p>Correlation of 0.033 suggests a negligible relationship.</p>	<p>Self-Discipline:</p> <p>Students emphasize the importance of self-discipline for academic success.</p>	<p>Weak correlation in the data contrasts with the students’ strong belief in self-discipline’s role in academic performance.</p>
<p>Literature Review:</p> <p>Studies show poor comprehension impacts academic performance.</p>	<p>Teacher Influence:</p> <p>Students value teacher engagement for better comprehension and performance.</p>	<p>The literature on reading comprehension links to the theme of teacher influence, emphasizing its impact on student performance.</p>
<p>Low Academic Performance:</p> <p>Majority exhibit low academic performance.</p>	<p>Strategies to Improve Comprehension:</p> <p>Students use strategies like re-reading and seeking help.</p>	<p>Students’ proactive strategies highlight the need for interventions to improve both comprehension and academic outcomes.</p>

Quantitative Analysis

As presented in the preceding chapter, almost all respondents have reading comprehension skills below the basic level. Ranked second are the respondents with basic level of reading comprehension. None of the respondents have intermediate, proficient, or advanced level of reading comprehension skills. The findings signify that the students are weak when it comes to comprehending what they have read, and thus would pose a

challenge in their studies. Having reached the college or tertiary level with reading comprehension skills below the basic level would mean that the respondents need improvement in terms of reading comprehension.

The findings above are founded on the several studies. In a study entitled “Levels of Reading Comprehension in Higher Education: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis”, it has been found that university students barely made it to the literal level of reading comprehension. The proportion of students who are able to proficiently comprehend text or any reading material has been found to be relatively low (de la Pena & Rojas, 2021). Similarly, Nanda and Azmi (2020) have found that poor reading comprehension is an issue among students. Poor reading comprehension has been linked to three remarkable factors, which are students’ lack of motivation, low prior knowledge, and poor English vocabulary. Consequently, this issue leads to adverse impacts, such as reducing students’ learning achievement, hindering students’ problem-solving skills, and inhibiting students’ future studies and careers.

In terms of the respondents’ level of academic performance based on the scores in the midterm exam of selected subjects, it can be gleaned that nearly half of the respondents got a midterm score of below 75. This implies that the said students did not meet the expectations or standards of the said course. It further signifies that the students may have difficulties in taking the midterm exam or may not have prepared well for their examination. Recommendations for intervention such as remediation may be thought of in view of the said findings.

Ranked second, third and fourth are those with fairly satisfactory, satisfactory, and very satisfactory performance in academics, respectively. Students with outstanding academic performance account for the least number in the distribution. The results further indicate that the students may have a low level of knowledge in certain subjects or may have difficulty in comprehending the concepts taught in class. Having low midterm scores may adversely affect the grades of the said students. Yusuf and Prabowo (2019, as cited by Tageh, et al., 2020) revealed that knowledge can help students hurdle their exams as well as transfer learning to other contexts. Despite a wide variety of teaching pedagogy, students, as most studies suggest, still have low performance in their examinations.

In terms of the relationship between reading comprehension skills and academic performance of students a correlation coefficient of 0.033 indicates that the relationship between reading comprehension skills and academic performance is negligible. This implies that the reading comprehension skills do not significantly influence the level of academic performance of students. Any relationship between the two variables is only attributed to chance. The p-value was found to be higher than the level of significance, thus proving that the association or relationship between the two variables are not significant. For Grabowski (2018), a p-value greater than 0.05 means that no effect was observed. This has led the researchers to accept the null hypothesis of the study.

Similar results have been found in an undergraduate thesis published by the University of Eastern Philippines. Comprehension levels of the students did not affect academic performance. As such, Tiany (2022) had suggested that other factors may have influenced how students perform thus, would warrant further studies.

Qualitative Analysis

The participants generally expressed a satisfactory perception of the relationship between their reading comprehension skills and academic performance. All students recognized that poor reading comprehension directly impacts their ability to perform well in their courses. As one participant noted, "If you have poor reading comprehension, it will be difficult to catch up and affect your grades" (Transcript A, page 8). Another student emphasized the importance of reading comprehension in subjects such as math, stating that "without reading comprehension, you may struggle to understand the problem-solving questions" (Transcript C, page 5). These statements align with the broader understanding that reading comprehension is foundational to academic success (Gong et al., 2009). When students are able to understand what they are reading, it facilitates better academic performance.

Intrinsic motivation emerged as a significant theme, where students emphasized the importance of time management and prioritizing tasks. One student explained, "I will make a list of my tasks so I can accomplish them within the timeframe" (Transcript B, page 8). Research supports the idea that self-discipline leads to better academic outcomes, as it helps students manage distractions and remain focused on their goals (Gong et al., 2009). This intrinsic motivation helps students avoid procrastination and perform better academically.

Personal disposition also played a role in students' learning strategies. For instance, one student shared that "if my mind is not interested, I won't understand" (Transcript A, page 8), while another mentioned their strategy of "study for 30 minutes and then take a 5-minute break to avoid burnout" (Transcript B, page 12). These individual strategies reflect how personal traits and mindset influence comprehension and performance.

Teacher influence was a strong external motivator for students. Several participants mentioned that they were more engaged in classes where they felt a connection with the teacher. One participant noted, "If I enjoy the teacher's class, I will actively participate and better understand the subject" (Transcript C, page 8). This finding is consistent with studies suggesting that positive teacher-student relationships enhance student engagement and academic performance (Gong et al., 2009).

Environment was another significant factor, with students mentioning both positive and negative influences. For example, one participant stated that they were "more motivated to study after watching K-Drama because it inspires me" (Transcript A, page 6). On the other hand, environmental distractions, like family drama, were seen as potential obstacles to focus (Transcript A, page 9). Thus, a conducive environment is essential for academic success.

CONCLUSION

Reading comprehension can be considered as one of the lifeblood of education as it is known to direct what and how students learn inside the classroom. As most literature suggests, problems with reading comprehension can adversely affect how students perform in schools. Factors affecting how students comprehend and perform in class may differ depending on their personal experiences and identifying these factors would be necessary to seek strategies to improve the learning outcomes. Firstly, based on the data gathered, the researchers conclude that students are not able to comprehend very well the material that they read. As such, this poor degree of reading comprehension hinders them in their studies. The researchers suggest that interventions may be undertaken to address the issue. Secondly, the study has also confirmed that low performance in academics is prevalent among students. Fewer students tend to perform better academically as manifested by their midterm scores in several subjects or courses. Collectively, reading comprehension skills have been thought of as an influential factor behind how students perform in academics. However, the spearman rho correlation proved to be inconsistent with what most literatures and existing studies suggest. The level of reading comprehension skills does not significantly influence the way students perform class. The data in this study failed to prove the importance of comprehension in academic performance. As a result of the study, the researchers have recommended the exploration of other factors which may have influenced the variables.

Thus, it can be concluded that based on the data gathered and analyzed comprehension and achieving academic performance success can be very challenging for students due to the factors that impact each of them individually and collectively. As mentioned early on, reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that students must possess for them to be productive and to attain their academic goals. Learning and developing reading comprehension skills are not limited to those students who struggle and have difficulties. Any proactive student would always look for opportunities and think of strategies and ways to further enhance their comprehension levels and academic performance.

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