Internal and External Factors and their Impact to the Reading Skills

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Abstract

Aim: This study aimed to identify and analyze the internal and external factors and their impact on the reading skills of grade 11 students.

Methodology: This study used a descriptive correlational design to determine the relationship between internal and external factors and the reading skills of grade 11 students. The researcher utilized a survey questionnaire, an adapted fluency test, and a reading comprehension test.

Results: Based on the findings of the study, internal factors of linguistic knowledge, learners' perception, and external factors of teacher influence and environment have a verbal interpretation of "agree". However, family influence has a verbal interpretation of "moderately agree". Furthermore, in terms of decoding and fluency, 40% of the respondents are at the instructional level, and 60% are at the independent level. The vocabulary test shows that 40% of the respondents are at the beginning level, 13.3% are at the developing level, 17.5% are approaching proficiency level, 15% are at proficient level, and 14.2% are at advanced level. The sentence construction and cohesion test results reveal that 32.5% are at the beginning level, 22.5% are at the developing level, 15% are approaching proficiency level, 14.2% are at proficient level, and 15.8% are at advanced level.

Conclusion: The correlation between internal factors and reading skills reveals that there is a significant relationship between linguistic knowledge, learners' perceptions, and reading skills. Moreover, the correlation between external factors and reading skills reveals that there is a significant relationship between teacher influence and reading skills. On the other hand, it reveals that there is no significant relationship between family influence and reading skills. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between environment and reading skills of decoding, fluency, and vocabulary, whereas there is no significant relationship between environment and sentence construction and cohesion.

Keywords: Internal and External Factors, Reading Skills, Reading Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

In any academic subject, reading is crucial and acts as a fundamental building block for learning. Reading is an imperative ability for everyday living, as seen by the necessity to read items like street signs and medications (Schlauch, 2014).

The reading process may be summed up as follows: readers decode words, retrieve their meaning, use their syntactic knowledge to group these words into clauses and sentences, and integrate information from various areas of the text. They frequently use prior knowledge to extrapolate information from the author's implicit statements (Silva & Cain, 2015).

When it comes to literacy, the Philippines stands tall above the rest of the nation. However, many Filipinos face challenges in the global workplace. According to Perez (2019), the former president of the Reading Association of the Philippines, the central issue is comprehension. Society necessitates excellent reading skills, as they are associated with students' success in school and even in life.

During the 2018 Program for the International Student Assessment (PISA), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) assessed about 600,000 15-year-old students in 79 countries. The Philippines

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participated in PISA for the first time as part of the quality basic education reform initiative. According to the PISA results, the Philippines has the lowest average reading score of 340. With the PISA results showing students' success on the National Achievement Test, the Department of Education acknowledges the importance of resolving problems in basic education in the Philippines.

Both teaching reading comprehension and helping students develop this skill are difficult tasks (Montero, 2019). Studying reading comprehension is essential since, without it, the meaning and information the author is attempting to convey would be lost (McDonnell et al., 2022). Studies must focus on broader perspectives of reading and current reading comprehension issues because educators are dissatisfied with the results of reading comprehension tests in order to develop some innovations and new approaches to improving reading comprehension (Paris, 2011).

In addition to the learning impediments students already had, the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant negative impact. According to Dr. Fernando Reimers, Director of the Global Educational Innovation Initiative at the Graduate School of Education of Harvard University, millions of children and adolescents worldwide were unable to attend school; experts claim that the pandemic resulted in this century's greatest educational setback (UdeG, 2020).

The necessity of reading comprehension is a global issue. It is the subject of ongoing research, events, and conferences. The Sixth Educational Conference on Reading Education was organized by the Spanish Association of Reading Comprehension (CIVEL) in December 2021. The primary goal was to discuss the most recent findings in reading comprehension research, including reading from linguistic and literary perspectives, the literary approach, and the promotion of reading from didactic, pedagogical, and psychological perspectives, among many others, in order to support researchers, teachers, and the students themselves (Mazariegos, 2022).

Finding out whether and how much reading achievement has been impacted by the pandemic-related restrictions requires taking into account a number of different factors. In addition to official classroom teaching, which includes homework, students also acquire the skill of reading on their own during free time. Less time was allotted for formal school-based education as a result of the transition from face-to-face instruction to ERE (Emergency Remote Education) due to COVID-19 constraints (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

In the period of the pandemic, 2020–2022, to ensure learning continuity, Alaminos Integrated National High School implemented distance learning modalities, including modular and online learning. The current grade 11 students in the school year 2022-2023 are involved in distance learning modalities in grades 9 and 10.

The Philippines implemented the Senior High School Program in 2016 to better equip the students with essential knowledge and skills and produce holistically developed graduates. Certainly, there is a need to find ways of improving the capacities of 11th grade students in both reading and comprehension. There are learning gaps with grade 11 students heightened by school closures and disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic that need to be addressed.

In relation to the National Reading Program, as one of the subprograms under the National Learning Recovery Program by the Department of Education, it is essential to enhance the reading abilities of the students. Identifying the factors in reading must be considered to fill the gaps and ameliorate reading skills. Internal and external factors must be taken into account, whether they affect the student's reading skills in one way or another.

Research Questions

This study is intended to identify and analyze the internal and external factors and its impact on the reading skills of grade 11 students.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the perception of the student-respondents on the internal factors in reading in terms of:
    1.1. Linguistic Knowledge; and
    1.2. Learners' Perception?
2. To what extent do student-respondents observe the implication of external factors in reading as to:
    2.1. Teacher Influence
    2.2. Family Influence; and
    2.3. Environment?
3. How is the level of reading skills of the student respondents be described in terms of:
    3.1. Decoding;
    3.2. Fluency;
    3.3. Vocabulary; and
    3.4. Sentence Construction and Cohesion?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the internal factors and the reading skills of the student-respondents?

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5. Is there a significant relationship between external factors and the reading skills of student-respondents?

Hypothesis

This study utilized the null hypotheses as follows:
1. There is no significant relationship between internal and external factors and the reading skills of grade 11 students.
2. There is no significant relationship between internal and external factors and the reading skills of grade 11 students.

METHODS

Research Design

A descriptive correlational design was utilized to determine the significant relationship between internal and external factors and the reading skills of grade 11 students. Research investigations that seek to present static pictures of circumstances and determine the connection between various factors employ a descriptive correlational design (McBurney & White, 2009).

Population and Sampling

The researcher used a cluster sampling technique. In cluster sampling, a population is divided into clusters, which are smaller groups. They then choose a sample at random from these clusters. To examine large populations, particularly those that are widely geographically distributed, cluster sampling is a probability sample technique that is frequently utilized (Thomas, 2023).

The respondents were the 120 grade 11 students from Alaminos Integrated National High School. The student respondents are from the General Academic Strand (GAS), Home Economics (HE), and Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Instrument

The instruments utilized in this study were a survey questionnaire, an adapted fluency test, and a reading comprehension test. The aforementioned instruments were validated by experts to ensure their validity. A pilot test was also administered. Through the use of Cronbach Alpha, the questionnaire was used to identify the perceptions of the respondents in terms of internal factors (linguistic knowledge and learners' perceptions) and external factors (Teacher Influence, Family Influence, and Environment), which revealed its reliability: Linguistic Knowledge (0.865), Learners' perception (0.880), Teacher Influence (0.904), Family Influence (0.904), and Environment (0.805). The adapted fluency test was used to identify the skills of the respondents in terms of decoding and fluency. A reading comprehension test was administered to determine the vocabulary, and sentence construction and cohesion skills of the respondents.

Data Collection

The researcher sought permission from the principal to conduct a study. Then, the researcher requested the student's cooperation in the study. The respondents answered the questionnaire, and they were called one by one for a fluency test. Succeeding, the respondents answered the reading comprehension test. After the collection of data, the researcher organized, tabulated, and treated the data gathered statistically for analysis and interpretation of each result.

Treatment of Data

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, SD, frequency count, and percentage) and inferential statistics (Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient (r).

The researcher used the mean and SD to show how much variation there was in the perception of internal and external factors among students. Frequency and percentage were used to determine the performance of the students in reading skills. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine if there is a significant relationship between internal and external factors in the reading skills of Grade 11 students.

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Ethical Considerations

To protect all individuals and organizations engaged in the conduct of this study, the researcher made sure that all research protocols, including ethics in research, were followed.

The researcher involved ethical considerations, which include protecting the rights of research participants, enhancing research validity, and maintaining academic integrity (Bhandari, 2023).

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The data with regard to the perception of the respondents, linguistic knowledge got an overall mean of 3.70 with a standard deviation of 0.50 and a verbal interpretation of "agree". It implies that the respondents perceived themselves as having a good knowledge of certain linguistic principles. The learners' understanding of reading text depends on their knowledge of linguistics. With a verbal interpretation of agree, the respondents are able to hear, distinguish, and categorize the sounds in speech, are implicitly familiar with the structure that constrains the way words fit together to make phrases and sentences, and are able to understand the meaning of individual words and sentences being spoken and the meaningful relations between them. According to the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, the three basic elements that support Linguistic knowledge are Phonology, Syntax, and Semantics. According to Alderson (2000), as cited in Grenfell and Razi (2012), the reader must be familiar with the language of the text in order to process it easily. Reading comprehension is likely to be constrained based on the interactive-compensatory reading model if readers do not possess appropriate language competence (Stanovich, 1980, as cited in Grenfell & Razi, 2012).

Learners' perception had an overall mean of 3.63, a standard deviation of 0.57, and a verbal interpretation of "agree". Results showed that the students have a positive reading perception. This implies that the respondents' have an agreeable perception of themselves and their surroundings, which helps enhance comprehension ability. According to Alexander and Filler (1976), as cited in Grenfell and Razi (2012), positive attitudes towards reading are influenced by their progress as readers. However, indicators 6 and 7, with a verbal interpretation of "moderately agree," reveal that reading is just a little part of the respondents' everyday activities and that they just fairly believe that they are good readers. Pobi (2016) stated that reading constantly is one of the most essential tasks for improving academic achievement. Regular reading broadens one's horizons, enhances one's verbal and writing skills, and enhances one's vocabulary and capacity for thought. Additionally, the term "self-efficacy" relates to people's perceptions of their capacity to carry out an action in order to accomplish a specific goal. Due to the self-teaching mechanisms involved in reading, self-efficacy is probably going to be particularly crucial in the development of reading skills (Bandura, 1993, as cited in Carroll & Fox, 2016).

The results regarding teacher influence had an overall mean of 3.86, a standard deviation of 0.62, and a verbal interpretation of "agree". This implies that the teachers have a good influence on their students when it comes to reading. In connection with this, the efficiency of the teacher is one of the factors mentioned in the research that affects a student's reading achievement (Gary, 2015). To improve students' reading abilities, teachers have to develop their reading instruction. Support from the teacher encourages students to read, which improves their reading proficiency since motivated students pay more attention and show more interest in what they are reading.

The data with regard to family influence has an overall mean of 3.29, a standard deviation of 0.69, and a verbal interpretation of "moderately agree". It implies that the family or parents of the respondents have little interest in reading specifically English-language texts. However, indicator number 4 with a verbal interpretation of "agree" implies that the respondents' family or parents still pay attention to their English reading achievement. Family members are a particularly effective influence on the growth of reading skills (Hide et al., 2020). According to Epstein (2018), there are six different approaches to providing parent involvement, which also offer some recommendations for enhancing school-family cooperation. These involve nurturing children, communicating, providing, studying at home, making decisions, and collaborating with the community.

The results regarding the environment had an overall mean of 3.97, a standard deviation of 0.59, and a verbal interpretation of "agree". Moreover, indicators numbers 3 and 5 have an interpretation of strongly agree. It implies that students need a comfortable reading environment in order to comprehend texts. The environment is a very powerful driver of behavior. Variables like light, noise, temperature, and space may affect individuals. All of these factors and more have the potential to impact mood, energy, motivation, efficiency, and a sense of security. There must be an optimal reading space for the learners (Matsoff, 2022).

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Table 1. Level of Reading Skills of the student-respondents in terms of Decoding and Fluency

Percentage Level	Frequency	Percentage	Verbal Interpretation
95% and above	72	60	Independent Level
75-94%	48	40	Instructional Level
74% and below	0	0	Frustration Level
Total	120	100	

Legend: *74% and below – Frustration Level*   *75-94% – Instructional Level*
95% and above – Independent Level

Based on the data analyzed, it reveals that no respondent is at frustration level in terms of decoding and fluency. 40% of the respondents are at the instructional level, and 60% are at the independent level. According to the UURC (University of Utah Reading Clinic), independent level is the highest level at which a reader has adequate background knowledge for the topic and can access text very quickly and with very few errors. Instructional level is the highest level at which a reader is not independent but has adequate background knowledge for a topic and can access text quickly and with no or few errors. Anything below 75% fluency is at frustration level. This means a reader needs to increase their vocabulary in order to understand the concepts of what they are reading. There is not enough word recognition at this level (Stewart, 2018). Students are not reading independently until they have about 95% fluency or greater. According to O'Connor (2018), fluent readers can read connected text with accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. Without practice, automaticity cannot develop in reading, and readers must focus their attention on decoding, limiting their ability to simultaneously comprehend. More fluent readers focus their attention on making connections among the ideas in a text and between these ideas and their background knowledge. Therefore, they are able to focus on understanding texts. Less fluent readers must concentrate mostly on word-by-word decoding. As a result, readers are not paying much attention to what the text conveys (Armbruster et al., n.d.).

Table 2. Level of Reading Skills of the student-respondents in terms of Vocabulary

Percentage Level	Frequency	Percentage	Verbal Interpretation
90% and above	17	14.2	Advanced
85-89 %	18	15	Proficient
80-84 %	21	17.5	Approaching Proficiency
75-79 %	16	13.3	Developing
74% and below	48	40	Beginning
Total	120	100	

Legend: *74% and below – Beginning   75-79% – Developing   80-84% – Approaching Proficiency*
85-89% – Proficient   90% and above – Advanced

Results showed that 40% of the respondents are at the beginning level of vocabulary, which implies that the respondents struggle with understanding prerequisite and fundamental skills in vocabulary that have not been acquired or developed adequately to aid understanding. There is a need to improve the vocabulary skills of the respondents to attain their highest proficiency level. Existing research has demonstrated that vocabulary knowledge aids in reading comprehension through the identification of semantic meaning and cooperates with inference in the understanding of

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sentence meaning (Lawrence et al., 2019). According to Hambali (2017), the environment of the students, the method or approach utilized by the teachers to teach English vocabulary, and the lack of motivation on the part of the students all affect how well they acquire English vocabulary.

Table 3. Level of Reading Skills of the student-respondents in terms of Sentence Construction and Cohesion

Percentage Level	Frequency	Percentage	Verbal Interpretation
90% and above	19	15.8	Advanced
85-89 %	17	14.2	Proficient
80-84 %	18	15	Approaching Proficiency
75-79 %	27	22.5	Developing
74% and below	39	32.5	Beginning
Total	120	100	

Legend: *74% and below – Beginning   75-79% – Developing   80-84% – Approaching Proficiency*
85-89% – Proficient   90% and above – Advanced

The data revealed that only 14.2% of the respondents are at the proficient level, and 15.8% are at the advanced level in sentence construction and cohesion. This implies that the respondents struggle to comprehend sentences that have not been adequately acquired or developed to support understanding because of a lack of knowledge and skills in sentence construction and cohesion. It is necessary to improve the respondents' knowledge of sentence construction and cohesion to achieve their highest proficiency level. Readers need to understand how sentences are built by understanding some basic grammar rules and how the ideas within sentences connect. This allows them to effectively comprehend the meaning of long texts and passages while connecting the different ideas in a written piece (eTale Africa, n.d.).

Table 4. Correlation between Internal Factors and the Reading Skills of student-respondents

Internal Factors	Reading Skills		
	Decoding & Fluency	Vocabulary	Sentence Construction and Cohesion
Linguistic Knowledge	.321**	.322**	.303**
Learners' Perception	.416**	.432**	.215*

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As revealed in Table 4, there is a significant relationship between linguistic knowledge and the reading skills of decoding and fluency, vocabulary, and sentence construction and cohesion at the 0.01 level. It implies that the respondents' knowledge of linguistics is directly linked to their skills in decoding and fluency, vocabulary, sentence construction, and cohesion. According to Alderson (2000), as cited in Grenfell & Razi (2012), the reader must be familiar with the language of the text in order to process it easily. Reading comprehension is likely to be constrained based on

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the interactive-compensatory reading model if readers do not possess appropriate language competence (Stanovich, 1980, as cited in Grenfell & Razi, 2012). Moreover, there is also a significant relationship between Learners' Perception and the reading skills of decoding, fluency, and vocabulary at the 0.01 level. On the other hand, the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level in Learners' Perception and the reading comprehension skill of Sentence Construction and Cohesion. This means that positive perceptions toward self and surroundings affect the respondents' reading skills. The perceptions of learners encompass sensations of fascination, boredom, anxiety, illness, and discomfort brought on by personal issues. Reading skills will be aided or hindered depending on whether there are favorable or negative personal evaluations about oneself and one's surroundings (Habibian et al., 2015).

Table 5. Correlation between External Factors and the Reading Skills of student-respondents

External Factors	Reading Skills		
	Decoding & Fluency	Vocabulary	Sentence Construction and Cohesion
Teacher Influence	.414**	.331**	.215*
Family Influence	0.043	-0.014	-0.077
Environment	.484**	.355**	0.141

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

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

The results in Table 5 show that there is a significant relationship between teacher influence and the reading skills of decoding, fluency, and vocabulary at the 0.01 level, whereas at the 0.05 level there is a significant relationship between sentence construction and cohesion. It implies that the teacher's effectiveness in reading is directly associated with the respondents' reading skills. Any characteristics relating to the teacher can have an influence on students. Reading skills can be influenced by a variety of factors, such as teaching strategies, instructional resources, reading lesson content, and the likelihood that knowledge will be used in everyday life. These elements are related to students' reading interests. According to Habibian et al. (2015), characteristics that encourage learners to have a positive attitude would help them succeed in the reading process. On the other hand, it reveals that there is no significant relationship between family influence and reading skills. It implies that the respondents' family has no impact on their reading skills. This means that the performance of the respondents in reading is determined by their own interests, knowledge, and skills. In connection with this, research on the relationship between parental involvement and reading comprehension is relatively limited (Yeo et al., 2014). Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between environment and the reading comprehension skills of decoding, fluency, and vocabulary at the 0.01 level, whereas there is no significant relationship between environment and sentence construction and cohesion. It implies that the environment is directly linked to the performance of the students' reading skills of decoding, fluency, and vocabulary but has no association with the reading skills of sentence construction and cohesion. In a supportive environment with enough light, a mild temperature, and tranquility, learners will be able to concentrate more on their reading tasks. On the other hand, an unsupportive environment, such as insufficient light, extreme temperatures, and interrupted noises, will distract learners from their reading tasks (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The respondents' perception of linguistic knowledge implies that they perceived themselves as having adequate knowledge of certain linguistic principles and a positive reading perception. Results also suggest that teachers have a valuable influence on their students when it comes to reading. However, the family or parents of the respondents have little interest in reading specifically English-language texts. Moreover, the students need a comfortable reading environment in order to comprehend texts.

The level of the reading skills of the respondents in terms of decoding and fluency revealed that no respondent was at a frustration level in terms of decoding and fluency. In terms of vocabulary, the respondents struggle with understanding prerequisite and fundamental skills in vocabulary that have not been acquired or developed adequately

to aid understanding. There is a need to improve the vocabulary skills of the respondents to attain their highest proficiency level. In addition, the respondents struggle to comprehend sentences that have not been adequately acquired or developed to support understanding because of a lack of knowledge and skills in sentence construction and cohesion. It is necessary to improve the respondents' knowledge of sentence construction and cohesion to achieve their highest proficiency level.

The correlation between internal factors and reading skills in terms of decoding and fluency reveals that there is a significant relationship between linguistic knowledge and the reading comprehension skills of decoding and fluency, vocabulary, and sentence construction and cohesion. It implies that the respondents' knowledge of linguistics is directly linked to their skills in decoding and fluency, vocabulary, sentence construction, and cohesion. Moreover, there is also a significant relationship between learners' perception and the reading comprehension skills of decoding, fluency, vocabulary, sentence construction, and cohesion. This means that positive perceptions toward oneself and their surroundings affect the respondents' reading skills. Correlations between external factors and reading comprehension skills show that there is a significant relationship between teacher influence and the reading comprehension skills of decoding, fluency, vocabulary, sentence construction, and cohesion. It implies that the teacher's effectiveness in reading is directly associated with the respondents' reading skills. On the other hand, it reveals that there is no significant relationship between family influence and reading comprehension skills. It implies that the respondents' family has no impact on their reading skills. This means that the performance of the respondents in reading is determined by their own interests, knowledge, and abilities. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between environment and the reading comprehension skills of decoding, fluency, and vocabulary, whereas there is no significant relationship between environment and sentence construction and cohesion. It implies that the environment is directly linked to the performance of the students reading skills of decoding, fluency, and vocabulary but has no association with their reading skills of sentence construction and cohesion.

In view of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: linguistic knowledge and learners' perception have a significant relationship with the reading skills of grade 11 students. Learners must acquire sufficient linguistic knowledge to comprehend texts when reading. Moreover, respondents' reading abilities are influenced by their favorable perceptions of themselves and their surroundings. Family influence has no significant relationship with reading skills, which implies that the family's interest and influence in reading do not impact the reading skills of the students extensively. On the other hand, teacher influence and the environment have a significant relationship with the reading skills of the students. An effective teacher and a comfortable reading environment play a crucial role in the development of the students' reading abilities. Nevertheless, the environment has no significant impact on sentence construction and cohesion.

The following recommendations are set forth to promote remedial plans for revealed problems and pursue further studies: Teachers may employ a variety of strategies to attain the highest proficiency level of reading skills, which are decoding, fluency, vocabulary, sentence construction and cohesion. Teachers must provide relevant reading materials to elicit deeper comprehension. Teacher preparation and professional development need to be strengthened to improve reading comprehension instruction. Reading programs led by the school head must provide enough time for the training of teachers to help them develop and internalize instructional best practices for improving the reading skills of the students.

In relation to the National Reading Program as part of the National Learning Recovery Program (NLRP) of the Department of Education, which aims to address learning gaps amidst the pandemic, there is a need for intervention to improve the reading skills of grade 11 students. Teachers must establish reading sessions and activities that focus on the improvement of reading skills and inculcate the habit of reading.

Reading comprehension has been a major issue, and more research is still needed regarding this topic. Further studies of the same nature may be conducted to find other related factors in relation to the learners' reading ability. In relation to the result of the study, more studies are needed to reveal the relationship between family influence and reading skills.

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