



An Exploration of Students' Current Reading Habits and Skills

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study is an exploration of students' reading habits and skills. This research employed a cross-sectional survey design to assess students' reading habits and skills. In a cross-sectional study, data is gathered in general to concentrate on a populace at a single point to look at the connection between variables of interest. Some inconsistencies in data trends were found in reading frequency and duration. This may indicate that higher reading frequencies and/or longer reading durations does not necessarily translate to better reading comprehension. Frequent reading of a material that does not effectively reinforce reading comprehension skills may just be as effective as infrequent reading of a material of substance. The findings of the study will be helpful for Academic Institutions, Educators, and Students. In the first place, this review will assist Academic Institutions with working on the school in the advancement of reading programs for student improvement. This study will cultivate better approaches for improving learning, skills, and abilities, thus training universally driven students in the future.

Keywords: Reading habits; higher reading frequencies; academic institutions; CHED policy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The report from the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 2019 delivered on December 1, 2020, showed the level of Grade 5 Filipino learners who accomplished the least capability in reading, writing, and mathematics was altogether poorer than in Vietnam and Malaysia (Balinbin, 2020). Fifth graders in the Philippines were at standard or some of the time far more terrible than those in Cambodia yet achieved somewhat better compared to those in Laos and Myanmar. This same pattern is observed especially with the onslaught of the pandemic. The most recent Unicef appraisal, released in April this year, means learning poverty — characterized by the World Bank as the portion of 10-year-olds who can't understand a basic story (de Vera, 2022). Under 15% of learners in the Philippines, or around three in each 20, can read basic texts by and large because of the longest schools closure brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Education (DepEd) shared that a new breed of teachers to teach in the post-COVID-19 learning environment must be maintained (DepEd-CHED Policy Reinforces Field Study, Teaching Internships of Pre-Service Teachers | Department of Education, 2021). Thus, on October 22, 2021, DepEd, through the Teacher Education Council Secretariat (TECS), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), discussed reinforcement methods in field studies. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) thus entail careful training on programs their teachers can adapt for the improvement of students post-covid. This research will employ a cross-sectional survey design (descriptive) to assess students' reading habits and skills. Based on the reading habits and skills findings, a reading program will be developed.

Previous studies on reading seek to identify the correlation among students' skills, attitudes, and self-esteem [1], the connection between students' habits and attitudes in studying with comprehension, and attitudes toward reading [2], and the influence of reading attitudes with reading achievement [3]. These studies use T-tests between group to check for critical contrasts [1], correlation along with regression analysis to check for significant relationships [2], and correlation and regression modeling to verify for the significance of relationships [3]. Finally, results uncovered that positive attitudes towards

reading were viewed correlated to positive attitudes towards studying, which were likewise observed to be strongly correlated to students' confidence and comprehension abilities [1], there is significant relationships between comprehension self-awareness, comprehension, and attitudes of reading and study habits [2], and positive attitudes towards reading were found to add to reading proficiency [3].

These characteristics brought about several assumptions that are crucial to students' reading habits and skills. These assumptions are as follows: 1) that reading habits are related to reading skills, and 2) that reading performance against reading comprehension questions is an indicator of reading skill.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study is an exploration of students' reading habits and skills. More specifically, the study addresses the following questions:

- At what level do students' current reading habits and skills lie?
- What are the common reading issues of students?
- In what reading comprehension questions are the students weak/strong?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study's findings will be helpful for Academic Institutions, Educators, and Students. In the first place, this review will assist Academic Institutions with working on the school in the advancement of reading programs for student improvement. This study will cultivate better approaches for improving learning, skills, and abilities, thus training universally driven students in the future. This study will likewise assist in the progression of the instruction assessment. For Educators, the outcomes of the review will assist with gauging the nature of the teaching demonstration they render for student performance. Results would likewise foster the teachers' methodologies for improving information, abilities, and manner of approach to the students in the time span given. Finally, the outcomes of the study will give students information in regards to understanding reading habits and skills.

This will aid students with assessing their academic performance, against their mindset and approach to reading. Information accumulated will likewise assist students with

further developing their understanding of reading habits and skills upon self-reflection or diagnostic tests.

1.4 Scope and Delimitations of the Study

Only data collected through the online survey of students who were reached through email addresses and Microsoft Teams were analyzed for the study.

Survey response was voluntary. As such, respondents were not required to answer all tests. In this case, 29 out of 205 respondents answered Test 2 Reading Comprehension.

The study will include only the respondents on Test 1 Reading Habits and Test 3 Common Reading Issues which are composed of 113 First Year College students, 11 Second Year College students, 74 Third Year College students, 6 Fourth Year College students, and 1 Fifth Year College Student. Subsequently, the responses gathered for Test 2 Reading Comprehension were 18 First Year College students and 11 Third Year College students. It will not include responses from parents, teachers, or students of Basic Education up to Senior High School.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This research employed a cross-sectional survey design to assess students' reading habits and skills. In a cross-sectional study, data is gathered in general to concentrate on a populace at a single point to look at the connection between variables of interest.

This method suits the research question and plans overall as it can analyze various samples at one point in time. In this research, the various samples to look at will be habits, skills, and common reading issues that will lead to a proposed reading program.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in a private university. The University was a large university situated in Metro Manila. The student population of the university is over 20,000.

2.3 Population, Sample, and Sampling Method

The target population are college students on all year levels. The respondents on reading habits

and common reading issues were 113 First Year College students, 11 Second Year College students, 74 Third Year College students, 6 Fourth Year College students, and 1 Fifth Year College Student. Subsequently, the respondents on measurement of reading comprehension were 18 First Year College students, and 11 Third Year College students.

Participation was voluntary. Student respondents were informed that responding or not responding to the online questionnaire had no bearing in their course grades. Submitting their responses indicated their willingness to be part of the study.

In light of ethical concerns, this study took rigorous measures to safeguard confidentiality and uphold participants' right to privacy. To ensure anonymity, participants were explicitly instructed to provide only their initials rather than their full names, and no other identifying information was solicited during data collection. Additionally, stringent data security protocols were implemented throughout the research process. All participant responses were meticulously stored in data files with restricted access limited solely to the research team. Furthermore, before data analysis, each respondent was assigned a unique code number, further fortifying the confidentiality of their contributions. These comprehensive measures were put in place to guarantee the utmost protection of participants' privacy and to uphold the ethical standards of our study.

Fig. 1 refers to the gender of the respondents. 139 (68%) respondents were comprised of females while 66 (32%) respondents were comprised of males.

Fig. 2 refers to the age of the respondents. Respondents were comprised of thirty-nine (19%) 18-year old students, fifty-eight (28%) 19-year old students, forty-one (20%) 20-year old students, fifty-two (25%) 21-year old students, fourteen (7%) 22-year old students, and one (1%) student over the age of 22.

Fig. 3 refers to the respondents' degree program. The respondents' degree programs were comprised of 21 (10.29%) from Accountancy, 9 (4.41%) from Applied Mathematics, 3 (1.47%) from Architecture, 19 (9.31%) from Business Administration, 55 (26.96%) from Civil Engineering, 16 (7.84%) from Communication, 1 (0.49%) from English, 58 (28.43%) from Medical Technology, 13 (6.37%) from Nursing, 1 (0.49%)

from Political Science, 6 (2.94) from Psychology, and 2 (0.98%) from Tourism.

Fig. 4. refers to the year level of the respondents. The respondents' year level was comprised of 113 (55.12%) First Year students, 11 (5.37%) Second Year students, 74 (36.1%) Third Year students, 6 (2.93%) Fourth Year students, and 1 (0.49%) Fifth Year student.

Fig. 5. refers to the educational attainment of the respondents' father. The majority of the educational attainment of the respondents' father were College Degree holders at 120 (58.54%) respondents. This is followed by respondents

with fathers holding Some College Units at 31 (15.12%), High School Graduate at 20 (9.76%), and Master's Degree Holder at 12 (5.85%) respectively.

Fig. 5. refers to the educational attainment of the respondents' father. The majority of the educational attainment of the respondents' father were College Degree holders at 120 (58.54%) respondents. This is followed by respondents with fathers holding Some College Units at 31 (15.12%), High School Graduate at 20 (9.76%), and Master's Degree Holder at 12 (5.85%) respectively.

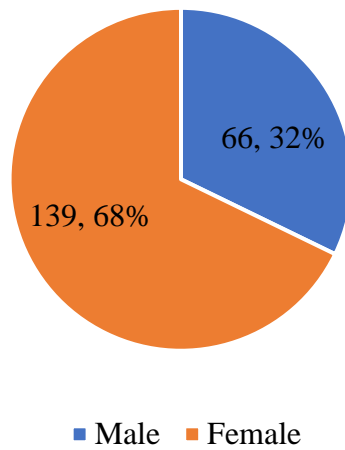


Fig. 1. Respondents' gender

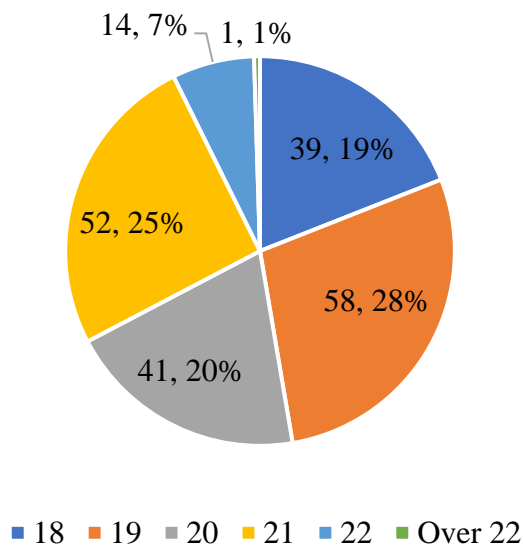


Fig. 2. Respondents' ag

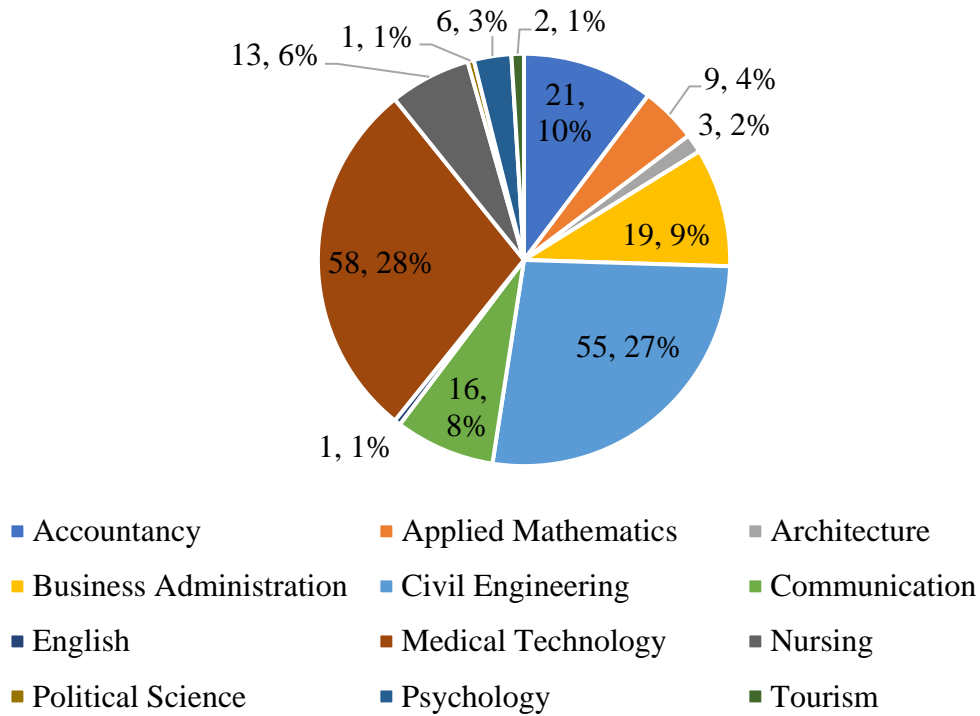


Fig. 3. Respondents' degree program

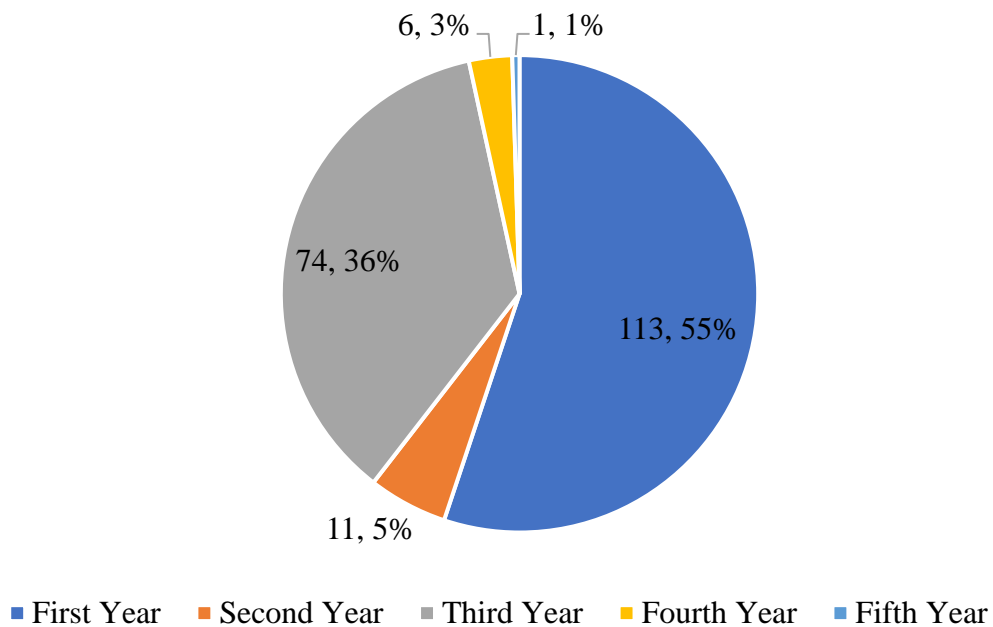


Fig. 4. Respondents' year level

Fig. 6 refers the educational attainment of the respondents' mother. The majority of the educational attainment of the respondents' mother were College Degree holders at 133 (65.52%) respondents. This is followed by

respondents with mothers holding Some College Units at 24 (11.82%), High School Graduate at 22 (10.84%), and Master's Degree Holder at 12 (5.42%) respectively.

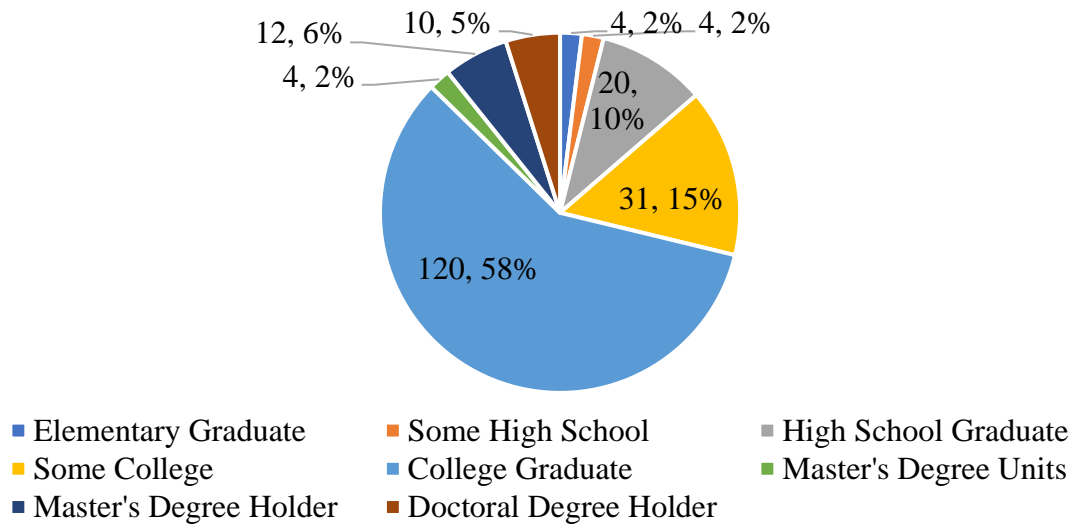


fig. 1. Educational attainment of respondents' father

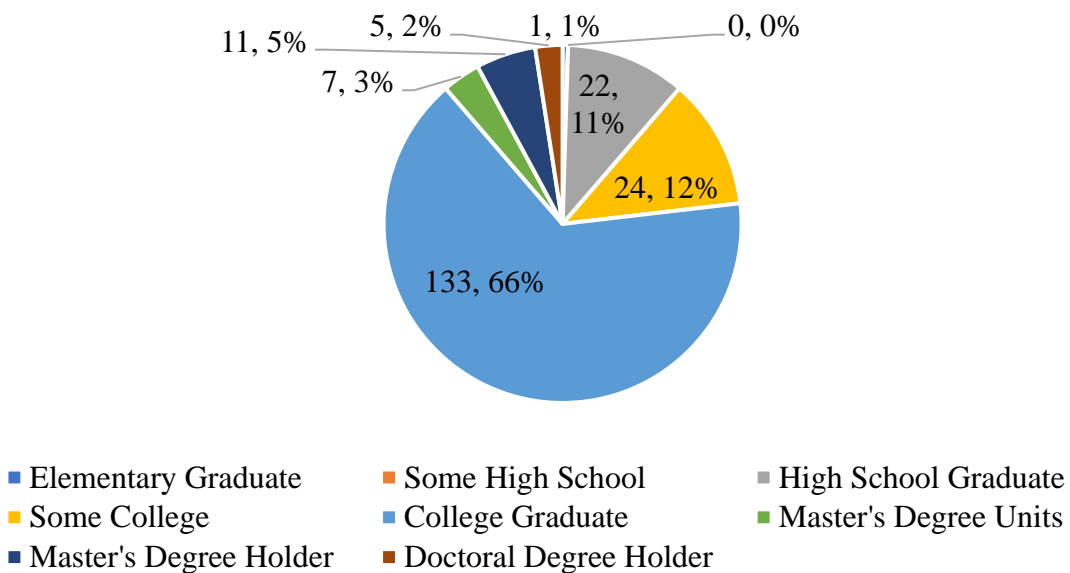


Fig. 6. Educational attainment of respondents' mother

2.4 Data Collection Tool/s

To collect data for the study, the researcher used a survey questionnaire. There were three parts to the survey questionnaire. The first is on reading habits and respondents' agreement to statements to determine their reading habits based on different measures (e.g., frequency, duration). The second part is on measuring the respondents' comprehension at different reading levels. This was done to ensure that the level of comprehension will be measured instead of the respondents' understanding of an individual

piece of text. Finally, the third part asked the respondents about their common reading issues. This allowed the respondents to provide more aspects about their reading habits and skills (e.g., summarizing, sequencing, inferencing, comparing and contrasting, drawing conclusions, self-questioning, problem-solving, relating background knowledge).

2.4.1 Construction

The survey was conducted through the Google Form platform. The questionnaire included Likert

scale questions on various measures of reading habits (e.g., type of media, frequency, duration) followed by reading proficiency questions covering different levels (e.g., literal, interpretive, applied) of reading ability. Respondents were asked to identify the reading issues they have encountered to be difficult or find challenging. Responses were summarized through descriptive statistics.

It included both open-ended questions and closed-ended items in the form of Likert-scale. Tests 1 and 3 have open-ended questions about respondents' other reading materials preference, acquisition, reading frequency, and shortest and longest duration they have read, and reading issues encountered. The Likert scale consisted of five ($k = 5$) statements on respondents' reading

habits. Half of the items were positively keyed, and the other half, negatively keyed, to prevent students from having response set.

2.4.2 Validation

The instruments underwent a series of consultations starting in the third week of January 2022 until the third week of May 2022. Revisions were made after each comment by the assigned research faculty.

2.4.3 Administration

The instruments were administered to respondents through Google Forms. Test 1 on Reading Habits and Test 3 on Common Reading Issues have no time limit. Test 2 on Reading Comprehension has a time limit of 15 minutes.



Fig. 7. First Page of the Online Survey (Google Form)

SECTION 1

In response to the economic slump brought about by the loss of jobs during lockdowns in the early months of the pandemic, the Philippine government implemented a social protection program called Bayanihan to Heal as One Act or Republic Act No. 11469 (enacted March 2020). Part of this Act was provision for financial subsidies called Social Amelioration Program (SAP). Seventy percent (70%) of the population, approximately 18 million poor families were covered by the program, which included the 4.4 million families who had already been signed up for conditional cash transfer program called the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (or 4Ps). Series of surveys initiated by the COVID-19 Low Income Household Panel and Economic (HOPE) survey revealed that the pandemic caused a dramatic disruption in the delivery of education and health services.

Initially, each family was given anywhere from 1,000 to 4,000 pesos for basic needs such as food and medicines. However, because government funds were limited, many poor families once more suffered hunger after a few weeks. It was in the midst of this dire situation that community pantries were born. Ordinary citizens brought various types of food items and products from rice to canned goods to vegetables to cooking oil to a specific spot in their communities from where poor families could take whatever they needed for each daily meal.

(Source: The World Bank. (2021, January 27). COVID-19 Impacts on Low-Income Families in the Philippines. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/philippines/brief/covid-19-impacts-on-low-income-families-in-the-philippines>)

1. What government initiative was executed to address the economic problems * caused by the pandemic?

A. Conditional Cash Transfer

B. Social Amelioration Program

Fig. 8. First Section of Test 2 on Reading Comprehension (Google Form)

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

First, the researcher prepared the online survey and created an Internet-based format using a digital platform (Figs. 7 and 8). The online survey was examined and reviewed by the faculty in charge. Revisions were accordingly made with regard to phrasing of some questions and statements. Then communications were initiated with contact persons in other departments. Faculty members who were handling courses with students of varied year levels were sent emails requesting their assistance in disseminating the online survey questionnaire. A diverse group of students in terms of institutional affiliation, geographical context and year level would ensure heterogeneity of the sample. A period of one week was designated for data

collection, from April 2 to 9, 2022. The internet link to the online survey was given to the faculty members, who in turn, forwarded the link to their classes. Responses were retrieved immediately after the cut-off date. These were transferred to a spreadsheet for data analysis. Data cleaning was performed to eliminate incomplete submissions. Initial data analysis was performed on two hundred five ($n = 205$) respondents. Upon examination of the data, researchers found that most respondents were First Year College students and that out of the total number of respondents, there were only 6 ($n = 6$) Fourth Year College students, and 1 ($n = 1$) Fifth Year College Student. The gathered data were processed and analyzed using the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software to generate the statistics required. These data were then

subjected to content analysis as described in the succeeding section.

2.6 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were computed for all quantitative data collected, including demographic information. Measures of central tendency (mean) and variability (standard deviation) were derived for Test 2 on Reading Skills. Graphs were created for better data presentation. Comparisons on habits and skills using descriptive statistics were made for male and female respondents. As for qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions in the instrument for Test 3 on Reading Issues, content analysis was applied. Preliminary reading of responses to each question were made to identify eight major themes. Using these themes, researchers carefully read each response entry and classified specific responses according to themes identified. Frequencies and percentages were computed for each theme and presented through tables.

3. RESULTS

Students' reading habits will be assessed using a questionnaire survey using different measures (e.g., frequency, duration, purpose). Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze students' responses. Frequency tables will be prepared to identify the most frequent choices. For choices that can be quantified (e.g., duration), data will be further analyzed by calculating means (i.e., for a measure of central tendency) and standard deviation (i.e., for a measure of spread).

On the other hand, students' reading skills will be assessed using sets of reading proficiency questions of varying reading levels (e.g., literal, interpretive, drawing conclusion, vocabulary). The number of correct answers will be tabulated for each level of reading. Summarized data will be used to compare the number of correct answers for each reading level. A t-test can also check if there is a statistically significant difference between the different sets of data.

For the question on the common reading issues of students, the provided texts will be assessed based on various measures (e.g., type of text, vocabulary tier, sentence lengths). Frequency tables will be prepared to describe the similarities between the submitted texts (i.e., among the texts submitted, how many are technical, poetry,

etc.). The data can also be further analyzed by identifying which is the most common issue (i.e., if for the 'type of text' measure, "poetry" appeared 30 times and is most common for that measure, and for 'sentence length,' "over 15 words" appeared 25 times and is most common for that measure, it can be said that "poetry" is a more common issue overall compared to sentences having "over 15 words").

3.1 Students' Current Reading Habits and Skills

This section presents the first part of the first research question on what level do students' current reading habits and skills lie. To answer this research question, the researcher analyzed Test 1 on Reading Habits. Frequency analysis was used to describe the distribution of student responses and graphs were prepared accordingly.

Fig. 9 refers to the most read materials of the respondents. The majority of the respondents are reading in digital copies. 'Brief Articles', and 'Opinion Essays' appeared to be the most read materials using digital copies. Among the materials read in print, 'Religious Books' and 'Pocketbooks' appear to be read more frequently.

Fig. 10 refers to the frequently read materials of the respondents. 'Brief Articles', 'Current Events Magazines', 'News Editorials', 'Opinion Essays', and 'Wattpad Stories' were found to be more frequently read by the respondents. On the other hand, 'Autobiographies', 'Books with Poems', 'Classic Novels', and 'Travel Books' were found to be seldom read.

Fig. 11 refers to the respondents' acquisition of their reading materials. For the respondents, most of the reading materials were acquired for free. It was also found that there are notable numbers of respondents who bought 'Classic Novels' (35.43%), 'Pocketbooks' (41.22%), and 'Religious Books' (35.66%). This may show the respondents' purchasing behavior to be more related with reading requirements, personal interests, and/or religious beliefs.

Fig. 12 refers to the respondents' reading location. Most respondents' reading locations are 'On my bed' and 'Any corner of the house'. On the other hand, 'In the car', 'In the library', 'In the classroom', and 'Any corner in school' are the least likely of the respondents' reading locations.

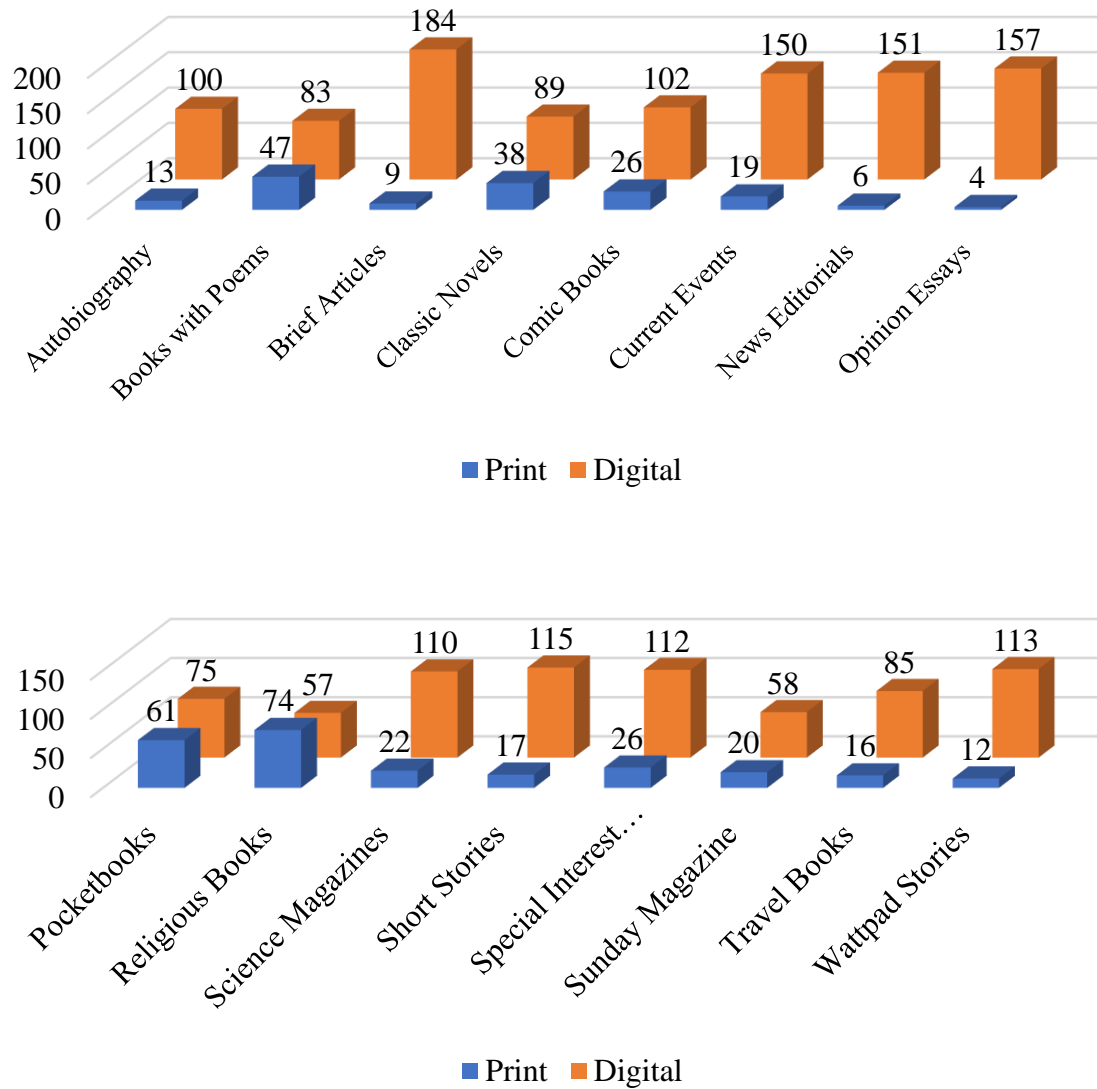


Fig. 9. Reading material

Fig. 13. refers to the reading purpose of the respondents. Majority of the respondents read 'For amusement' and 'For additional knowledge'. A small percentage does not read 'For assignments', and 'To improve my English skills'.

Fig. 14. refers to the respondents' reading duration. Majority (50.24%) of the respondents have an average reading duration range from 1 to 4 hours. Majority (63.32%) of the respondents' longest reading duration ranged from 2 to 10 hours, while that for the shortest reading duration (74.14%) ranged from 5 to 40 minutes.

This section presents the second part of the first research question on what level do students' current reading habits and skills lie. To answer

this research question, the researcher analyzed Test 2 on Reading Comprehension Questions. There are two texts on this test, and both have two literal, two interpretive, one drawing conclusion, and one vocabulary type of questions. Frequency tables were prepared and measures of central tendency and variability were used to describe the data. Data analysis was also performed on disaggregated data based on gender to check for possible differences. T-test was conducted to check for statistical significance.

Table 1 summarizes the frequencies (percentages) of students giving correct answers for each skill in paragraph 1. Male respondents

were found to perform better in 'Literal', and 'Interpretive' questions while female respondents were found to perform better in 'Drawing Conclusions' and 'Vocabulary' skill questions in Paragraph 1. Additionally, students were found to

perform better in 'Interpretive' and 'Vocabulary' questions than 'Literal', with questions on 'Drawing Conclusions' garnering the greatest number of incorrect responses.

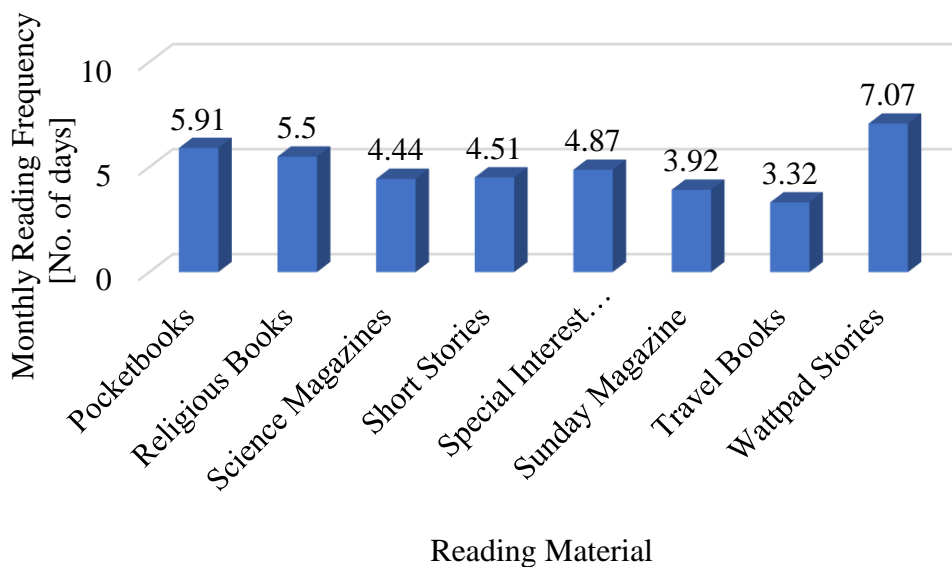
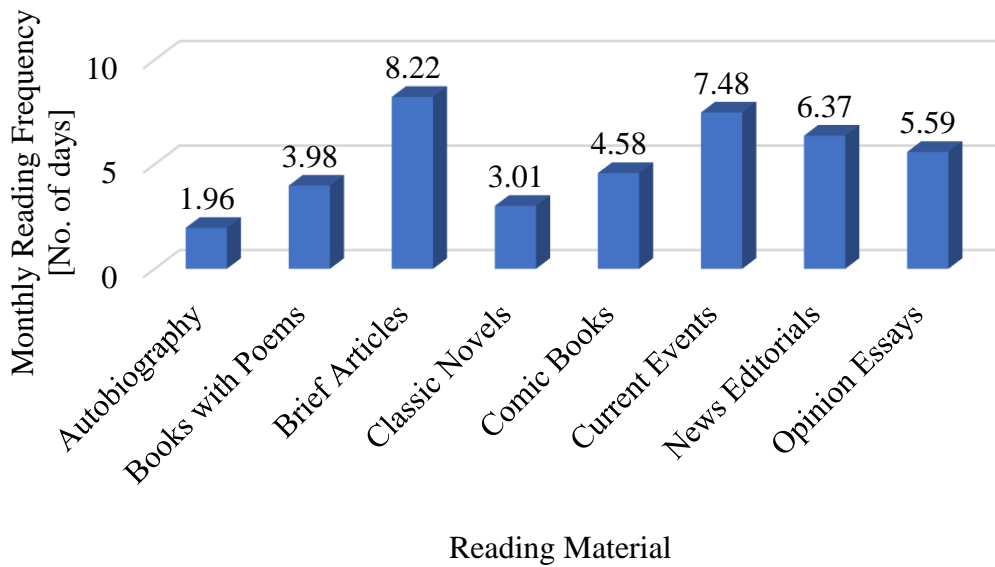


Fig. 10. Reading frequency

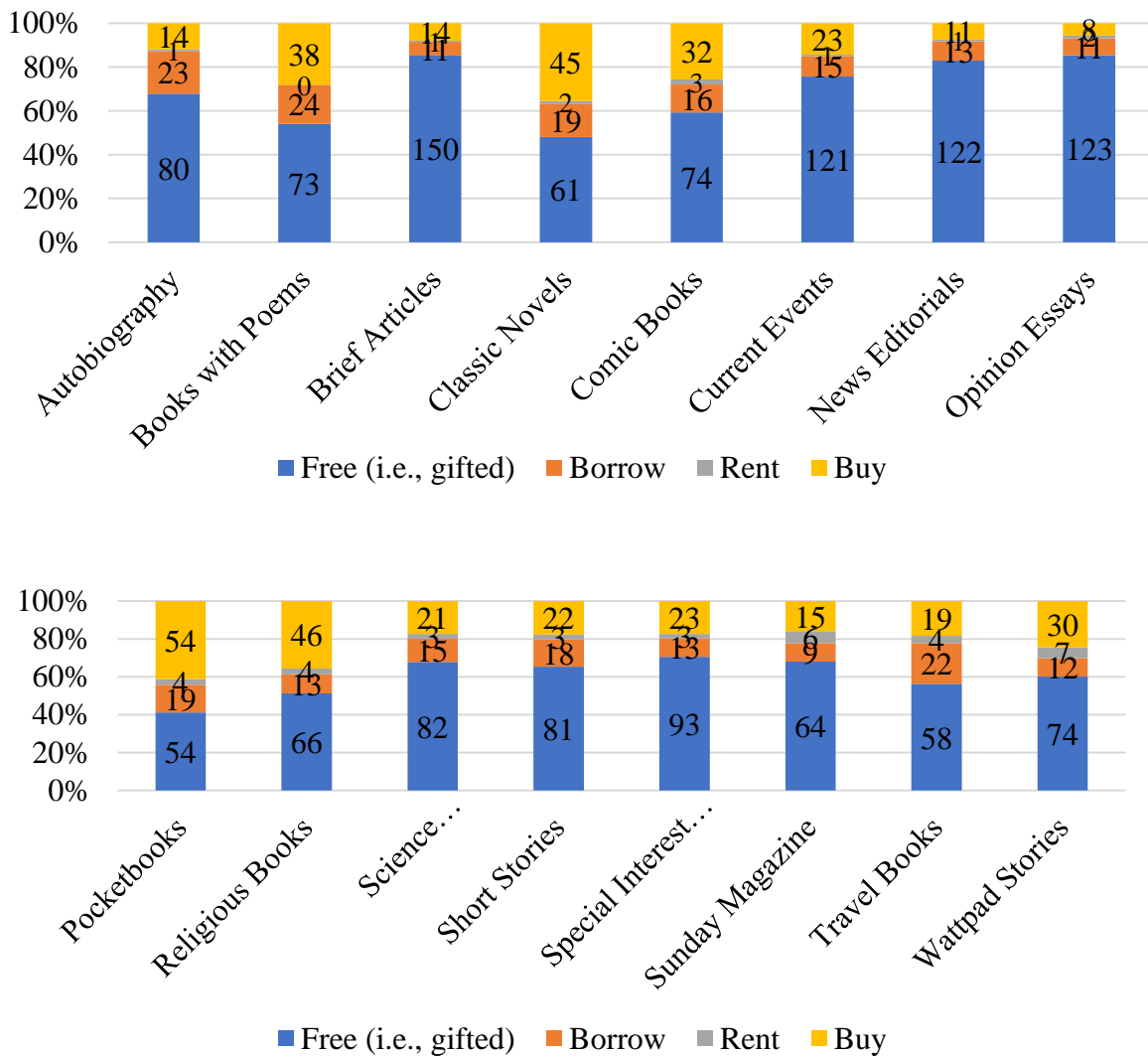


Fig. 11. Reading material acquisition

Table 1. Correct response frequencies (Percentages) for paragraph 1

	Male (n = 8)	Female (n = 21)	Combined
Literal 1 (Q1)	6 (75%)	14 (66.67%)	20 (68.97%)
Literal 2 (Q2)	8 (100%)	20 (95.24%)	28 (96.55%)
Interpretive 1 (Q3)	8 (100%)	16 (76.19%)	24 (82.76%)
Interpretive 2 (Q4)	7 (87.5%)	18 (85.71%)	25 (86.21%)
Drawing Conclusions (Q5)	3 (37.5%)	14 (66.67%)	17 (58.62%)
Vocabulary (Q6)	6 (75%)	18 (85.71%)	24 (82.76%)

Table 2 shows the frequencies (percentages) of students giving correct answers for each skill in paragraph 2. All respondents incorrectly answered the 'Literal 1' question. Female respondents performed better in all questions

except the 'Interpretive 1' question. In paragraph 2, however, students' general performance against different types of questions is different, with relatively more students incorrectly answering the 'Vocabulary' question.

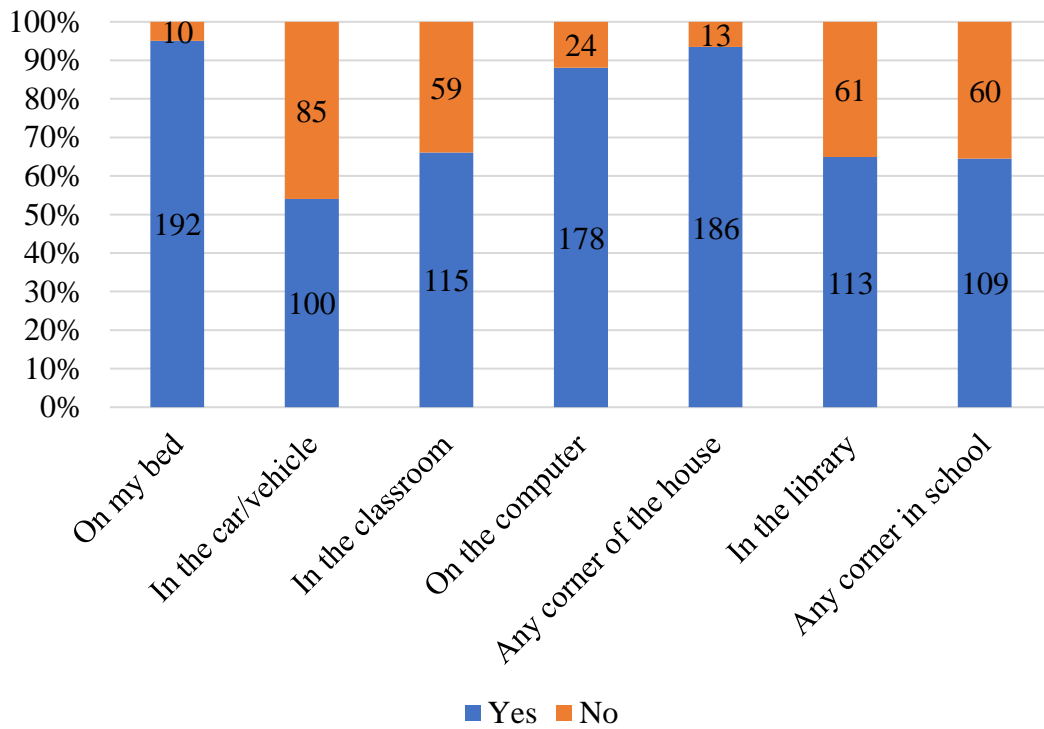


Fig. 12 Reading location

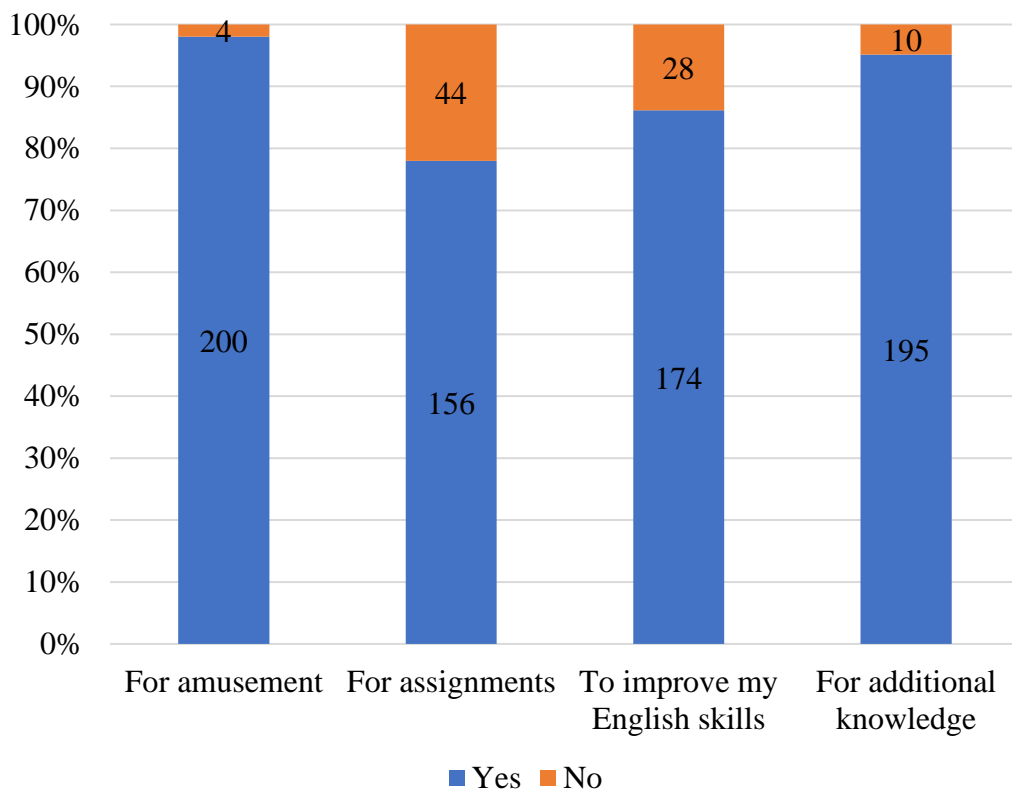


Fig. 13. Reading purpose

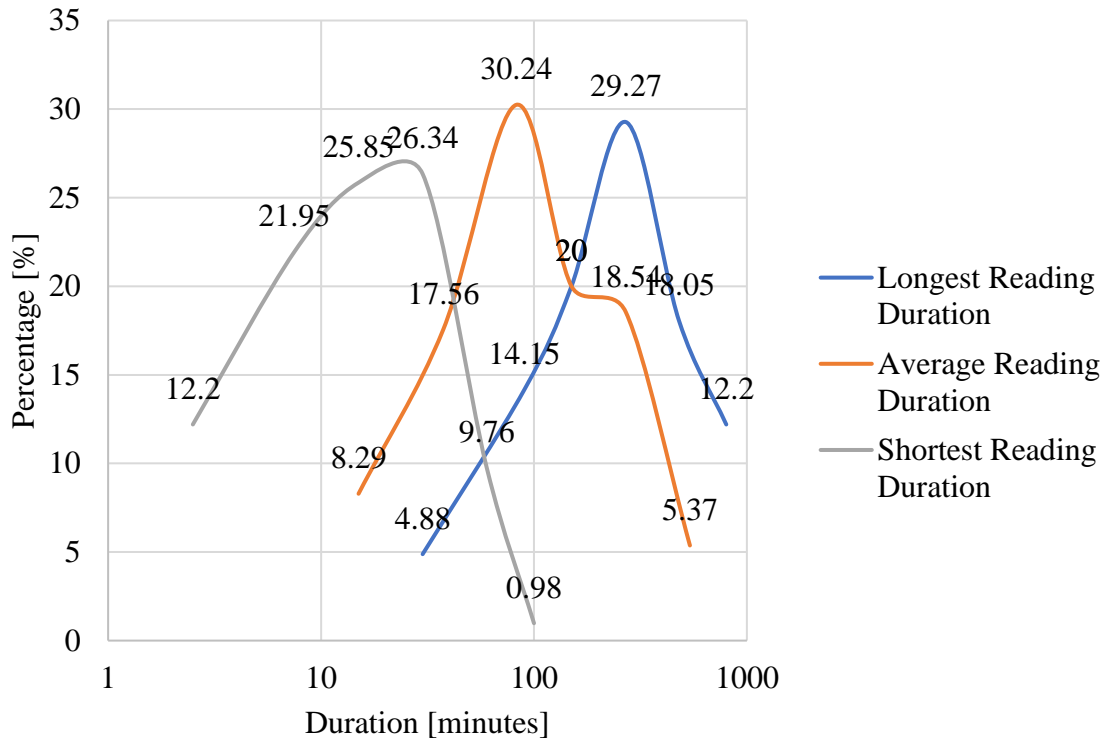


Fig. 14. Reading duration

Table 2. Correct response frequencies (Percentages) for paragraph 2

	Male (n = 8)	Female (n = 21)	Combined
Literal 1 (Q1)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Literal 2 (Q2)	7 (87.5%)	20 (95.24%)	27 (93.1%)
Interpretive 1 (Q3)	8 (100%)	18 (85.71%)	26 (89.66%)
Interpretive 2 (Q4)	5 (62.5%)	18 (85.71%)	23 (79.31%)
Drawing Conclusions (Q5)	6 (75%)	18 (85.71%)	24 (82.76%)
Vocabulary (Q6)	2 (25%)	6 (28.57%)	8 (27.59%)

Table 3 summarizes the mean scores (standard deviations) of students across different types of questions on reading comprehension. Although male students were found to generally perform better than females in 'Literal' and 'Interpretive' questions, the opposite can be said for questions on 'Drawing Conclusions' and 'Vocabulary'. However, these differences were not found to be statistically significant in describing the difference between male and female students' performance in each level of reading comprehension question.

3.2 Students' Common Reading Issues

The second research question was on what the common reading issues of students are. To answer this research question, the researcher

analyzed Test 3 on Reading Issues. Respondents were asked to describe texts that they find difficult to comprehend. Thematic coding was used to identify the common reading issue raised by the students. Frequency tables were prepared and used for the preparation of data presentation.

Fig. 15 refers to the respondents' common reading issues. 'Vocabulary' (34.95%) and 'Environment' (27.96%) emerged to be the major reading difficulty mentioned by students. 'Time' and 'Recall' were the least cited reading issues of students.

With regard to 'Vocabulary', respondents shared that it stemmed from phrases or words that are

“unfamiliar”, too deep, full of jargons, and too formal for them. One respondent (id #) said,

“There would be times when I am having a hard time understanding what the author is trying to imply to their readers because of their choice of words; furthermore I sometimes do not get to fully understand why such things occurred or where did it come from.” Another respondent (id #) also said that *“(vocabulary) is too difficult to understand and includes many complex words.”*

On one hand, a respondent encountered challenges with their ‘Environment’ when the setting is noisy or silent, full of distractions (i.e., technology), and just plain uncomfortable. A respondent shared that

“I get distracted easily,”. Another one also said that *“The distraction from other people and the lack of silence around me is bothersome.”*

3.3 Students’ Reading Comprehension Level

The third research question was on what reading comprehension questions the students are

weak/strong in. To answer this research question, the researcher analyzed Test 2 on Reading Skills. The researcher analyzed students’ performance against different questions of varying level of reading comprehension. Responses were further disaggregated to allow for the comparison of performances of various student groups.

Fig. 16 refers to the respondents’ performance per year level. More First Year students were able to answer correctly than Third Year students for ‘Vocabulary’ (58.33% versus 50%) and ‘Drawing Conclusion’ (72.23% versus 68.19%) types of questions. On the other hand, more Third Year students were able to answer correctly than First Year students in ‘Literal’ type of questions (68.18% versus 62.5%), while they have comparable performances in ‘Interpretive’ type of questions (84.09% and 84.72%).

Fig. 17 refers to reading exercise results distributed by gender. There were more females who answered on ‘Drawing Conclusion’ and ‘Vocabulary’ questions. Meanwhile, there were slightly more male respondents who answered correctly in ‘Interpretive’ questions. Finally, there is no observable difference on the respondents’ performance on ‘Literal’ questions.

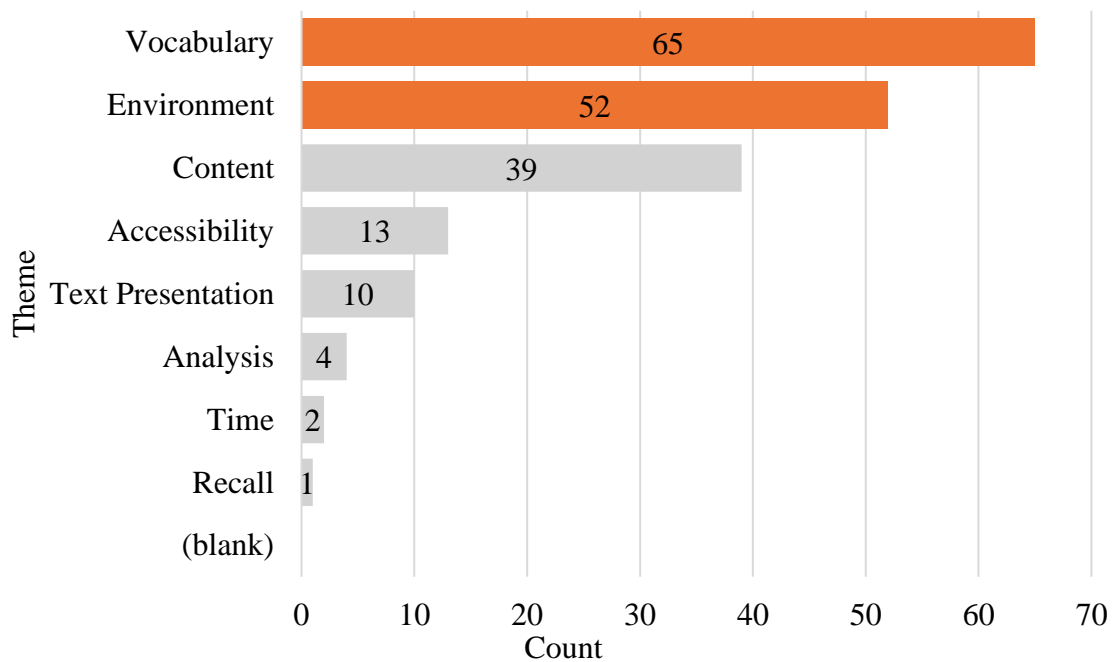


Fig. 15. Common reading issues of students

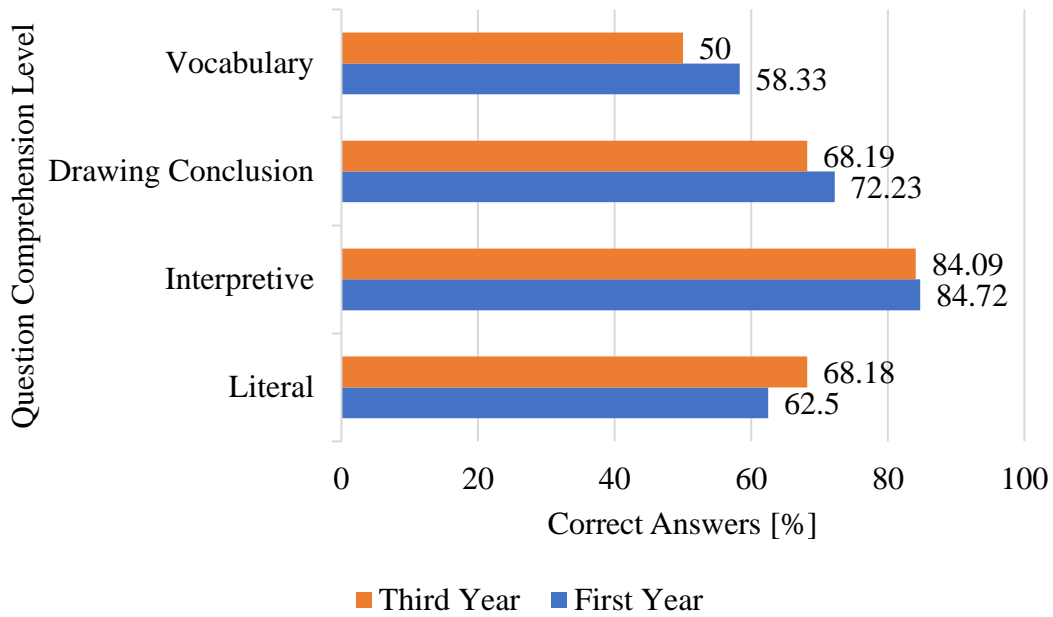


Fig. 16. Reading exercise results' distribution by year level

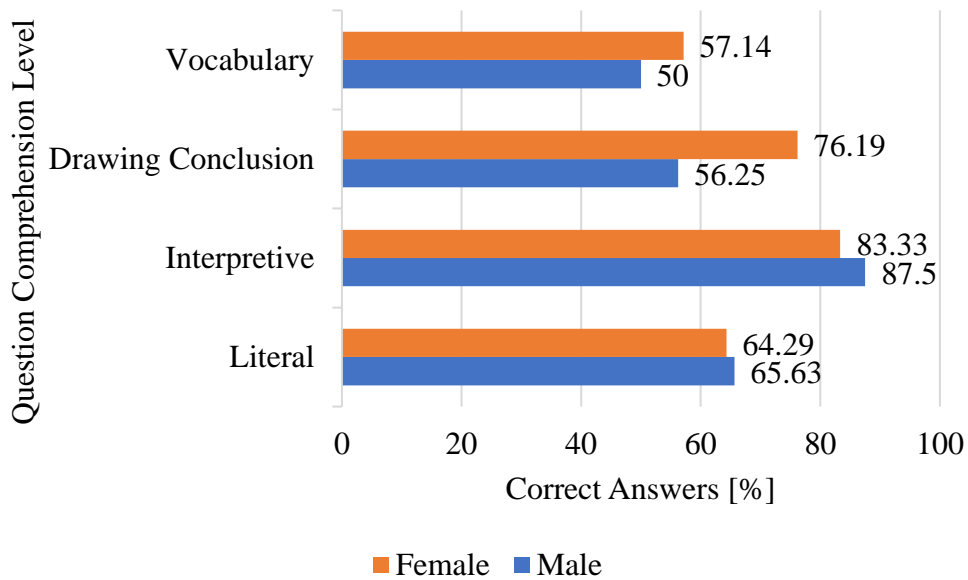


Fig. 17. Reading exercise results' distribution by gender

Table 3. Student mean scores (standard deviation)

	Male (n = 8)	Female (n = 21)	t stat	t critical (two-tailed)
Literal	65.63 (44.92)	64.29 (44.92)	0.134	2.003
Interpretive	87.5 (17.68)	83.33 (4.76)	0.578	1.999
Drawing Conclusions	56.25 (26.52)	76.19 (13.46)	1.382	2.064
Vocabulary	50 (35.36)	57.14 (40.4)	0.475	2.056

Fig. 18 refers to the respondents' reading exercise results distribution per year level. The data shows that respondents who read print materials correctly answered 'Drawing Conclusion' questions more than those who read in digital. On the other hand, more respondents who read digital materials were able to correctly answer "Interpretive" questions. Finally, respondents performed similarly on 'Literal', and 'Vocabulary' questions.

Fig. 19 refers to the respondents' reading exercise results' distribution by reading frequency. For 'Vocabulary' questions, the data shows that respondents with lower reading frequency were able to answer more questions correctly. A similar finding can be observed for 'Interpretive' questions. Reading frequency appears to have the opposite effect on respondents' performance against 'Literal' questions. Lastly, there is no apparent pattern observed on the 'Drawing Conclusion' questions.

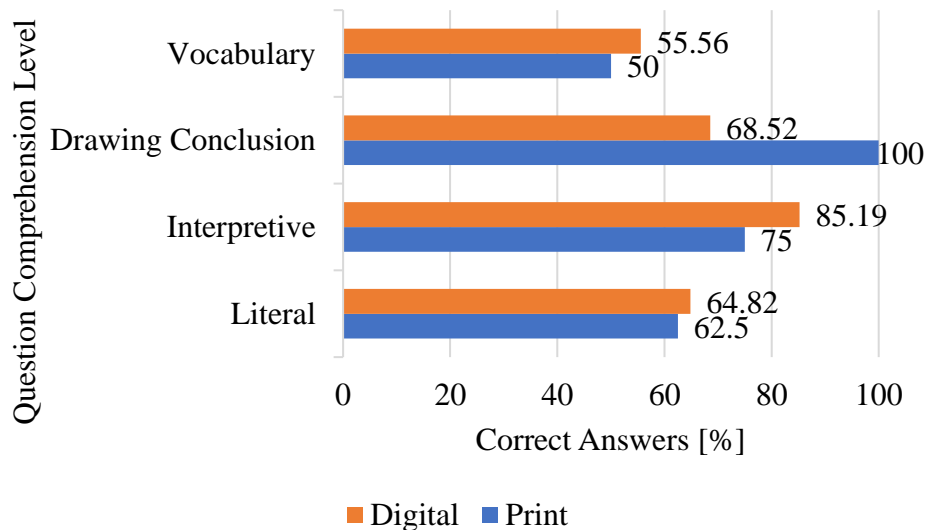


Fig. 18. Reading exercise results' distribution by year level

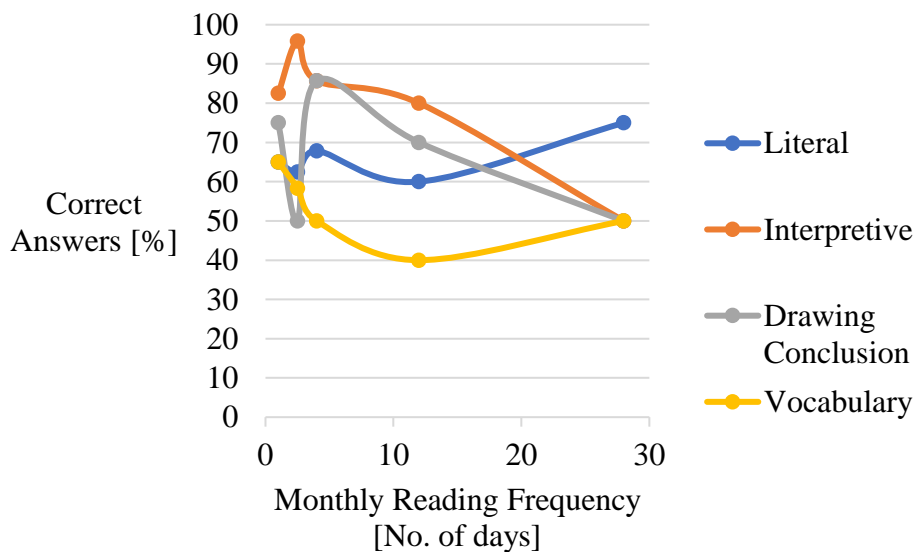


Fig. 19. Reading exercise results' distribution by reading frequency

Fig. 20 refers to the reading exercise results' distribution by reading material acquisition. For most of the questions on different reading comprehension levels, those who borrow the reading material were able to correctly answer more questions. Additionally, those who buy the reading material were found to least answer correctly.

Reading location and purpose does not seem to influence students' performance against questions on different levels of reading (See Appendix A and B).

Fig. 21 refers to the respondents' reading exercise results' distribution by average reading duration. Despite trend inconsistencies in lower average reading duration ranges and a dip in the 3 to 5 hours range, the ability to correctly answer 'Literal', 'Interpretive', and 'Drawing Conclusion' questions tend to increase with an increase in reading duration. The opposite, however, can be said for 'Vocabulary' questions. Distributions for the longest and shortest reading durations can be found in Appendix C and D.

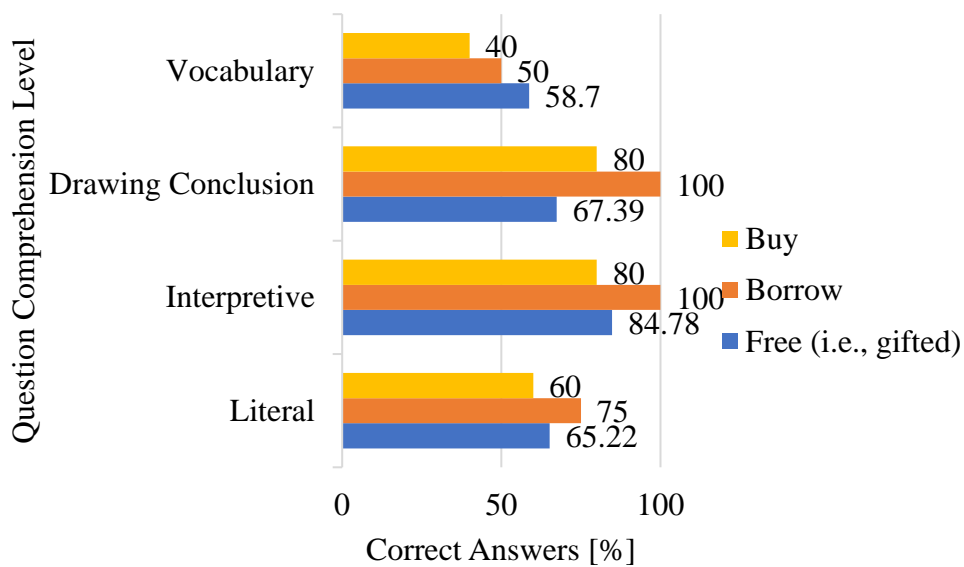


Fig. 20. Reading exercise results' distribution by reading material acquisition

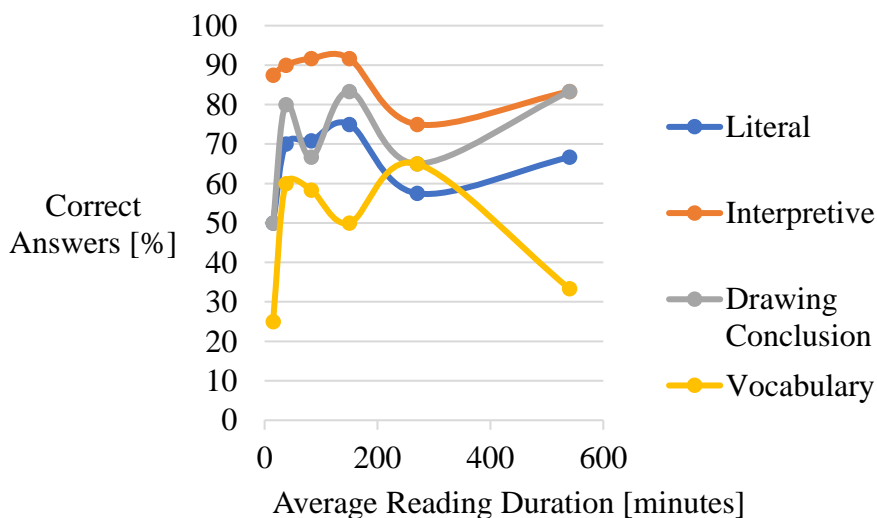


Fig. 21. Reading exercise results' distribution by average reading duration

4. DISCUSSION

The findings from this study of exploration of students' reading habits and skills indicated areas for improvement on reading programs institutions can adopt for implementation to their respective schools.

4.1 Habits

Specifically, in Research Question 1, students' current reading habits show that more inclination towards reading current materials (i.e., Brief Articles, Opinion Essays) through digital copies are preferred among students. Further, most students prefer reading locations in the comforts of their own home (i.e., On my bed, Any corner of the house). Additionally, students' reading purpose shows that entertainment and additional knowledge was the intention.

Reading programs adapting to today's digital landscape may be more efficient to younger generation of students. With the advent of technology and the current pandemic, students may have preferred easily accessible materials that can be downloaded while staying on their bed. This is supported by Akbar et al. [4] who did an overview inspecting the impacts of reading digital texts on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension and found that digital materials influenced comprehension. Further, the findings of this study support Kaman and Seyit Ertem [5], who uncovered that the utilization of digital materials positively influenced reading comprehension and reduce common errors. Lastly, this same finding is upheld by Bhatti [6] who observed that utilizing digital texts was more effective than printed texts.

Further, it is worth noting that reading materials should also offer variety to spark student interest. For instance, research on the young generation has leisure reading is decidedly connected with positive reading attitudes [7], which are connected to accomplishment in reading McKenna and Kear, [8], a higher self-esteem [7], and joy in reading later in adulthood [9]. Taking into account that most students read for leisure and extra knowledge, schools, therefore, need expansive ways to deal and consult with students so as to learn of their inclinations and to guarantee that the scope of reading materials accessible in school mirrors those interests.

4.2 Skills

In skills, however, differences were not found to be statistically significant in describing the difference between male and female students' performance in each level of reading comprehension question. This suggests that deliberate instruction is needed to develop both students' skills in literal, interpretive, drawing conclusion, and vocabulary areas of reading. Institutions can promote reading programs where enhancing students' session guide intended for this macro language skill is prioritized. This means contextualizing its content such as by using texts familiar to them and focusing on the skills they need mastery.

4.3 Students' Common Reading Issues

In Research Question 2, the common reading issues of students were 'Vocabulary' (34.95%) and 'Environment' (27.96%). These two appears to be the major reading difficulty mentioned by students. This same finding is observed in [10] which affirmed that the students face vocabulary-learning issues even at the college level of schooling. The problems surfaced as difficulties in pronouncing news words, spelling new words, using new words correctly. Thus, a reading program focusing on exercises to improve 'Vocabulary' is recommended to improve student performance.

'Environment', on the other hand, can start at home. With regard to this, institutions can encourage the parents of the students to establish a solid reading climate at home by beginning with a decent stock of reading materials like newspapers, magazines, and books notwithstanding whether they are possessed or acquired, new or second-hand. Significantly, reading materials are a characteristic piece of their home and day to day routines. With a helpful reading climate made available, the students would effectively achieve access and are urged to read often. Similarly, this finding is supported by Morni and Sahari [11] which confirmed that positive reading climate exceptionally convinced students to develop great reading habits and attitudes within themselves. For example, adults who are eager readers themselves will ordinarily inspire students thus encourage them more to read. Following this is a reinforcement through reading programs in schools where the same practice cultivated at home is continued in class [12,13].

4.4 Student Performance in Reading Comprehension Questions

In particular, the findings in Research Question 3 reveal that 'Vocabulary' and 'Drawing Conclusion' should be reinforced among Third Year students while that for First Year students should strengthen their skills on 'Literal' type of questions. Additionally, since male respondents appear to perform poorly on 'Drawing Conclusion' and 'Vocabulary' type of questions, supplementary reading exercises can be incorporated in their specific reading programs. It was also found that purchase of reading material does not directly improve reading comprehension skills. This may also indicate that limitations on purchasing capability does not necessarily relate to poor performance.

Some inconsistencies in data trends were found in reading frequency and duration. This may indicate that higher reading frequencies and/or longer reading durations does not necessarily translate to better reading comprehension. Frequent reading of a material that does not effectively reinforce reading comprehension skills may just be as effective as infrequent reading of a material of substance. Additionally, reading for extended periods of time may not necessarily translate to the amount of text read, but rather indicate an experience of difficulty in reading through the material, thus, requiring the person to read the text multiple times. Aside from reading frequency and duration, other factors like the type of material being read and/or external factors like the environment, purpose, etc. may also be significant contributors.

This finding is supported by Walczyk et al. (1999) which found that the best comprehension was observed in the mild pressure condition. This confirms that how much time that students are taken part in scholastic tasks during their reading time frame at school is connected with higher performance in their reading accomplishment. Thus, reading programs can adhere to following a certain list of reading materials up for discussion in the next meeting. This way, students can prepare and read at their own pace and time at home. Additionally, this can enhance the reading program's session evidently for the testing of the students' understanding on the reading.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that although students read on the average of 1 to 4

hours at a time, at many kinds of locations, and for various purposes, these reading instances are spent mostly on leisure reading materials. Additionally, with students identifying 'Vocabulary' and 'Environment' as the common reading issues, the importance of the type of text and location where reading is being performed is further highlighted. When it comes to the performance of students against questions of varying levels of reading comprehension, more students are generally able to correctly answer in 'Interpretive' and 'Drawing Conclusion' questions than in 'Literal' and 'Vocabulary' questions. This may indicate that despite concerns on students' reading habits, they perform better on reading comprehension questions requiring subsurface understanding of the text.

In light of the findings, enhancing reading programs by focusing on several key aspects is crucial. First and foremost, these programs should be meticulously designed to cater to the specific reading comprehension levels expected from students. This means incorporating texts that align with students' proficiency levels, ensuring they are manageable and manageable. Moreover, addressing the most common reading challenges students encounter is imperative. To achieve this, reading programs should go beyond the traditional classroom setting and create environments conducive to more profound reading experiences. One effective strategy involves a thorough restructuring of libraries. Libraries can be transformed into a wide range of reading materials in print and digital formats. This approach not only expands the accessibility of resources but also encourages more students to utilize these facilities. By implementing these measures, the study aims to improve reading comprehension and address the specific issues that hinder students' reading progress. This comprehensive approach to reading programs seeks to provide tailored solutions to common reading challenges, ultimately fostering a more enriching and practical learning experience for all students.

COMPETING INTERESTS

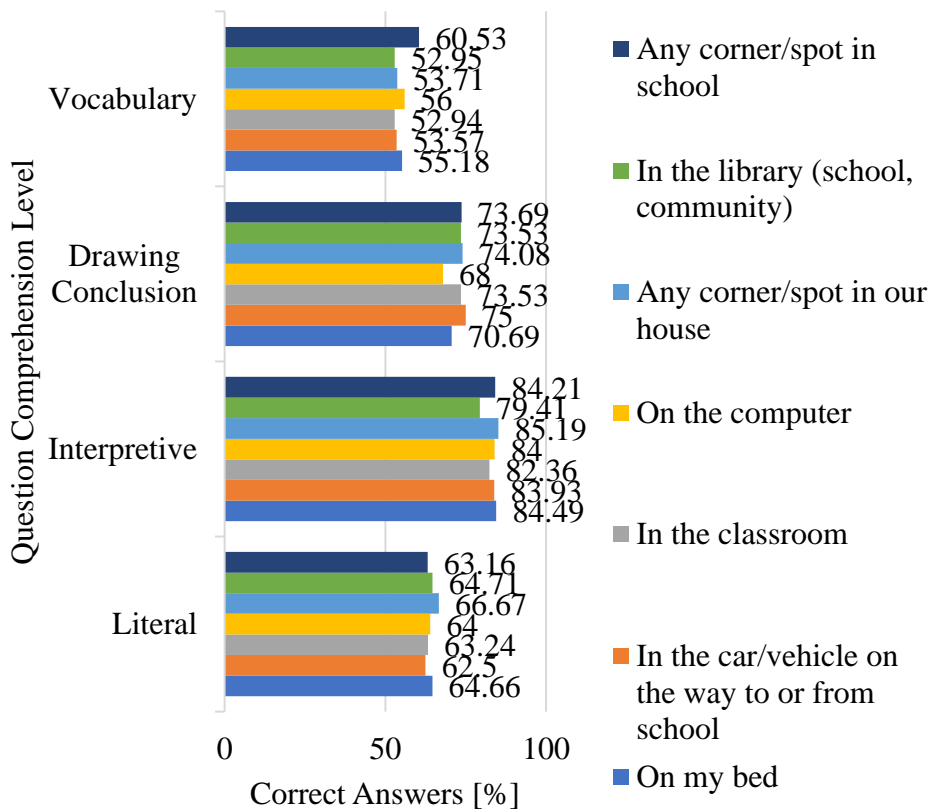
Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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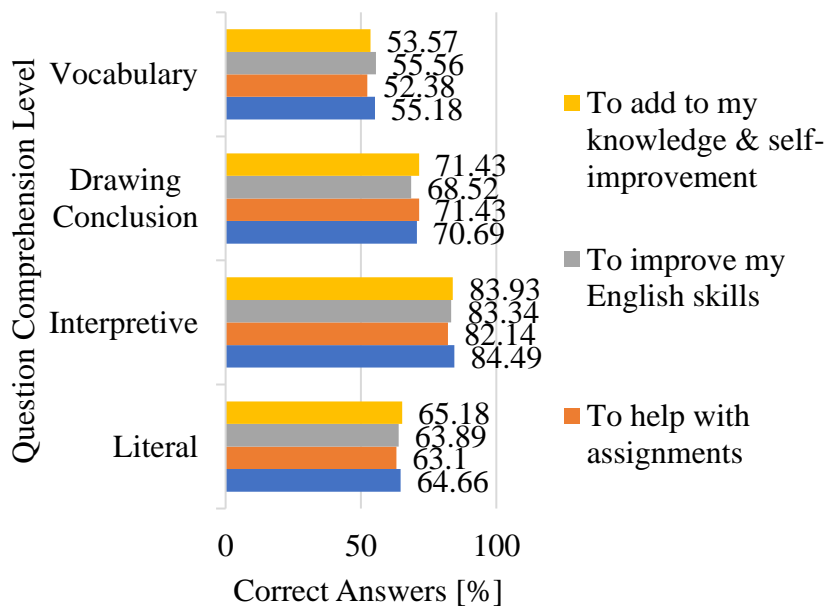
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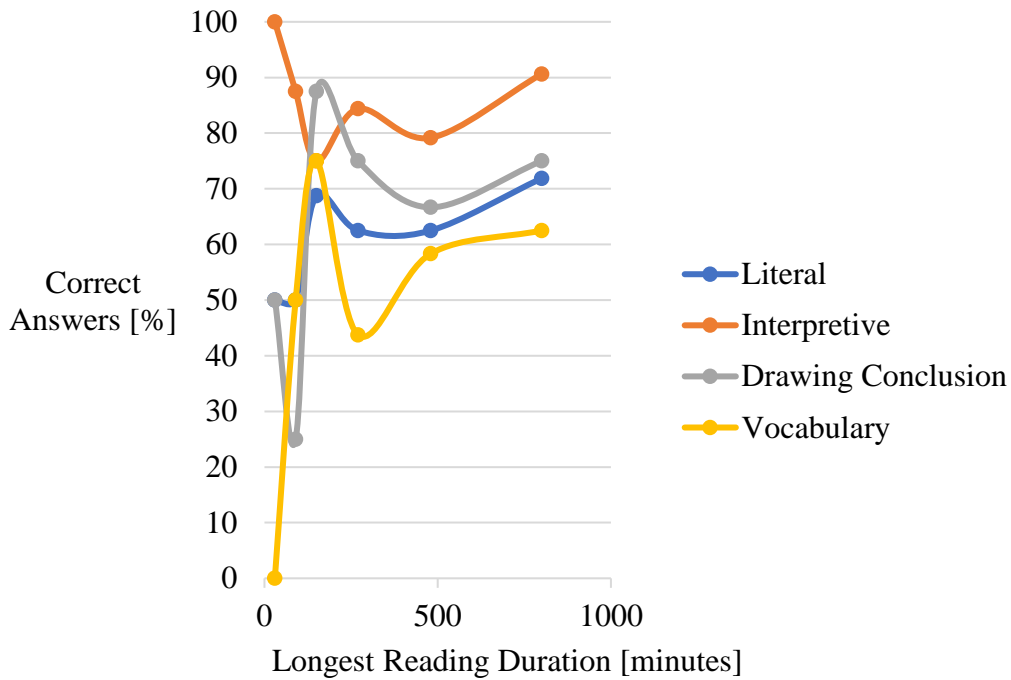
APPENDICES



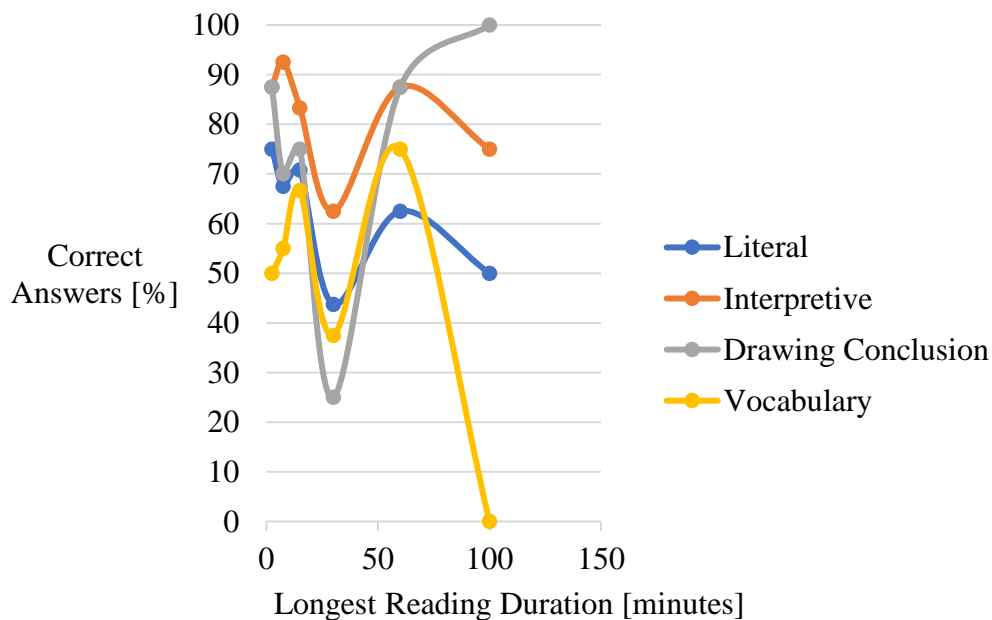
Appendix A. Reading exercise results' distribution by reading location



Appendix B. Reading exercise results' distribution by reading purpose



Appendix C. Reading exercise results' distribution by longest reading duration



Appendix D. Reading exercise results' distribution by shortest reading duration

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