

Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance of Grade 11 Students in Reading and Writing Skills: Basis for an Intervention Program

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Abstract—This study investigated the reading challenges and struggles of Grade 11 Senior High School (SHS) students and their academic performance in the subject Reading and Writing Skills (RWS) using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. Anchored in the Active View of Reading, Cognitive Load Theory, and Situation Model Theory, it employed a quantitative collection of data through survey and standardized reading assessment to the total population of 341 respondents, followed by a qualitative thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with six (6) SHS teachers and seven (7) Grade 11 students. A Foundational Comprehension Level was recorded under all the components: Literal, Inferential, Evaluative, and Vocabulary in Context, which was translated as a profound reading comprehension gap influenced by factors such as demographic profiles: Sex, Track/Strand, Parent/Guardian's Educational Attainment, and Exposure to Reading Materials. The respondents' Academic Performance in the RWS subject was Very Satisfactory with a mean 3rd Quarterly grade of 86.5, with a Significant Moderate Positive Relationship to the Reading Comprehension Level of the students, which means the relationship between the two variables moved in the same direction of the connection that was clear and visible, but not perfect, as it was only moderate. The final stage of the data analysis involved triangulating the quantitative results with qualitative data from teacher and student narratives to identify points of convergence and divergence. Based on the statistical results and thematic intersections, links were revealed and discussed, where instructional strategies directly crossed with student performance and coping mechanisms, providing a unified explanation for the current reading proficiency and literacy landscape in Senior High School, such as: 1) Cognitive Environment: The Core Challenges of a Reading Crisis, 2) Learner Agency: Reading Proficiency Across Sex and Strands, 3) The Social Foundation of Student Engagement and Success, 4) The Better Format: Visual Presentation and Typography, 5) Digital Integration or Modern Distractions, and 6) Meaning Construction at the Foundational Level. These findings served as the empirical basis for the recommendations and the proposed twenty-week Reading Intervention Program tailored for SHS learners.

Keywords— Senior High School, Reading Comprehension, Comprehension Levels, Reading Challenges and Struggles, Literal, Inferential, Evaluative, Vocabulary, Academic Performance, Reading and Writing Skills Subject, Cognitive Load Theory, Situation Model Theory, Active View of Reading, Reading Intervention Program.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill that allows people to function in their everyday living, involving the early stages of decoding letters and symbols, stringing them into words and sentences, making sense of what is presented in the material, employing

their learned skills, from the most basic ones up to the higher stages of comprehension. It is an activity that students learn primarily and ideally at home with their carers, and in school through their mentors, where they are expected to attain a certain competency at a certain grade level.

The ultimate goal of reading is comprehension, which is labeled as the cornerstone of literacy (Duke, Ward, and Pearson, 2021). It is a huge step toward personal, academic, and professional success; thus, its importance for learners, especially Senior High School students transitioning from secondary to tertiary education or directly to employment or entrepreneurship, is highly commended.

Although the notion of reading as a passive skill suggests that comprehension is a passive process, achieving comprehension requires a more active, complex process that integrates schema with new information presented in the text and engages with the author's ideas (Banditvilai, 2020). Without the conscious effort to apply the cognitive skills involved in reading comprehension, motivation, and limited background knowledge, reading comprehension is compromised, as this posed the difficulties and challenges that this study aimed to investigate.

Our country, the Philippines, was among Asian nations with a high literacy rate among its elementary pupils, particularly in reading, compared to neighboring countries (Mapa, 2023). Filipino children were able to read at their grade levels, with only a small percentage requiring remediation. This statement described the basic literacy skills of our learners, meaning they could read, write, and perform basic math. However, results from other standard tests, such as in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 and 2024, which measured the skills of older learners in high school, told a different story. Filipino high school learners ranked at the bottom in reading, science, and mathematics. Although our learners had basic literacy skills to read, write, and compute simple items, they lacked competency in higher-level comprehension, analytical, and critical skills (Chi, 2023).

This decline in comprehension has been an ongoing crisis in our education system. Many factors have contributed to this problem, with the previous shift to remote learning making it more pronounced, as learners were required to read more, especially independently, since lectures were delivered through distance learning via modules and written

instructions, and most teaching was through reading. This situation led to a deeper decline in our students' proficiency, both in basic literacy and in higher levels of comprehension, as reported by the World Bank and UNESCO (2022). Numerous efforts, including remedial and intervention programs, were made to address the learning loss and discrepancies reported (DepEd, 2024).

This study was necessary because it offered a multidimensional, more in-depth analysis of the research problem regarding the reading comprehension levels of SHS students. It presented more than test scores and also opened an important insight into the hows and whys of this learning crisis, which significantly contributed to improving learning and planning for intervention programs and outcomes among the Senior High School students of the country.

1. Statement of the Problem

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

What is the profile of the student respondents in terms of:

- 1.1 Sex;
- 1.2 Track and Strand;
- 1.3 Socio-Economic Status;
- 1.4 Educational Attainment of Parents/Guardians; and
- 1.5 Exposure to Reading Materials?

2. What is the level of reading comprehension of the student respondents as assessed through a standardized reading assessment in terms of:

- 2.1 Literal;
- 2.2 Inferential;
- 2.3 Evaluative; and
- 2.4 Vocabulary in Context?

3. Is there a significant difference in the level of reading comprehension of the student respondents when grouped according to their demographic profile?

II. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to determine the levels of reading comprehension and academic performance of Grade 11 Senior High School students, using numerical data from assessments and in-depth insights from interviews. These steps aimed to collect complementary information that led to the creation of an evidence-based intervention program to be administered in the school to address the learning crisis in the department.

Particularly, this study followed the Explanatory Sequential Design, in which the quantitative process was primarily undertaken, followed by qualitative approaches to elaborate on the results of the collected numerical data (Toyon, 2021). First, the researcher administered the reading comprehension test and survey to the respondents to get measurable data on their demographic profile, reading scores, and other factors affecting their comprehension levels, then proceeded to the purposive selection of smaller, representative samples from the total population to conduct semi-structured interviews, considering the students' perspectives as well as their teachers'.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study. In the first phase, quantitative data were collected to identify trends in Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance of Grade 11 Students. Following the analysis of these data, the qualitative phase was conducted to explore and explain the specific statistical results in greater depth.

This chapter begins by detailing the quantitative findings, followed by the qualitative themes that emerged, and concludes with an integration of both data sets to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Quantitative Data Presentation

This table presents the demographic profile of the student respondents involved in the quantitative phase of the study. A total of 341 Grade 11 Senior High School student respondents completed the survey and the reading assessment, providing the foundational data for this explanatory sequential research. The demographic profiles, including Sex, track, and Strands; Socio-Economic Status; parents/guardians' educational attainment; and Exposure to Reading Materials, were summarized to provide context for the statistical analyses that follow.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Student Respondents according to Demographic Profile

SEX	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	178	52.20%
Female	163	47.80%
Total	341	100%
TRACK AND STRANDS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ABM	34	9.97%
HUMSS	94	27.57%
STEM	139	40.76%
TVL	74	21.70%
Total	341	100%
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Less than Ph 12,030 per month (Poor)	117	34.31%
Between PhP 12,030 to PhP 24,060 per month (Low income but not poor)	105	30.79%
Between PhP 24,060 to PhP 48,120 per month (Lower middle income)	65	19.06%
Between PhP 48,120 to PhP 84,210 per month (Middle class)	34	9.97%
Between PhP 84,210 to PhP 144,360 per month (Upper middle income)	11	3.23%
Between PhP 144,360 to PhP 240,600 (Upper income but not rich)	5	1.47%
At least PhP 240,600 (Rich)	4	1.17%
Total	341	100%
PARENT/GUARDIAN'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Elementary Graduate	8	2.35%
High School Level	35	10.26%
High School Graduate	111	32.55%
College Level	70	20.53%
College Graduate	105	30.79%
Master's Degree	11	3.23%
Doctorate Degree	1	0.29%
Total	341	100%
EXPOSURE TO READING MATERIALS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Textbooks	49	14.37%
Social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	310	90.91%

Physical newspapers / magazines	16	4.69%
Storybooks / Novels	81	23.75%
Comics / Graphic novels	48	14.08%
Others	7	2.05%

As shown in Table 1, the participation rate was similar among Grade 11 males (52.20%) and females (47.80%) in phase 1 of this study. The majority of the respondents were under the Academic Track – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Strand with 139 students (40.76%), followed by the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) Strand with 27.57% and the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) Track with 21.70%.

Regarding Socio-Economic Status, 34.31% were students with a monthly income of Less than Ph 12,030 per month (Poor), followed by 30.79% from families that earned Between PhP 12,030 to PhP 24,060 per month (Low income but not poor) (PIDS, 2021). Related to this is the Educational Attainment of the students' parents or guardians, with High School Graduates accounting for 32.55% of the total, followed by College Graduates at 30.79%. Regarding Exposure to Reading Materials, 90.91% of respondents reported exposure to Social Media Posts (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), which accounted for the largest share of all options provided in the survey.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Students' Level of Reading Comprehension

INDICATOR	Mean	MPS	SD	Interpretation
LITERAL	3.10	62%	1.36	Foundational
INFERENTIAL	2.38	48%	1.10	Foundational
EVALUATIVE	3.04	61%	1.22	Foundational
VOCABULARY	2.79	56%	1.18	Foundational
	11.31	57%	0.50	Foundational

Table 2 presents the students' levels of reading comprehension, tallied from the standardized reading test administered to Grade 11 Senior High School Students in the S. Y. 2025 – 2026. All in all, the reading test yielded a mean score of 11.31 and an MPS of 57% at the Foundational level, indicating that students demonstrated only a basic, inconsistent understanding of comprehension skills and required substantial support to progress to higher levels of reading.

For each of the comprehension levels: Literal, Interpretive, Evaluative, and Vocabulary in Context, students garnered a 2 – 3 out of 5 points or 35 – 65% MPS, wherein they correctly answered questions that were equivalent to the category of Foundational, described as students displayed a minimal or inconsistent grasp of the skill.

Looking closely at the results, the respondents scored highest at the Literal level, with a mean score of 3.10 and an MPS of 62%. The Literal Comprehension is the most basic level, involving a reader's knowledge and retention of the information explicitly stated in the text. It serves as the foundation for all higher-level reading skills. The simple answers to questions who, what, where, and when, directly written and included by the writer in the text, can be recalled by the reader (Cervetti and Wright, 2020).

Close to it was the Evaluative level with a mean of 3.04 and an MPS of 61%, which was a surprise as this level was assumed to be one of the most difficult among the four levels, as it expected readers not just to accept and retain what was presented in the text, but to interact with it by determining objective and subjective information, judging the author's perspective and how it is presented, either argumentatively or persuasively, to identify biases (Amalya, Anugerahwati, and Yanafari, 2020).

Another turn of results was in Vocabulary in Context, with a mean of 2.79 and an MPS of 56%, which was the baseline for reading comprehension. A student who could read and decode well but lacked knowledge of word meanings would have difficulty comprehending the text. Vocabulary is not simply a part but an active bridge or connector that strengthens a reader's ability to automatically recognize a word and retrieve its meaning from memory or from context. A weak and limited vocabulary would otherwise serve to divert from the understanding of the literal text (Kärbla, Männamaa, and Uibu, 2020). Grasping the overall meaning of a text would be difficult if they could not determine the meanings of unfamiliar words, especially if they have limited experience using context clues to address their vocabulary issues (Bautista, 2020).

The Inferential level scored the lowest, as it required readers to read between the lines. As such, this level was more cognitively demanding than the first, requiring students to make predictions, interpret figurative language, determine the author's purpose and tone, deduce meanings, draw conclusions, and use prior knowledge to make connections (Krismadayanti and Zainil, 2022). This level was considered the highest level of struggle for SHS students, with the lowest mean score of 2.38 and an MPS of 48%. Research by Tabodoo et al. (2023) highlighted the difficulty Grade 10 students (a predecessor to SHS Grade 11) experience in higher reading comprehension, such as making inferences, judging the value and information of a text, determining the author's purpose, distinguishing facts and opinions, and drawing conclusions.

In relation to the results tallied from the PISA 2022 and 2024 tests, Filipino high school learners ranked at the bottom in reading, science, and mathematics. Although our learners had basic literacy skills to read, write, and compute simple items, they lacked competency in higher-level comprehension, analytical, and critical skills (Chi, 2023), as further supported by the results of the reading comprehension test in this research.

Table 3 presents the results of the study examining the relationship between students' demographic profiles and their reading comprehension levels. A significant result was determined in the Sex, Track, and Strands, Educational Attainment of Parent/Guardian, and Exposure to some of the Reading Materials profiles.

Regarding Sex, the table shows a statistically significant difference in reading comprehension levels between male and female respondents. The related literature generally indicated female dominance in literacy (PIRLS, 2021; PISA, 2022), and the scores supported this finding. Though the males in this study outnumbered their female counterparts, the scores

supported the claims regarding the girls' reading proficiency. This performance may be attributed to the nature, style, format, and content of the reading passages used, which aligned more closely with female reading interests (Ngongare, Samalo, and Rettob, 2021). Furthermore, although males were more represented in the sample (52.20%) and were closely followed by female respondents (47.80%), the statistical significance suggests that the performance gap was not merely a result of group size but reflected a genuine difference in comprehension levels within this specific student population.

Table 3. Analysis of Variance on the Relationship Between the Students' Demographic Profile and their Level of Reading Comprehension

Demographic Profile and their Level of Reading Comprehension							
SEX	MPS	SD	t value	p value	Interpretation		
Male	54.04	19.12	-2.724	0.007	Significant		
Female	59.29	16.19					
TRACK AND STRANDS	MPS	SD	t value/F value	p value	Interpretation		
ABM	60.15	15.00	6.068	0.0005	Significant		
HUMSS	58.78	17.61					
STEM	58.24	17.79					
TVL	48.92	18.10					
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS	MPS	SD	t value/F value	p value	Interpretation		
Poor	52.86	18.96	1.770	0.104	Not Significant		
Low income but not poor	58.19	16.94					
Lower middle income	60.62	16.14					
Middle class	58.38	19.80					
Upper middle income	51.82	16.62					
Upper income but not rich	57.00	17.54					
Rich	52.50	17.94					
PARENT/GUARDIAN'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	MPS	SD	t value/F value	p value	Interpretation		
Elementary Graduate	47.50	20.53	3.144	0.005	Significant		
High School Level	50.71	16.55					
High School Graduate	54.32	18.02					
College Level	57.07	16.86					
College Graduate	59.67	17.88					
Master's Degree	71.36	16.60					
Doctorate Degree	55.00						
EXPOSURE TO READING MATERIALS	Group	N	MPS	SD	t value	p value	Interpretation
Textbooks	Yes	49	61.22	15.50	-1.977	0.049	Significant
	No	292	55.77	18.23			
Social Media Posts	Yes	310	56.81	19.91	-0.820	0.413	Not Significant
	No	31	54.03	18.37			
Newspapers / Magazines	Yes	16	63.12	16.42	-1.503	0.134	Not Significant
	No	325	56.23	17.98			
Storybooks / Novels	Yes	81	61.67	16.66	-2.973	0.003	Significant
	No	259	54.94	18.09			
Comics / Graphic Novels	Yes	48	65.31	16.12	-3.716	0.0002	Significant
	No	293	55.12	17.84			
Others	Yes	7	70.71	11.70	-2.120	0.035	Significant
	No	334	56.26	17.94			

Moreover, the Standard Deviation (SD) for males (19.12) is slightly higher than that for females (16.19), suggesting that the wider gap in abilities among males persists; on the other hand, the latter group achieves closer scores.

Also revealed was a significant relationship between students' reading comprehension levels when grouped by Track and Strands. This result suggested that a student's choice of specialized subjects may influence their exposure to

complex texts and technical vocabulary. While STEM students accounted for the most respondents (40.76%), they earned a Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of 58.24, ranking only third. However, Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) students, although comprising only a small portion of the sample (9.97%), demonstrated the highest MPS of 60.15 across all strands.

For Senior High School students, reading comprehension is a prerequisite to all other skills they must possess and master (Villegas, 2024). When multiple comparisons were conducted across the Track and Strands, the data revealed that students in the TVL track had the largest mean difference compared to the other strands. Thus, SHS students, particularly those in the TVL track, showed the greatest difference among the strands, earning the lowest Reading Test scores compared to ABM, HUMSS, and STEM.

Multiple Comparisons			
Dependent Variable:			
Tukey HSD			
(I) Tracks/Strand		Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
ABM	HUMSS	1.37046	0.980
	STEM	1.90965	0.941
	TVL	11.22814*	0.012
HUMSS	ABM	-1.37046	0.980
	STEM	0.53919	0.996
	TVL	9.85768*	0.002
STEM	ABM	-1.90965	0.941
	HUMSS	-0.53919	0.996
	TVL	9.31849*	0.001
TVL	ABM	-11.22814*	0.012
	HUMSS	-9.85768*	0.002
	STEM	-9.31849*	0.001

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

This disparity indicated that the nature of the reading materials encountered within these specific tracks, ranging from technical manuals to creative narratives, played a role in shaping overall literacy proficiency (Andalajao-Dalanon, 2024). For SHS students, reading comprehension as HOTS requires them to analyze and synthesize information, infer and conclude, interpret, decide, and evaluate the manuscripts they read for various purposes that they are required to complete (Urbano et al., 2021).

This finding was further supported by the results presented below that measured the total scores of the student respondents on the five texts included in the Reading Assessment. Students had a Foundational Level in Tests A, B, C, and E, with a combination of photos and text, as well as tabular or visual presentations; however, in the historical text (Text D), composed of four continuously presented paragraphs, the respondents scored an Emergent Level with a mean score of 1.44 and an MPS of 28.80.

INDICATOR	MEAN	MPS	SD	INTERPRETATION
Test A	2.11	42.17	1.16	Foundational
Test B	2.64	52.84	1.03	Foundational
Test C	2.46	49.21	1.12	Foundational
Test D	1.44	28.80	0.85	Emergent
Test E	2.66	53.20	1.15	Foundational

A significant 2021 study highlighted that students struggled with plain text as they faced immense pressure when dealing with plain English texts, specifically those without visual or instructional scaffolds, such as in Text D. It had long and complex passages that might have become a major barrier to their understanding, as a result of their lack of focus, interest, and vocabulary familiarization with the topic discussed.

Moreover, their knowledge of sentence structure and grammar also influenced students' comprehension skills. If students were unfamiliar with these patterns and structures in writing, it would be difficult for them to connect ideas presented in compound and complex sentences within paragraphs (Urbano et al., 2022). This discrepancy also influenced their higher-order thinking skills, requiring them to engage in deeper analysis and critical reading of the texts they were dealing with (Taboada et al., 2023).

This idea could also relate to the CLT, which holds that reading comprehension difficulties may not be due to the student's lack of effort, but rather to the overload of information his mental space can effectively process. In this part of the results, the respondents were presented an academic text with an unfamiliar topic, containing numerous jargons and ideas of an unrelated field (high intrinsic cognitive load) that was designed or poorly with continuous paragraphs (high extraneous cognitive load), requiring them to exert more effort mentally in order to understand the text (high Germane cognitive load), which then led to the prevention of constructing a deep situation model in relation to the SMT Theory, thus only the Emergent - Foundational scores on the reading test were achieved.

Continuing with the factors, no statistically significant relationship between students' Socio-Economic Status (SES) and their level of reading comprehension was detected in the data. In contrast, the Parent/Guardian's Educational Attainment showed a significant relationship. The findings revealed a contrasting relationship between the two profiles, suggesting that, in this context, a parent's knowledge and educational values had a more profound impact on a student's comprehension skills than the family's financial standing. Additionally, it implies that educated parents offer a more literacy-rich environment via active engagement and academic guidance, which successfully makes up for any shortage of material resources.

This finding also implied that the school's academic environment may be acting as a leveling field, in which equal access to library resources and teacher support effectively neutralize the traditional advantages of higher financial standing. Also, in these modern days, digital learning materials and online resources are accessible and available free for all learners.

The quantitative analysis also revealed both significant and non-significant findings regarding students' Exposure to Reading Materials, suggesting that the type of content matters more than the frequency of reading. In this part, Textbooks, Storybooks/Novels, Comics/Graphic Novels, and Others showed a significant relationship with students' reading comprehension, whereas exposure to Social Media Posts and

Newspapers/Magazines did not. First, in Social Media Posts, the lack of significance may be attributed to the skimming nature of digital consumption. These posts often used informal language, abbreviations, and visuals, which did not necessarily challenge or develop the high-level cognitive skills required for formal reading comprehension. In Newspapers/Magazines, the non-significant result might reflect the medium through which students access these materials (online or via social media handles). It could also be explained by the declining relevance of traditional print journalism in students' daily lives nowadays.

These findings implied that academic and narrative texts (Textbooks and Storybooks/Novels) provided the necessary linguistic complexity to improve reading comprehension, as Comics and Graphic Novels provided a visual-text combination that could help bridge comprehension gaps. In contrast, casual reading through Social Media Posts and Newspapers/Magazines did not offer the same cognitive benefits.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Students' Academic Performance in Reading and Writing Skills

VARIABLE	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
RWS GRADE	341	86.5	5.92	Very Satisfactory
TRACK/STRAND	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
ABM	34	90.03	5.35	Outstanding
HUMSS	94	86.57	5.68	Very Satisfactory
STEM	139	85.45	5.55	Very Satisfactory
TVL	74	86.74	6.55	Very Satisfactory

Table 4 presents the Academic Performance of Grade 11 Senior High School Students in the Reading and Writing Skills (RWS) subject, which received a Very Satisfactory rating with a mean of 86.5 across all strands. Students practiced comprehension, which was RWS's primary emphasis, by studying different text kinds, choosing necessary information, establishing text connections through critical reading, and creating different sorts of academic and professional correspondence (Urbano, Gumangan, Gustilo, and Capacete, 2021).

The Academic Performance in this study pertained to students' achievement in their schoolwork and across all their academic pursuits, determined by their ability and capacity to meet the standards of the entire curriculum or a particular subject. Like reading and comprehension, it was a multi-layered metric measured in many ways, including quantitative, qualitative, or both. It helped determine students' success and achievements in their educational endeavors as a culmination of all their efforts observed in school (Brew, Nketiah, and Koranteng, 2021).

The Very Satisfactory (VS) level indicated a high degree of competence and a strong grasp of the curriculum. A student at this level has above-average performance, clearly understands the core concepts, and performs tasks with high accuracy and skill through active engagement. This level also means students have the proficiency to demonstrate solid mastery of most learning goals, with only minor errors in more complex or advanced applications (DepEd DO No. 8, s. 2015).

When grouped by Track/Strands, the ABM strand performed best, with a mean of 90.03, interpreted as an

Outstanding (O) level, representing the highest standard of academic achievement. Students at this level are described as exceeding expectations, consistently performing beyond the required learning competencies and demonstrating a profound understanding of the subject matter. The Outstanding level also shows high initiative and requires minimal supervision to produce high-quality, original work among the students.

The other three strands, HUMSS (86.57%), STEM (85.45%), and TVL (86.74%), were grouped under the VS level.

Table 5. Pearson Product Correlation on the Relationship Between the Students' Academic Performance and their Level of Reading Comprehension

VARIABLES	r value	p value
MPS VS RWS GRADES	0.439	0.000

Table 5 shows that the Academic Performance in RWS and the Level of Reading Comprehension of the students through the MPS have a Significant Moderate Positive Relationship, where a proven, steady link between the variables presented exists, as when one goes up, the other usually follows at a noticeable but not extreme rate. This pattern is strong enough to be scientifically trusted.

Reading comprehension is important in numerous ways, as it is a prerequisite for learning and understanding various information and new concepts. As readers were able to understand complex concepts easily using metacognitive strategies, they tended to perform well in school, at work, or in life, generally speaking, making it a clear indicator of a person's academic and professional success. It also enabled effective communication, allowing readers to connect their learning through conversations and correspondence with others (Figueroa-Macias and Andrade-Zambrano, 2022).

The Positive Relationship describes the direction of the connection: when one variable increases, the other moves in the same direction. For example, when Academic Performance increases, the MPS also moves in the same direction. When one increases, the other increases as well.

The Significant Moderate describes the certainty and strength of the connection, respectively. The former concerns the existence and reliability of the relationship, as indicated by the p-value. The latter explains the tightness of the data around the trend line, as measured by the correlation coefficient r of 0.439. This result means that the connection is clear and visible, but it is not perfect, as it is only moderate.

TRACK AND STRANDS	Reading		Academic	
	Comprehension Test		Performance RWS	
	MPS	SD	Mean	SD
ABM	60.15	15.00	90.03	5.35
HUMSS	58.78	17.61	86.57	5.68
STEM	58.24	17.79	85.45	5.55
TVL	48.92	18.10	86.74	6.55

The results show that students obtained seemingly higher grades in RWS at the Very Satisfactory level (mean of 86.5) than on their reading test, with a 57% MPS at the Foundational level (mean of 11.31 across all levels measured). The scores differed from the description on the development and proficiency levels for the reading test, as well as the academic performance descriptors they obtained from their

RWS subject, as indicated by the MPS of the students per strand: ABM (90.03%), HUMSS (86.57%), STEM (85.45%), and TVL (86.74%). TVL students ranked 2nd in Academic Performance in RWS; however, they scored 4th-lowest in the Reading Test among the other strands. This portion was further supported by qualitative data from both teacher and student participants.

The next table (Table 6) presents the Teachers' Demographic Profile, with 6 teachers participating in Phase 2 of this study, which covers the qualitative data. They were purposely selected as they taught English and handled RWS subjects in SHS.

In this study, these data from the teacher participants are treated as descriptive indicators. Their primary purpose is to provide a comprehensive social profile of the participants.

The next table (Table 6) presents the Teachers' Demographic Profile, with 6 teachers participating in Phase 2 of this study, which covers the qualitative data. They were purposely selected as they taught English and handled RWS subjects in SHS.

Table 6. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Teacher Participants according to Demographic Profile

VARIABLES	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
SEX	Male	2	33.30%
	Female	4	66.70%
AGE	20 - 30	5	83.30%
	31 - 40	1	16.70%
	41 - 50	0	0%
	51 and up	0	0%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	Bachelor's Degree	5	83.30%
	Masters Unit	1	16.70%
	Master's Degree	0	0%
	Doctorate Unit	0	0%
	Doctorate Degree	0	0%
	Others	0	0%
SPECIALIZATION	English	6	100%
	Math	0	0%
	Science	0	0%
	AP	0	0%
	MAPEH	0	0%
	ICT	0	0%
	TVL	0	0%
	Others	0	0%
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	0 - 5	5	83.30%
	6 10	1	16.70%
	11 15	0	0%
	15 up	0	0%
TEACHING LOAD (No. of Hours)	15 hours below	1	16.70%
	16 - 24	4	66.70%
	25 up	1	16.70%
TEACHING LOAD (Subject Categories)	Core	6	100%
	Applied	3	50%
	Specialized	1	16.70%
	Others	0	0%
ROLES / DUTIES	Adviser	5	83.30%
	Org Adviser	3	50%
	Admin Task	3	50%
	Coordinatorship	1	16.70%
	Others	0	0%

In this study, these data from the teacher participants are treated as descriptive indicators. Their primary purpose is to provide a comprehensive social profile of the participants.

In the data, 4 of 6 teachers were female, accounting for 66.70% of the Sex profile. The youngest option in Age was ticked by five teachers (83.30%), with the range of 20 - 30 years old. Garnering the same weight is Educational Attainment, where five of the participants (83.30%) obtained their Bachelor's Degree, with one (16.70%) continuing her postgraduate education by earning Master's units (T5). All six teachers (100%) were English Majors, with one having graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Communication before earning units in Education with a major in English (T4). In terms of Teaching Experience, 5 teachers (83.30%) had 0 - 5 years of service in the academe, while 1 teacher had 6 - 10 years of service.

Their Teaching Load with respect to the number of hours they teach classes each week differed: four of them (66.70%), all section advisers, rendered 16 - 24 hours a week, while one had 15 hours and below due to office work, and another one had 25 hours and more per week, with more responsibilities and duties assigned aside from the regular advisor role for teachers.

The SHS curriculum for this school year offered subjects under different categories: Core, Applied, and Specialized. RWS is a core subject and is handled by all teacher participants (100%). Three teachers were also assigned to teach Applied Subjects, such as Research and EAPP, and one teacher also taught Specialized subjects in SHS.

Aside from being the main drivers of classroom discussions, the teacher participants also had other roles to play in the school. Five teachers were classroom advisers (83.30%); three were organization advisers and had administrative tasks (50%); and one held a coordinatorship or leadership role in the school (16.70%).

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

Literacy as a Functional Tool. Though from the student interviews, students still read printed books, AU (Alternative Universe) / Wattpad stories, and social media posts regularly for leisure, their Foundational Level score from the Reading Assessment helps us determine the type of material they prefer to process. SHS students have shifted their reading from leisure to practicality, engaging only with texts that offer topics of interest and immediate, real-world utility. If not, students persist in reading texts that drift away from their interests for grade-based incentives, resulting in compromised outputs and outcomes, as reflected in their Academic Performance in RWS, with a mean of 86.5 (Very Satisfactory).

The Failure of Traditional Formatting. Reflecting the scores in the Reading Assessment that determined their Comprehension Level in texts that have heavy text loads (Text A and Text D), it can be concluded that standard academic modules often create an extraneous cognitive load due to poor layout and dense vocabulary, which act as a physical deterrent

to reading. As students' Cognitive Load becomes too heavy and crowded due to the layout (beyond vocabulary and content load), they will not have the space to process other inputs and might abandon the reading task altogether.

The Fragility of the Modern Learner. The literacy crisis is as much emotional as it is cognitive. Success in reading is now dependent on psychological safety and the teacher's ability to provide discreet, one-on-one scaffolding. As there is a critical home guidance gap, the teacher becomes the sole driver of literacy for students, which requires them to adjust and adapt their lecture materials and methods to students with varying levels of comprehension. Aside from pedagogical alignment, teachers must also be cautious when providing feedback and correcting students. On the other hand, students perform better when they perceive that the situation, place, and people in their context are safe and will provide constructive learning opportunities rather than embarrassment or demotivation.

The Need for Intervention. Based on the mixed-methods data collection, the implementation of reading initiatives, such as establishing a book hub with easy access to books and recalibrating the school library to make it a more inviting place to read and study, is suggested. Classroom-based interventions, such as reading drills incorporated in their Homeroom or motivation activities before the discussion, help engage students in the upcoming technical discussion. Furthermore, an institutionalized, scheduled intervention is necessary rather than relying on independent student study. SHS students are transitioning from DepEd education to tertiary education, entrepreneurship, or employment; thus, ensuring their mastery of the foundational but essential reading skill (not to mention their core, applied, and specialized subjects) should be a priority before their exit from the institution.

To address these conclusions, this dissertation proposes the following actions:

1. Implementation of a Reading Intervention Program for SHS Learners

The data suggested that interventions such as the ARAL program in DepEd should be adapted for Senior High School as well, as the literacy crisis was no longer confined to younger years. This research strongly recommends the adoption of a tailor-made Reading Intervention Program for SHS Learners that will run for the first two terms; the first two weeks will be allotted to diagnostic assessments (pre-tests) for the entire SHS population of a school, along with the preparation of the intervention materials. The next weeks will be scheduled for Foundational Remediation of basic decoding and fluency gaps.

In the succeeding weeks, the intervention activities for the comprehension levels will proceed for a total of twenty (20) weeks, including the post-diagnostic test, which measures the proficiency levels achieved from the program.

The program will be integrated into the schools' schedules, with a daily homeroom period after classes. If the new schedule/curriculum allows, a full day of intervention could also be scheduled during the week (Wednesdays/Fridays),

covering longer, more focused intervention activities for the students. Activities will cover individual and group work, and will be presented in multimodal forms.

Moreover, the program will also seek home partnerships to provide complete guidance from parents or guardians, with short reading tasks assigned at home to sustain and strengthen the formation of the reading habit.

This program is believed to help alleviate students' reading challenges and comprehension difficulties by adjusting its processes and requirements based on the data collected. It also aims to place greater focus on aspects that students thrive on, such as practical contexts, to help develop their functional literacy.

2. Adoption of a Text Formatting Standard in Schools

To address the text formatting issues identified through teacher and student interviews, this study proposes adopting a standard formatting style for the school to use when distributing reading texts to SHS students, which standardizes the use of high-readability fonts such as Arial 11 or 12, with 1.5-line spacing, and a visual-to-text ratio to reduce cognitive overload, as identified in the collected data.

This particular standard aims to reduce cognitive load and overcome the physical barrier in the Senior High School's printed context by providing a structured set of rules that make the printed text or modules easier for SHS students to read and process.

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