The Influence of Reading Habits on the Academic Achievement of College Students in San Agustin Institute of Technology

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Abstract:- This study was conducted to examine the influence of reading habits of college students on their academic achievement. Reading habits, being the exogenous variable, is categorized into reading attitude, reading frequency, materials read, purpose of reading, and time spent on reading. Meanwhile, academic achievement was measured using the respondents' General Point Average (GPA). One hundred forty-two (142) college students were sampled for this study. Using mean and standard deviation, the study revealed that respondents are highly positive when it comes to reading attitude, sometimes read in terms of reading frequency, read a quite number of reading materials, highly purposeful when it comes to purpose of reading, and spent enough time when it comes to reading. Moreover, the respondents' academic achievement is generally good. When test of relationship was done using Pearson r product-moment correlation analysis, only reading frequency has a significant relationship with academic achievement. Furthermore, regression analysis revealed that reading frequency is a significant predictor of academic achievement. Recommendations include giving the college students more reading tasks to cultivate their critical thinking skills which would translate to improvement of their academic achievement.

Keywords:- reading habits; reading attitude, reading frequency, reading materials, purpose of reading, time spent on reading; academic achievement, GPA.

I. INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement is one measure of the academic success of college students. Basically, academic achievement means how much level of knowledge the students have learned from the academe (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012). In some studies, academic achievement is synonymous to academic performance. Other studies defined academic performance as participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities while others measured academic achievement as solely grades. In this study, the researchers adhered to define academic achievement as grades using the General Weighted Average of students.

Meanwhile, reading habits have been known to be of great influence on the academic success of college students (Balan, Katenga, and Simon, 2019; Nootens et al., 2019; Owusu-Acheaw and Larson, 2014; Horbec, 2012). Reading is one of the most important skills that students need to develop. Horbec (2012) even emphasized that there is a significant relationship between reading habits and academic achievement. In fact, those who have been reading since childhood become voracious readers (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2001). Therefore, if a student has good reading habits, he must have good academic outcomes. On the contrary, those who have poor reading habits will usually have poor and unproductive academic achievement (Fatiloro, Adesola, Hameed, & Adewumi, 2017; Whitten, Labby, & Sullivan, 2016; and Kidd & Castano, 2013).

Having poor reading habits negatively affects students' perception, thus affecting their accomplishment and progression (Asagwara, 2000). According to the research conducted by Levine, Waite, and Bowman (2007), even skilled students who diminish their reading activity has a tendency to perform poorly in academics. The Programme for International Student Assessment (2018) reported that there is just 1 out of 5 Filipinos (19.4%) who have reached at least the minimum proficiency level (level 2) in the overall reading literacy. Moreover, Filipino students are significantly behind Indonesian students where NCR, Region 7 (Cental Visayas), and Region 11 (Southern Mindanao) got the highest reading average performance, yet Region 10 was one of the lowest (PISA, 2018). This fact posed a problem to the Department of Education (DepEd) even the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Problems on students reading literacy can be traced back to their poor reading habits which based on studies could eventually affect their academic achievement.

The main purpose of this study is to assess the level of reading habits of college students and if these habits affect their academic achievement.

II. METHODS

Discussed below are the research design, research locale, population and sample, research instrument, statistical treatment, and ethical considerations.

A. Research Design

The researchers employed quantitative research approach using a descriptive – correlational research design. It is a design where researchers describe the data at hand using descriptive statistics and test relationships of variables through correlational statistical techniques (Creswell, 2012). The researchers used this design since they aimed at describing the level of reading habits of the respondents and explore possible correlation between reading habits and academic achievement. Furthermore, the researchers aimed at discovering predictors of academic achievement.

B. Research Locale

The researchers conducted the study at San Agustin Institute of Technology (SAIT), Valencia City, Bukidnon. SAIT is a premiere Catholic higher education institution in Valencia City, Bukidnon, Philippines founded by an Italian missionary Fr. Manlio Caroselli, SJ.

C. Population and Sample

The respondents of the study are 142 out of 223 third year college students from different programs. Probability sampling using Raosoft was employed to come up with the sample of the study.

D. Research Instrument

The researchers used an adapted questionnaire from the study of Balan, Katenga, and Simon (2019) entitled "Reading Habits and their Influence on Academic Achievement among Students at Asia Pacific International University". The questionnaire obtained a Cronbach's Alpha of .934 which means highly reliable.

E. Statistical Treatment

To determine the level of the reading habits of the respondents, the researchers employed mean and standard deviation. To examine the relationship between study habits and academic achievement, Pearson r product-moment correlation analysis was used. To determine if study habits in terms of reading attitude, reading frequency, materials read, purpose of reading, and time spent on reading predict academic achievement, multiple regression analysis was used.

F. Ethical Consideration

The researchers made sure that ethical protocols in the conduct of the research were observed. Permission from the Dean of College and classroom instructors and consent from the respondents were sought first before the conduct of the study. The respondents were thoroughly informed on the objectives and the possible risks involved in the conduct of the study. Respondents were encouraged to participate in the study and were not forced to do so. This means that all the respondents who answered the questionnaires participated in the study wholeheartedly. The researchers assured the privacy and confidentiality of the personal information given by the respondents. Moreover, no data in the study were manipulated and fabricated. To ensure originality of work, the researchers had their manuscript examined by a plagiarism checker software. All these ethical issues were avoided and all ethical protocols were observed by the researchers to come up with a quality and ethically-bound study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presented concisely below are the results of the study in tabular and textual forms.

A. Level of Students' Reading Habits in terms of Reading Attitude

In general, the respondents of the study are highly positive in terms of reading attitude. They all strongly agreed that reading is interesting, enjoyable, rewarding, and entertaining. Meanwhile, some respondents found reading as relaxing.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Reading is interesting.	4.49	0.65	Highly Positive
2. Reading is enjoyable.	4.35	0.74	Highly Positive
3. Reading is rewarding.	4.34	0.71	Highly Positive
4. Reading is entertaining.	4.30	0.74	Highly Positive
5. Reading is relaxing.	4.20	0.75	Fairly Positive
Overall Mean	4.34	0.62	Highly Positive

Limits	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Positive
3.41-4.20	Agree	Fairly Positive
2.61-3.40	Neutral	Not positive nor Negative
1.81-2.60	Disagree	Fairly Negative
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Highly Negative

Table 1: Students' Reading Habits in terms of Reading Attitude

Attitude towards reading is a crucial factor since it has been shown in studies that it could influence the reading skills and academic success of students (Nootens et al., 2019). Students who are positive towards reading are internally motivated. They do not need external reinforcements for them to read. Thus, it is very imperative for students to develop within them a positive attitude towards reading. This might be achieved easily with the proper guidance of their teachers.

B. Level of Students' Reading Habits in terms of Reading Frequency

In terms of reading frequency, the study found that respondents generally read reading materials sometimes. They often read print materials, audiobooks, and ebooks however, they do it once in a couple of days, or at least once a week or a month.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I read a book including print, audiobooks, and e-books almost every day.	3.65	0.83	Often
2. I read once in a couple of days.	3.47	0.90	Often
3. I read at least once a week.	3.47	1.02	Often
4. I read at least once a month.	3.20	1.08	Often
5. I read less often.	3.15	1.04	Often
6. I never read.	2.26	1.25	Seldom
Overall Mean	**3.20**	**0.74**	**Sometimes**

Limits	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree	Always
3.41-4.20	Agree	Often
2.61-3.40	Neutral	Sometimes
1.81-2.60	Disagree	Seldom
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Never

Table 2: Students' Reading Habits in terms of Reading Frequency

This finding suggests that the respondents need to make reading as a regular frequent practice as it mirrors the results of the study conducted by PISA (2018) that Region 10, where Valencia City belongs, was among the lowest in terms of reading average performance.

C. Level of Students' Reading Habits in terms of Materials Read

As to materials read, respondents claimed that they read quite a number from websites and online articles to lecture notes, textbooks, and novels. They also read periodicals like magazines and newspapers but not as much as the other reading materials.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I read from websites most of the time.	3.88	0.85	Quite a number
2. I read online articles.	3.76	0.84	Quite a number
3. I read lecture notes regularly.	3.70	0.75	Quite a number
4. I read text books most of the time.	3.63	0.75	Quite a number
5. I read novels most of the time.	3.52	1.02	Quite a number
6. I read most of the time magazines.	3.16	0.88	Just enough
7. I read newspapers most of the time.	3.13	0.87	Just enough
Overall Mean	**3.53**	**0.62**	**Quite a number**

Limits	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree	A lot
3.41-4.20	Agree	Quite a number
2.61-3.40	Neutral	Just enough
1.81-2.60	Disagree	Few number
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	1-2 only

Table 3: Students' Reading Habits in terms of Materials Read

Today, students can access to a variety of reading materials and platforms. Gone are the days where the only place to access reading materials are the libraries only. Commercial bookstores are already existing in shopping malls outside the academic realm where students can stand by for a few minutes or hours for reading. More extensively, the internet nowadays offers a lot to read, from fictional and technical e-books, to current news, online magazines and comic books, to trending shares and posts.

Though, digital formats for reading seem to be dominating nowadays, still people do not set aside print books. In the USA, most Americans comprising 33% still prefer to read both print and digital books (e-books and audiobooks) while 32% prefer print books and the 9% prefer digital books only (Perrin & Faverio, 2021).

D. Level of Students' Reading Habits in terms of Purpose of Reading

Moreover, the study revealed that the respondents are highly purposeful on their reading. Few of the motivations why the respondents read are: to learn new things, create new ideas, gain knowledge, and improve their spoken and written English. It is not surprising that these are the highest indicators as to their purposes in reading. College students are expected to read for the quest of new knowledge on their specific disciplines. They are not expected to read only for fun as their primary purpose. As Fatiloro et al. (2017) said, for college students, reading is a gateway to academic success.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Reading helps me to learn new things.	4.51	0.62	Highly Purposeful
2. Reading helps me to create new ideas.	4.47	0.63	Highly Purposeful
3. Reading makes me gain knowledge.	4.47	0.65	Highly Purposeful
4. Reading helps me for the imagination of things.	4.45	0.68	Highly Purposeful
5. Reading helps me to improve my spoken and written English.	4.44	0.65	Highly Purposeful
6. Reading helps me to discover other views.	4.41	0.64	Highly Purposeful
7. Reading helps me to do well in my studies.	4.39	0.57	Highly Purposeful
8. Reading helps me to find about all the necessary information about the world.	4.38	0.73	Highly Purposeful
9. Reading helps me to express my views better.	4.36	0.69	Highly Purposeful
10. Reading helps me to pass the examination and quiz.	4.36	0.68	Highly Purposeful
11. Reading helps me to shape my personality.	4.34	0.74	Highly Purposeful
12. Reading is fun.	4.25	0.77	Highly Purposeful
13. Reading helps me to relax myself.	4.15	0.77	Fairly Purposeful
14. Reading keeps me from getting bored.	4.08	0.79	Fairly Purposeful
15. Reading relieves my stress.	4.07	0.81	Fairly Purposeful
Overall Mean	**4.34**	**0.54**	**Highly Purposeful**

Limits	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Purposeful
3.41-4.20	Agree	Fairly Purposeful
2.61-3.40	Neutral	Moderately Purposeful
1.81-2.60	Disagree	Slightly Purposeful

Table 4: Students' Reading Habits in terms of Purpose of Reading

E. Level of Students' Reading Habits in terms of Time Spent on Reading

Furthermore, the study found that in terms of time spent on reading, respondents in general spend enough time for it. As indicated in the highest item, the respondents spend a lot in reading for thirty (30) minutes to one (1) hour every day. This reading duration is just enough to build their foundation for reading habits.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I read 30 minutes - 1 hour every day.	3.48	0.88	A lot
2. I read 1-2 hours every day.	3.32	0.92	Enough
3. I read 2-3 hours every day.	3.23	0.99	Enough
4. I read 4 hours and above every day.	3.06	1.10	Enough
Overall Mean	**3.27**	**0.80**	**Enough**

Limits	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree	Most
3.41-4.20	Agree	A lot
2.61-3.40	Neutral	Enough
1.81-2.60	Disagree	Less
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very little

Table 5: Students' Reading Habits in terms of Time Spent on Reading

Studies show that when reading is religiously done every day, even fifteen (15) minutes of it would be enough to develop the habits of reading for lifetime (Nurlaela & Romadhoni, 2018). Regular reading at a minimum duration of fifteen (15) minutes is way better than reading longer but infrequent. Moreover, another study claimed that it will only take fifteen (15) minutes for students to see substantial positive gains in reading achievement (Renaissance Learning, 2016).

F. Level of Students' Academic Achievement

In general, the respondents obtained a good rating for their academic achievement. Most of them belong in a grade range of 1.6-2.0, followed by those who belong in 1.1-1.5 bracket. Meanwhile, no respondent obtained both a failure and an excellent rating. This "good" rating of the respondents might either reflect to the level of complacency of the students on their studies, or the rigorous instructional and grading practices of the school.

Grading Range	F	%	Interpretation
1.0	-	-	Excellent
1.1-1.5	53	37.3	Very Good
1.6-2.0	73	51.4	Good
2.1-2.5	15	10.6	Satisfactory
2.6-3.0	1	0.7	Passing
3.1-3.5	-	-	Failure
Total	142	100.0	
Mean = 1.67	**SD = 0.32**		**Good**

Table 6: Students' Academic Achievement

Excellent academic achievement might be difficult to achieve for most students but not impossible. Though students are encouraged to obtain excellent or very good grades, they are also aware that good grades do not define their future. As Bashir and Mattoo (2012) stressed, academic achievement is the measurement of the level of knowledge that students learned from the school. It is not a measurement of their success in life after school.

G. Correlation Analysis between Students' Reading Habits and Academic Achievement

The researchers employed Pearson r product-moment correlation analysis to examine the relationship between the reading habits of the respondents in terms of reading attitude, reading frequency, materials read, purpose of reading, and time spent on reading and their academic achievement.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement			
	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Degree	Interpretation
Reading Attitude	0.018	0.832	---	Not significant
Reading Frequency	0.223**	0.008	Low	Significant
Materials Read	0.069	0.419	---	Not significant
Purpose of Reading	0.085	0.317	---	Not significant
Time Spent on Reading	0.091	0.282	---	Not significant

Table 7: Correlation Analysis between Reading Habits and Academic Achievement

Based on the findings, among the five indicators of reading habits, only reading frequency has a significant relationship with academic achievement with a corresponding p-value of 0.008 which is below the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that frequency in reading is somehow associated with academic achievement. And, that their frequency of reading can potentially increase their academic achievement.

For the longest time, numerous studies have already been conducted on reading habits and academic achievement and most of these studies affirmed the association between these two variables (Balan et al., 2019; Owusu-Acheaw and Larson, 2014; Horbec, 2012). This goes to say that the relationship between these variables has already been established.

H. Regression Analysis between Reading Habits and Academic Achievement

When test of influence was done through multiple regression analysis, still only reading frequency among the five indicators of reading habits can significantly influence academic achievement with a p-value of 0.014. In other words, reading attitude, materials read, purpose of reading, and time spent on reading do not predict academic achievement, only reading frequency.

Independent Variable: Reading Habits	Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement				
	Beta	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Constant	1.604	0.240	6..683	0.000	---
Reading Attitude	0.069	0.060	1.154	0.251	Not significant
Reading Frequency	**0.102**	**0.041**	**2.486**	**0.014**	**Significant**
Materials Read	0.016	0.061	0.263	0.763	Not significant
Purpose of Reading	0.121	0.069	1.744	0.084	Not significant
Time Spent on Reading	0.010	0.044	0.025	0.221	Not significant
R = 0.265	Adj. R^2 =0.036			S=0.314	

Table 8: Regression Analysis between Reading Habits and Academic Achievement

In simpler words, among the five indicators, only reading frequency can contribute to the academic achievement of the students. That the frequent the students read the higher the academic achievement they can potentially achieved. This finding is consistent with the findings of Balan et al. (2019), Nootens et al. (2019), Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2014), and Horbec (2012).

In contrast, students who have poor reading habits usually have unfavorable academic achievement (Fatiloro et al., 2017; Whitten et al., 2016; and Kidd & Castano, 2013).

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the aforementioned findings, the authors recommend to strengthen the reading habits of the students particularly their reading frequency. The academic affairs department of the school with the help of the learning resource center may come up with a reading program for students targeting to develop their habits of reading especially in the upcoming school year when partial face-to-face classes will be implemented for the whole country already. It might have been difficult to conceptualize and implement such program during the peak of the pandemic but it would be a lot easier already when the new normal comes back. Moreover, college professors and instructors may give students more reading tasks to exercise their critical thinking which will eventually help them obtain favorably high academic achievement.

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