Attitudes toward Reading and Reading Performance of High School Students from a Private Academic Institution in the Philippines

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Abstract −This research assessed the attitudes of the high school students toward reading. Results showed that the respondents are mostly female, 13 year old and graduates of private elementary schools. The respondents have a positive attitude towards reading. Even if the respondents have positive attitudes toward reading in general, still most of them have performed poorly or failed the test. There is no correlation between the respondents' attitude toward reading and the students' profile in terms of age, gender, grade school where they graduated and reading performance. A Reading Enhancement Program focusing on the areas of classroom activities, intervention, library support, stimulation with the use of technology, strengthening English speaking in the campus and subscribing into other reading resources such as Scholastic and Quipper School may be done.

Keywords −reading performance, reading enhancement, library support

INTRODUCTION

Lack of positive outlook towards reading or English language learning could be one of the reasons why Filipinos are falling behind in English proficiency tests. Recent language test results released by the International Development Program(IDP) Education Pty. Ltd. Philippines (2010), an accredited group that administers the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) to Filipinos seeking to work and migrate abroad, showed that the Philippines is no longer the top English-speaking country in Asia. With an overall score of 6.71, Malaysia is now the No. 1 rank in English proficiency in Asia. The Philippines placed only second with 6.69, followed by Indonesia (5.99), India (5.79) and Thailand (5.71). This was revealed by the IELTS results in 2008 where 35,000 Filipino nursing graduates applying for jobs abroad took the language test to evaluate their English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening. This is one of the challenges that the current educational system in the Philippines needs to focus on and where Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU) educators could take part in crafting solutions.

High School English teachers are doing their part in strengthening the students' language learning foundation through various classroom aided activities. Through interviews, teachers generally perceive that some students are engaged into reading (most likely for higher sections) though some are not. These students sometimes engage themselves more in lengthy informal literature such as those from wattpad stories, which were mostly turned into movies or teleserye series. Boosting the students' love for reading and developing their reading competency remain as a challenge which shall be addressed in the conduct of this paper.

Education Secretary Br. Armin A. Luistro, FSC (2012) quotes that it is important to assess the reading capability of students because reading is the foundation of all academic learning. He added that if a pupil fails to master basic reading skills at the outset, it will be a constant struggle for them to get through other disciplines successfully, thus depriving them of the chance to become literate and productive individuals.

Development of reading skills is vital most especially for students. Reading is a multifaceted process that develops only with practice. There are certain aspects of reading, such as fluency and word recognition, which can be learned in a few years. These basics must be mastered but at the same time reading comprehension should be emphasized in the process. Students can parrot words on a page all day long but if they don't have the necessary

comprehension skills they will not be able to make predictions about what will happen next, monitor their understanding of content, sequence or characters, clarify confusing parts of the text, or connect what they're reading to their own experience or prior knowledge [1].

Consequently, students spend more of their free time enjoying with their gadgets, mostly for games rather than with their reading materials. No matter how hard educators push the campaign of reading among students, most of them would prefer not to participate. Reading is not stimulating enough, people read slowly, readers can get confused while reading, and reading is like a job. If these are how the students perceive reading nowadays then, the challenge in encouraging students to read comes along [2].

Students who are not currently skilled, enthusiastic readers face unnecessary and serious obstacles to realizing their potential contributions to themselves, their families, and to society in general. In this information age, they will be shut off from the power gained through obtaining and providing information and from the splendor and inspiration of good fiction. Thus, educators need to create and implement programs to help students who fall behind in reading [3].

This paper assessed the attitudes of the high school students in LPU toward reading. Over the years, LPU adapted the Just English Please (JEP) Campaign to its course studies. For S.Y. 2014, the administration has revised the campaign to Think in English, Talk in English, and Teach in English (TIE). Having a newly established high school campus, being true to the campaign is a challenge. LPU high school formerly caters Grades 7 and 8 alone which later added Grade 9 for S.Y. 2014. It will soon welcome Grade 10 students and senior high school (Grades 11 and 12) as the years go by. The administration assures that this high school program is compliant with the DepEd curriculum with enhancements on the use of technology, acquisition of values, and development of competent leaders. With students coming from all parts of the province, it is truly a challenge for language teachers on how to make everyone cope with the global challenges. This paper may be helpful for English language teachers towards the enhancement of their program.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper aims to assess the attitudes of LPU high school students toward reading and their reading performance.

Specifically, this study has described the profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, and type of grade school where they graduated. Also, it explored on the students' attitudes toward reading and their reading performance. Moreover, the researcher tested how the students' attitudes toward reading correlated with their profile variables. Finally, this study proposed a reading enhancement program that will help the high school students of Lyceum of the Philippines University enhance their reading performance.

Hypothesis of the Study

The respondents' attitude toward reading does not correlate with the students' profile.

METHODS
Research Design

This research utilized the descriptive quantitative approach through a modified survey questionnaire patterned with the National Literacy Trust's First Annual Survey into Reading of Cristina Clark [4] as a data gathering tool. A descriptive study was used to establish the associations between variables, quantitative research approach determined the relationship between the independent variable (respondents' profile) and the dependent or outcome variable (reading attitudes and reading performance) in the population.

Participants of the Study

From the population of 316 (Grades 7 and 8) high school students, a total of 177 students were respondents of the study. The number was derived using Slovin's formula with a margin of error of 5%. The respondents were also selected at random using stratified proportional allocation.

Research Procedures

The researcher personally administered the instrument and explained in simpler terms some items in the instrument. To further validate the data gathered, the researcher gathered related information such as action researches from the internet, books, journals, magazines and previous researches. The data collected were encoded and tabulated, interpreted and analyzed.

Instruments Used

The survey used in a research in London entitled "Setting the Baseline: The National Literacy Trust's First Annual Survey into Reading" written by Clark

[4] was used in the study. There were some items customized so as it may deem appropriate for the target respondents. For the reading performance of the respondents, sample comprehension tests (for Grades 7 and 8) from Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) were used. These are Standards Based Assessment which follows the Common Core Content Standards in English – International Standards. AIMS measures student proficiency of the Arizona Academic Content Standards in Writing, Reading, Mathematics, and Science and is required by state and federal law.

Data Analysis

The needed data were encoded, tallied and interpreted using different statistical tools. These included frequency distribution and chi-square which were based from the objectives of the study. Correlation analysis was used to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the respondents' profile, attitudes toward reading and reading performance. Frequency distribution was used to note the number of responses given for each item while chi-square test was used to test whether the null hypothesis stating respondents' attitude toward reading does not correlate with the students' profile is true. All data were treated using PASW version 18 to further analyze the result with 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile

Profile Variables	f	%
Gender		
Male	78	44.00
Female	99	56.00
Age		
12 years old	24	13.60
13 years old	122	68.90
14 years old	31	17.50
Grade School Graduated		
Private	103	58.20
Public	74	41.80

Table 1 presents the percentage distribution of the respondents' profile. Among 177 respondents, there were more female respondents representing 56% compared to male respondents representing 44% of the actual population. Since the respondents came from grades 7 and 8, most of them or 122 respondents (68.90%) are aged 13, 31 respondents (17. 50%) are aged 14 and 24 respondents (13.6%) are aged 12.

More than half of the population representing 58.20% (103 respondents) came from private schools and the remaining 41.8% (74 respondents) came from public schools.

Table 2 presents the respondents' attitudes toward reading. With the composite mean of 2.77, it generally shows that the respondents have a positive attitude towards reading. This may be attributed to the language teachers, parents and environment with which the respondents have interacted with for the past years. Classroom activities for reinforcement and intervention encouraged the respondents to be positive about reading done by English teachers. These attitudes were ranked and are as follows: Firstly, 'The more I read, the better I become' (3.44), it showed that the respondents have the idea that reading could help them do better or be better. This result supports the claim where he suggested that reading attitudes and beliefs about reading competency are thought to affect reading frequency, and thus exerts an indirect influence on reading achievement [4].

Next in rank is 'I think young people should read books, newspapers and poems. With a weighted mean of 3.28, it showed that the respondents agree that they should read materials like books, newspapers and poems. These materials are often found and studied in school. The respondents may have viewed these materials as aids to complement studying in passing the grade level. This attitude ranked second for the respondents may have referred to 'books' from the statement as their 'textbooks' used in school. Textbooks are firsthand reading resource for them which create a greater perception that 'books', as one of the reading materials, should be read. Books, newspapers and poems are mostly printed reading materials. Reading as a teen leads to success. When teens read more than just their classroom assignments, research clearly shows that they generally do well in school [5]. For high school students, it was quite surprising that the reading attitude 'I think young people should read magazines, comics and text messages' ranked 8th with the mean of 2.92. This means that in spite of the nationwide boom in the use of cell phones, lesser number of respondents involve themselves in such. This could be further supported with the reading attitude 'I mostly read books, newspapers and poems than magazines, comics and text messages' with 2.97 mean ranking 7th among the reading attitudes.

Another is that 'I can say that reading is cool'. With a weighted mean of 3.20, the respondents agreed that reading is a cool thing for them. This agrees with

their response where most disagreed with 'I am embarrassed if my friends see me reading' with the mean of 2.16. This kind of attitude develops in the primary years where the students are beginning to expose themselves in reading. There are many factors contributory to this claim such as reading materials, instruction, parent support, past experiences and so on. This reading attitude is further supported with the reading attitude that ranked first - 'The more I read, the better I become.' Therefore, something 'cool' could be something 'better' or could make someone become better. Relatively, doing something 'cool' avoids feeling of embarrassment.

Other attitudes which completed the top ranks were 'I enjoy reading very much' and 'I browse ten or more books at home'. With the weighted mean of 3.15 for both items, it showed that the respondents mostly agreed that they enjoy reading and that they have ten or more books at home. This supported their previous apprehension that reading is cool. It is quite important that the students enjoy reading since most of the time

in school, they read. With the enjoyment of reading and having books at home, the respondents extends reading at home. It was surprising to know that the respondents disagreed on 'I go to school library once or twice a week' with the mean of 2.46. They may be enjoying reading with their materials at home or from other sources. This may be supported when the respondents have agreed with 'I go to book shops to check on new books (like National Bookstore, BookSale, etc.) at least once or twice a month' with 2.81 mean and 'I am happy when given a book as a present' with the mean of 3.02. The respondents have disagreed with 'I cannot find things to read that interests me' with the mean of 2.37. It means the respondents are mostly interested with what they read which connotes a positive attitude towards reading. People who are interested in a topic will read about it and, as they read, they acquire more useful information. Therefore, when teachers build their students' interests in what they are reading, they also strengthen their students' reading processes.

Table 2. Attitudes Toward Reading

Attitudes Toward Reading	WM	VI	Rank
1. I enjoy reading very much.	3.15	Agree	4.5
2. I am a very good reader.	2.88	Agree	9
3. I get to read text messages, e-mails, websites, instant messages (IMs), e-books, blogs, and Social Networking Sites (like Facebook, Twitter, etc.) at least once a month.	2.68	Agree	12
4. I get to read magazines, fiction stories (like fables, myth, Scifi), non-fiction stories, lyrics, poem, manuals, comics, and newspapers at least once a month.	2.72	Agree	11
5. I think young people should read books, newspapers and poems.	3.28	Agree	2
6. I think young people should read magazines, comics and text messages.	2.92	Agree	8
7. I mostly read books, newspapers and poems than magazines, comics and text messages.	2.97	Agree	7
8. I read everyday outside of class.	2.61	Agree	14
9. I read an hour or more outside of class.	2.60	Agree	15.5
10. I finish reading a book (novel) or more in a month.	2.60	Agree	15.5
11. I browse ten or more books at home.	3.15	Agree	4.5
12. I am happy when given a book as a present.	3.02	Agree	6
13. I go to book shops to check on new books (like National Bookstore, BookSale, etc.) at least once or twice a month.	2.81	Agree	10
14. I go to school library once or twice a week.	2.46	Disagree	19
15. I realize that the more I read, the better I become.	3.34	Agree	1
16. I prefer watching TV than reading.	2.66	Agree	13
17. I can say that reading is cool.	3.20	Agree	3
18. I do not read as good as other pupils in my class.	2.33	Disagree	21
19. I only read when I have to.	2.54	Agree	18
20. I cannot find things to read that interests me.	2.37	Disagree	20
21. I am embarrassed if my friends see me reading.	2.16	Disagree	22
22. I consider that reading is more for girls than boys.	2.58	Agree	17
Composite Mean	**2.77**	**Agree**	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

However, in spite of the enjoyment that the respondents get out of reading, it is interesting to note that they agreed with the reading attitude 'I prefer watching TV than reading' with the mean of 2.66. This is not quite surprising since the Light House Learning Group (2013) have presented the reasons on 'Why reading is so boring' such as: reading words are boring, reading is not stimulating enough, people read slowly, readers can get confused while reading, and reading is like a job. However, this must be taken into consideration. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2011) have identified effects of watching TV for long hours every day. These are as follows: have lower grades in school, read fewer books, exercise less, be overweight [6]. Another, the respondents have agreed with 'I only read when I have to' with the mean of 2.54. In spite of the positive attitudes they have over reading, the learners only ready when they are asked. It was like reading is 'forced' to them. They may have felt this since they usually read out of teachers' instructions like doing reading assignments, researching, studying for tests, etc. In the brighter side, it is quite good that the respondents agreed with reading when they have to. This means an external force like a teacher or parent still has control over them with what to read. In case the respondents have negative attitudes toward reading, teachers and parents can still do something to help them.

Table 3. Performance of the Respondents in Reading

Performance	f	%
Excellent	-	-
Very Good	1	-.60
Good	-	-
Fair	4	2.30
Poor	1	-.60
Failed	171	96.60

Legend: 96 – 100 = Excellent; 91 – 95 = Very Good; 86 – 90 = Good; 80 – 85 = Fair; 75 – 79 = Poor; below 75 = Failed

Furthermore, Table 3 presents the performance of the respondents in their respective reading tests. It shows that only 0.6% representing one respondent had a very good performance, 2.30% representing four respondents had fair performance, 0.6% representing one respondent had poor performance and 96.6% representing 171 respondents had failed performance. Even if the respondents have positive attitudes toward reading in general with the mean of 2.77, still most of them have performed poorly or failed the test. Reading attitudes may be a factor in delivering reading performance, but it is not enough to assure good performance. Same is true which found some evidence to suggest that increase in attainment is not necessarily mirrored by greater reading enjoyment, more positive attitudes or changed reading behavior [7]. Language aptitude which the reading tests used in this research have intended to measure. Language aptitude is the propensity to learn second language and is one of the many factors researched in the field of individual differences. Under classic scenarios of aptitude, there are four main factors associated with such propensity: the ability for a learner to handle and memorize new sounds in an L2; the ability for a learner to recognize grammatical function if words in an L2; the ability for the learner to extrapolate grammatical rules from L2 samples; and the ability for the learner to memorize new words in an L2. Still, positive attitudes in reading may not be enough to pass a reading test [8].

Table 4. Relationship between the Profile Variables and the Students' Attitudes Toward Reading

Profile Variables	λ^2_c	p-value	Interpretation
Gender	3.147	0.534	Not Significant
Age	2.579	0.631	Not Significant
Grade School Graduated	2.592	0.274	Not Significant
Performance in Reading	1.217	0.976	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

As seen from the result, all computed chi-square values are less than the tabular and the resulted p-values are all greater than 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the student's attitude towards reading and their profile variables is accepted. This means that there is no significant relationship which exists. This implies that the respondents' attitudes towards reading is not affected by their gender, age, grade school graduated and their performance in reading.

Correspondingly, there is no significant relationship between reading attitudes and gender of the respondents. This contradicts with study [3], where it was found out that girls enjoy reading more than boys and rate themselves as better readers. Girls are more likely to read technology-based materials and magazines, while boys are more likely to read newspapers and comics. Girls are also more likely to read every day or a few times a week and to read for longer periods of time than boys. Girls read more books in a month that boys and estimate to have more books at home. Girls also tend to have more positive

attitudes towards reading. However, in the study among Malaysian Student Teachers at University Putra Malaysia, he found out that no significant difference in attitudes was detected between females and male's student teachers at UPM towards IT. This is maybe because they possess almost equal prior computer experience before their enrolment, with most of them having at least one year of relevant experience. The respondents were like the respondents in this research in terms of possessing a year of relevant experience in the school they have attended before. This means that attitudes toward reading create no significant difference if relevant experiences are considered [9].

Likewise, there is also no significant relationship between reading attitudes and age of the respondents. This contradicts the results of the National Survey based in England which dealt with the attitudes to reading last December 2008. It showed that younger children (8 – 12 years) are more likely to enjoy reading, consider themselves good readers and read a lot during their spare time. However, older children (13 – 16 years) are more likely to say they only read when they have to. Each age range displays a specific reading behavior general to their target respondents. However, this paper had respondents aged 12 to 14 which may not be considered as extremes as to significant difference is involved.

Moreover, the type of school (public or private) where the children have attended may have reflected the social status of a family. The students from private schools could have had more positive reading experiences considering the class size, number of books, library, learning environment, and others. However, in this paper, it was found that there was no significant relationship between reading attitudes and grade school where the respondents have graduated. Public schools may already be offering the same quality of reading education as with private schools for the students to develop positive attitudes toward reading.

Similarly, there is no significant relationship between reading attitudes and reading performance of the respondents. Their reading performance is reflected by their reading test scores from a standardized test. This means that positive attitudes toward reading do not guarantee passing marks in reading tests. It follows too that passing reading tests does not necessarily reflect positive attitudes toward reading.

Proposed Reading Enhancement Program

This program generally aims to achieve the following objectives: promote more venues for students to enhance their reading skills; assist teachers as facilitators of learning; and keep track of students' reading progress.

Table 5. Proposed Reading Enhancement Program

Areas	People Concerned	Objectives	Action to be Taken
1. Classroom Activities	All teachers and staff (most especially English teachers)	• Attract students' attention to engage themselves more with reading materials	• Put up a mini-library or reading corner inside the classroom to encourage students to read even during their free time • Establish guidelines regarding the use and maintenance of the said reading corners
	English teachers	• Develop the students' love for reading	• Come up with book reports of novels personally chosen or pre-identified by teachers as an exit task or subject requirement
	All subject teachers	• Train students in taking standardized tests	• Follow the format of standardized tests in constructing major tests
2. Campus Activities	All teachers and staff, students	• Improve communication skills with English language as the medium	• strict compliance of the TIE (Think in English, Talk in English, and Teach in English) is expected from everybody
	All teachers and students	• Appreciate the practice of English speaking	• Pursue the conduct of book clubs, reading contest or reading campaigns
3. Library	All teachers and staff, students	• expose the students more with updated reading materials	• assign a library period for students • encourage students to visit the library for their assignments or research work
4. Materials for Reinforcement	English Department, Computer teachers	• keep track of individual students' reading performance	• subscribe into reading companies which provide assessment records like Scholastic (paid) or Quipper school (for free)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The respondents are mostly female, 13-year-old and graduates of private elementary schools. The respondents have a positive attitude towards reading. Even if the respondents have positive attitudes toward reading in general, still most of them have performed poorly or failed the test. There is no correlation between the respondents' attitude toward reading and the students' profile in terms of age, gender, grade school where they graduated and reading performance. A Reading Enhancement Program focusing on the areas of classroom activities, intervention, library support, stimulation with the use of technology, strengthening English speaking in the campus and subscribing into other reading resources such as Scholastic and Quipper School may be done.

It is recommended that the proposed enhancement reading program may be tried, implemented and evaluated. The top administration may provide additional support in terms of exploring possibilities in adjusting schedules to insert library periods, approve more activities related to fostering positive reading attitudes, provide more teacher training related high school students' continual development of reading skills, and seeking for other reading programs which can help monitor students' reading progress. Follow up studies regarding reading attitudes and reading performance of high school students may be conducted. Future studies using other variables related to the paper may be undertaken. Monitoring of the implementation of the proposed program may be done.

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