ANTECEDENTS OF LEISURE READING

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ABSTRACT

The antecedents of pupils’ leisure reading and how they affect one another were key issues this study sought to make lucid. Pupils’ self-concept as readers, the value they place on reading, their attitude toward recreational and academic reading, their reading speed and level, the availability of materials at home for their reading, their reading interests and the amount of time they spend in leisure reading were determined. The correlation of each antecedent with the others was established. Findings reveal that most antecedents are generally positive with girls having more positive, higher and better antecedents than boys. The study reflects on the gender deviations in terms of antecedents and on the need to engage pupils more in leisure reading and make the antecedents of their leisure reading better, higher and more positive.

Keywords: leisure reading, reading level, reading speed, reading comprehension, self-concept, value placed on reading, attitude toward academic reading, attitude toward leisure reading, reading interest, availability of materials, amount of time of leisure reading

INTRODUCTION

Reading makes up twenty-five percent of a totally macro-skilled human, the seventy five being writing, listening and speaking. As an activity, reading is considered to be one of the most fascinating and enriching things man has discovered (Santiago, 2010). A balanced reading has four components: developmental, functional, remedial/corrective, and recreational/leisure. The last component mentioned is the focus of this study.

Leisure reading has been defined by Greaney (1980) as reading of any kind, excluding school texts and other materials assigned at school. Accordingly, leisure reading is out-of-school reading (Moyer, 2005). More recently, Hughes-Hassell and Rodge (2007) in their study of urban adolescents, defined leisure reading as the reading students choose to do on their own, as opposed to reading that is assigned to them. They have the most comprehensive definition as they count anything in which students are reading: text, whether on a printed page or on a screen. Also referred to as voluntary reading, spare time reading, recreational reading, independent reading, reading outside of school, and self-selected reading, leisure reading involves personal choice, choosing what one wants to read, and reading widely from a variety of sources—not just books.

Leisure reading makes man not only someone who can read but one who does read, enjoys what he reads and knows how to use what he has read. We do know that reading is a skill that is developed by actually practicing it with genuine reading materials and not by filling workbooks with exercises that relate peripherally to it. That is why leisure or independent reading is a component positively essential in all literacy programs (Sloan, 1991).

Studies that emphasize the benefits of leisure reading are accumulating and they show that leisure reading can have a major impact on readers and their future. Research endeavors have shown that the amount of out-of-school reading an individual does is positively related with word recognition skills (Leppänen, Aunola & Nurmi, 2005); text comprehension and grammar (Cox & Guthrie, 2001); reading attainment (OECD, 2007; Foertsch, 1992; Little & Hines, 2006; Baker, 2003); and
academic achievement (Anderson, Fielding, & Wilson 1988; Guthrie & Wiegfield, 1999; Knoester, 2009). It is likewise evidenced that leisure reading not only impacts reading achievement but increases general knowledge (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998) as well.

Recognizing the benefits of leisure reading, on September 11, 2002, the Department of Education of the Philippines issued DepEd Order No. 45 s. 2002 that spoke of the enforcement of the policy “Every Child A Reader Program” (ECARP), which was to ensure that every child is a successful reader at the end of grade 3. It is expected that no pupil will be promoted to the next higher grade unless he/she manifests mastery of the basic literacy skills in a particular grade level.

The University of Saint Louis Tuguegarao Elementary Department, in support to the order, split English subject into two: English language and English reading. In addition, it conducts avenues for poem recital, readers’ theater, storytelling, play and other literacy and/or literary activities. Moreover, the Elementary Library implements a library literacy program where children are taught basic library skills and where the love for reading is instilled in them. As a documented offshoot, storybooks are borrowed more frequently than academic books such as Music Arts and Physical Education (MAPE) and Home Economics and Livelihood Education (HELE).

The presence of researches proving that leisure reading is essential to literacy necessitates the conduct of this study. The evidence showing Louisian pupils’ growing interest in reading leisure materials makes them very fitting subjects of this study, allowing exploration of and probe into their reading speed and level, their reading interests, their attitude toward recreational and academic reading, their self concept as readers, the value they place on reading, the amount of time they spend in leisure reading and the interplay among these variables.

Having proven throughout time that leisure reading positively yields numerous benefits, this study was conceived to explore the antecedents of leisure reading of pupils. For this reason, the study sought to:

1. determine the reading interests of pupils in terms of their material, topic/subject and genre preferences and their preferred place for reading.
2. investigate if there is an effect of gender and grade level to:
   a. Reading interests
   b. Value a pupil places on reading
   c. Self concept as a reader
   d. Attitude toward recreational and academic reading
3. ascertain if there is a significant relationship of the following with the amount of time pupils spend in leisure reading:
   a. Gender
   b. Grade Level
   c. Reading speed
   d. Reading level
   e. Availability of Materials
   f. Value a pupil places on reading
   g. Self concept as a reader
   h. Attitude toward recreational and academic reading

Through the results of this study, the parents, who shall be made aware of the leisure reading of their children may employ a culture of active parent-involvement in their child’s leisure reading pursuits as these positively impact their future; the teachers shall be able to adjust their methods and strategies in teaching reading and their reading requirements to best suit pupils’ reading interests, reading level and reading pace and encourage their positive leisure reading practices; the library workers shall be aided in the crafting of programs to promote leisure reading and to improve existing library literacy activities; the Library Committee composed of teachers in the department may use the results to build the library collection greatly matching the interests of the pupils thereby encouraging them to read more for leisure; the results eventually shall establish a benchmark for the formulation of future literacy/reading programs by the University Grade School Department’s administrators that could encourage pupils to get engaged with leisure reading more; the DepEd will take as inputs the results of this study to improve their existing reading program focusing on recreational reading; the curriculum makers and seminar organizers, through the results of this study
will be aided in designing and/or redesigning reading programs for elementary pupils and leisure reading seminars and workshops for elementary teachers; from this study may proceed future researches on leisure reading; this study can create a significant advantage in the pupils, by helping them grow their love for leisure reading and ultimately improve their academic performance.

**Underpinning Theory**

The Reading Engagement Theory formulated by the National Reading Research Center (NRRC) which Gallagher (2010) discussed in his article on engaged reading, claims that most children enter school excited to read; however, by the time they enter middle school they have a dislike for reading. This disheartening phenomenon led the NRRC to raise the question “How can we change this pattern of struggling readers who choose not to read for pleasure so that more readers become engaged and successful readers?”

Engaged readers, as defined by Guthrie and the NRRC and cited by Gallagher (2010) are those who apply reading strategies for comprehension and conceptual knowledge, are motivated to learn and achieve, and who are part of a supportive literate community. Engaged readers not only are able to decode and comprehend texts, but also value reading, believe they are good readers, and choose to read. Engagement is strongly related to reading achievement. The more highly engaged readers showed higher achievement than the less engaged readers (Guthrie, 2000). Engaged reading is not an attack on the cognitive importance of reading, rather, it is a calling for integration between motivation, cognition, and social contributions in order to engage learners in reading to become lifelong, successful readers. (Gallagher, 2010)

According to Guthrie (2000), engaged reading is a merger of motivation and thoughtfulness. Engaged readers seek to understand; they enjoy reading (a showcase of positive attitude toward reading) and they believe in their reading abilities (which is an indication of high self-concept as a reader). They are mastery oriented, intrinsically motivated and have self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is another aspect of motivation. It is defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated type of performances. Self-efficacy acts as an active precursor of self-concept (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003).

Devotion to reading spans across time, transfers to a variety of situations, and culminates in valuable learning (Guthrie, 2000). An engaged reader comprehends a text not only because he can do it but because he is motivated to do it. Motivational processes are the foundation for coordinating cognitive goals and strategies in reading. For example, if a person is intrinsically motivated to read and believes she is a capable reader, the person will persist in reading difficult texts and exert effort to resolve conflicts and integrate text with prior knowledge. Self-concept and value placed on reading are two components of motivation which are distinct from attitude, which refers to liking for a task. Readers may report high self-concept without liking to read. They may report that they are good at reading but do not like it (Oldfather & McLaughlin, 1993).

**Leisure Reading and Its Benefits**

Why should we care about the antecedents of pupils’ leisure reading? What good does this activity bring?

Elizabeth (2010) in her article pointed out that reading is a way to improve communication skills. The more readers read, the more vocabulary they pick up and the more they are able to intrinsically grasp grammar, spelling and the general use of language. By consistently engaging in reading as a leisure activity, they are increasing their language ability, and as a result, their speaking and writing abilities will both flourish. Clark (2010) in her study found that young people with literacy level above the expected level for their age are twice as likely to be school library users as their peers with a literacy level below that expected for their age. School library use is an indicator of reading. Foertsch (1992) discovered that the amount of reading that students do in and out of school was positively related to their reading achievement. This finding coincided with Anderson, Fielding, & Wilson’s (1988). Little & Hines (2006) revealed that their after-school reading program has potential benefits for both low ability and high ability readers to improve their achievement in reading. The claim that leisure reading positively impacts school achievement was further strengthened by Knoester (2009) when he found out in his study that
independent reading has a positive impact on academic achievement. According to the study conducted by Nestle UK Ltd. (2003), for many, reading is about the magic and escape that a great story can make possible. Beyond that, the good readers know that it can even influence the kind of person that they will become. Lifelong readers are only made if they can enjoy reading in this kind of way. It is why it is so important that though schools are the place where reading is most actively promoted, it is through individual experience that real readers are made. Indeed, reading is an essential tool if one is to continuously obtain knowledge throughout his or her lifespan (Croston, 2005).

Leisure Reading and Gender and Grade Level

Johnsson-Smaragdi & Jönsson (2006) postulated that age between nine and twelve is usually described as the “book devouring age”, where after the interest in reading tends to decrease. This is backed up by Howard & Jin (2004) who found out that reading appeared to decline with age. Will this hold true to grade level?

Recent research has revealed a gender gap in reading achievement and attitudes. The reading gap between the genders appears to be widening (Howard & Jin, 2004). Broadly speaking, when compared with girls, boys appear to have more difficulty learning to read and perform less well on measures of reading achievement (OECD, 1997). A study on young people’s reading habits revealed substantial gender differences in relation to book reading. There exists a considerably higher proportion of non-readers among the boys than among the girls (Johnsson-Smaragdi & Jönsson’s, 2006). The same held true with Hopper’s (2005), Hughes-Hassell & Lutz’s (2006), Nippold, Dutheie, & Larsen’s (2005), Dubin & Zorkaia’s (2010), Zvonovskii & Lutseva’s (2004) that said females were reportedly more likely to read for pleasure than males. In line with previous studies, girls reported greater enjoyment of reading than boys and were likely to do so more frequently (Clark & Foster, 2005).

Amount of Time Spent in Leisure Reading

Creel (2007) found out in his study a more percentage of “more than once a week readers” than “once a week readers”. Reasons given by participants for not reading were no time; boring; not interested; prefer computers/games; prefer movies or TV. Pachtman & Wilson (2006) on the other hand, had tape-recorded student comments that revealed additional insights. When asked to comment on the practice of not having to complete a book report for every book that they had read, many students noted that such an assignment would have decreased the amount of books they read.

Leisure Reading and Availability of Materials

There is a general tendency that indicates that the higher the socio-economic level, the more books are read and the longer the time spent on books in leisure hours (Johnsson-Smaragdi, 2006). This is maybe due to the fact that families that are well-off are able to provide more reading materials at home for the leisure reading of their children. McKool (2007) in his study discovered through interviews that students who were in schools where they were given opportunities to read self-selected materials and were given access to materials that they were personally interested in reading were more likely to engage in voluntary reading than those in classrooms where these practices were not evident. The students did indeed appreciate being able to find books immediately, when they needed and wanted them (Pachtman & Wilson, 2006).

Leisure Reading and Reading Interests

Reading interest relates to people’s preferences for genres, topics, tasks or contexts (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). According to Clark & Foster’s (2005) study, pupils indicated reading a diverse range of materials outside class, which included texts other than books. When respondents to studies were asked specifically about genre preferences, adventure, comedy and horror/ghost stories were the most frequently chosen types (Clark & Foster, 2005), realistic fiction and fantasy (Creel, 2007; Hopper, 2005), magic (Hopper, 2005); historical fiction, mystery, spy/thriller/adventure (Moyer, 2007). When asked what adolescents read about, celebrities, "people or characters like me," sports figures, and musicians were among the most popular subjects pursued in respondents' leisure reading (Hughes-Hassell, & Rodge, 2007). The element of choice was important for most of the students because they had interests they wished to pursue. Furthermore, as students became increasingly aware of the various genres and authors’ writing styles, they developed their
own preferences for these, too. The opportunity to choose fostered a sense of ownership. This translated into students reading and enjoying more books (Pachman, & Wilson, 2006)

Studies show time and again that young people read a wide range of materials outside class, incorporating materials not traditionally regarded by schools as acceptable reading matter (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). In Hopper’s (2005) study, 93 percent of school students indicated that they chose to read materials other than books. Other studies reveal that the most popular reading materials among readers were: books (Creel, 2007; Smith, 2004) particularly general books and religious materials (Smith, 1997), comic books (Knoester, 2009) and novels (Nippold, Duthie, & Larsen, 2005); periodicals (Smith, 1997; Smith, 2004), specifically magazines (Creel, 2007; Nippold, Duthie, & Larsen, 2005; Knoester, 2009; Hughes-Hassell, & Rodge, 2007; Clark, Osborne, & Akerman, 2008); cards, and computer game manuals, (Knoester, 2009); comics (Nippold, Duthie, & Larsen, 2005; Hughes-Hassell, & Rodge, 2007); computer-based reading (Smith, 2004); and the Internet (Nippold, Duthie, & Larsen, 2005; Knoester, 2009). There is evidence of considerable reading of Internet material. These findings indicate that new technologies are significant, but have not replaced traditional forms of reading (Hopper, 2005).

Students seemed to do most of their reading after school or at night (Hughes-Hassell, & Lutz, 2006) and their reading mostly took place at home (Smith, 1997). Students seemed to love to talk about reading material if they enjoyed or found a connection with what they were reading. Students also read in subjects that they could talk about with peers or siblings (Knoester, 2009). It is apparent that, in many cases, the boys are influenced by their fathers’ reading choices (Smith, 2004). Adolescents choose books that their peers have enjoyed, and which validate reading as a peer group cultural experience (Hopper, 2005). Truly, personal interests play a critical role in the students’ engagement and success with reading (Croston, 2005).

Leisure Reading and Value a Pupil Places on Reading

Chua & Kwok (2010) in their study of Sustained Silent Reading Program (SSR), discovered that students who place higher value on reading behaved better during SSR periods and had a more positive attitude toward SSR and leisure book reading than those who place less value on reading. SSR is a period of uninterrupted silent reading. It is based upon a single simple principle: reading is a skill. And like all skills, the more you use it, the better you get at it. Sustained silent reading (SSR) is a form of school-based recreational reading, or free voluntary reading, where students read silently in a designated time period every day in school. An underlying assumption of SSR is that students learn to read by reading constantly. Successful models of SSR typically allow students to select their own books and require neither testing for comprehension nor book reports (Wikipedia, 2011). Baker (2003) in her study unveils that children who experienced reading in a comfortable and supportive social context at age five were more likely to recognize the value of reading, report enjoyment of reading and have positive concepts of themselves as readers in subsequent years.

Leisure Reading and Self-concept

Identity development may have an impact on the independent reading habits and interests of the adolescents in focus (Knoester, 2009). McKool (2007) in her investigation why some children choose to read out-of-school and others do not, revealed significant positive correlation between out-of-school voluntary reading and self concept. This suggests that students who have positive self-concepts as readers are more likely to engage in voluntary out-of-school reading than students with less positive self-concepts. Clark, Osborne, & Akerman, (2008) in their study revealed that whether young people saw themselves as readers or not greatly impacted their reading habits, reader perceptions and their perceptions of family, friends and school influences. For example, young people who defined themselves as readers rated themselves as more proficient and indicated reading more frequently outside of school. Self-defined readers associated reading with positive feelings, such as feeling calm, while non-readers associated reading with negative feelings, such as boredom and stress. Self-defined readers also view readers differently, seeing them as being clever/intelligent. A greater percentage of self-defined non-readers than readers believed that no one in their family thinks they are
a good reader and that no one encourages them to read. Reading played a greater role in the life of readers. More non-reading boys than girls believed that reading is more of a girls’ thing. Many of the students recognized that the more they read, the better readers they become (Hughes-Hassell, & Lutz, 2006)

**Leisure Reading and Attitude toward Academic and Recreational Reading**

Reading attitudes refer to the feelings and beliefs an individual has with respect to reading. Quoting Sanacore (2002), “becoming a lifetime reader is predicated on developing a love of reading” (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). Clark & Foster (2005) found out that pupils generally held positive attitudes toward reading - agreeing with statements that reading is important and disagreeing with statements that reading is boring, hard, or for girls rather than boys. Reading attitude fulfills a pivotal role in the development of lifelong reading skills (Lazarus & Callahan, 2000). Clark & Foster (2005) found out that boys tended to hold more negative attitudes toward reading than girls. Both boys and girls rated themselves to be equally proficient readers. Baker’s (2003) study revealed that children who have more opportunities to engage in literacy relevant activities at home have more positive views about reading, engage in more leisure reading and have higher reading achievement. Clark’s (2010) paper, showed a link between school library use and increased reading enjoyment, higher self-assessments of reading ability as well as more positive attitudes toward reading. Chua’s (2008) study revealed that the program Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) had a significant effect on cultivating students’ pleasure in and enjoyment of reading.

In this study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

**METHODS**

The study employed descriptive-correlational method as it described the variables and established relationships between them. The study was conducted in the Elementary Department of the University of Saint Louis Tuguegarao during the school year 2010-2011. Respondents were pupils from grades 3, 4, 5 and 6. Total enumeration was employed consisting of 296 respondents. However,
only 290 pupils were present during the administration of the data gathering instruments.

A set of questionnaire was used to determine the pupils’ profile, their reading interests and the level of availability of materials at home for their leisure reading.

Three other sets of instruments were used in gathering data for this study. They are the following:

1. **Motivation to Read Profile (MRP)** (Gambrell et al., 1996). This instrument provided an efficient and reliable way to quantitatively and qualitatively assess reading motivation by evaluating pupils’ self concept as readers (10 items; the odd numbered ones) and the value they place on reading (10 items; the even numbered ones). The 20 items here used a 4-point Likert-type response scale. The items that focused on self-concept as a reader were designed to elicit information about pupils’ self perceived competence in reading and self perceived competence relative to peers. The value of reading items were designed to elicit information about the value pupils place on reading tasks and activities.

2. **Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS)** (McKenna & Kear, 1990). This instrument was used to provide a quick indication of pupils’ attitude toward recreational reading (10 items; the odd numbered ones) and academic reading (10 items; the even numbered ones). Each item presented a brief, simply worded statement about reading, followed by four pictures of smiley faces/emoticon. Each face was designed to depict different emotional states: happiest face (Love it), slightly smiling face (Like it), mildly upset face (Ho Hum…) and very upset face (Don’t like it!)

In administering the above instruments, the researcher read every item aloud and pupils answered after each.

3. **Philippine Information Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) Silent Reading Test** (DepEd, 2008). The PHIL-IRI, an assessment tool initiated by the Bureau of Elementary Education, evaluates the reading proficiency level of elementary school pupils. Reading level and reading speed of the respondents were measured by administering a seven or eight-item test after letting the pupils read a passage silently. In administering this instrument, the researcher set the go signal and the pupils started reading while the researcher held up sheets of paper showing the number of seconds consumed in reading the passage. Upon finishing reading, the pupils looked up to the researcher and recorded the number shown on the sheet held by the researcher. The pupils’ reading level was determined by the percentage of correct answers they got in the test. Their reading speed was computed based on the recorded number of seconds spent in reading the entire passage.

All the above-instruments were fielded per section.

Data analysis made use of frequency count and percentages for the profile of the readers, their reading interests and availability of materials. The attitude toward academic and recreational reading, the value placed on reading and the self concept were treated using the weighted mean average. Bivariate correlation was utilized to determine the effect of independent to the moderating variables and the relationship of these to the dependent variable.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Findings of this study reveal most of the respondents spend one hour a day in leisure reading. This may imply that heavy academic requirements and recreational activities eat most of the children’s time leaving them little time to read for leisure. In addition, this study shows that majority of the respondents are fast readers but in the test given to them after letting them read a passage, majority of them got below 74% comprehension scores, thus categorizing them under frustration reading level. This reflects a very sad picture of today’s young reader which means that reading level among pupils is poor. However, according to Kirby (2003), comprehension involves the relating of two or more pieces of information. Those pieces of information can come from long-term memory (prior knowledge), but in reading comprehension at least one piece must come from the text.

A crucial component to understanding reading comprehension is its measurement. There exist many very different methods of measuring reading comprehension, including multiple choice questions after short passages (which was used in this study), fill-in-the-blanks cloze tests, short-answer
constructed response tests, and much longer constructed responses such as text retelling and summarizing. There is growing recognition that these different measures do not necessarily assess the same things. For example, multiple choice questions are efficient to score, but may not do a good job of assessing higher-level comprehension skills such as in situation model construction. Essay questions may seem more valid, but may allow children with more extensive prior knowledge to conceal their reading comprehension difficulties.

Rasinski’s (n.d.) paper on assessing reading fluency says that for years, teachers thought that if students could learn to decode words accurately, they would be successful in reading printed text. While it is true that accuracy in decoding is important for fluency, it is not the entire story. Readers not only need to decode the words accurately; they also need to decode them effortlessly or automatically. The ability to read with appropriate phrasing and expression (interpretation) is also important for fluency. In essence, reading fluency refers to accurate and automatic decoding of the words in the text, along with expressive interpretation of the text, to achieve optimal comprehension. Fluency clearly depends upon decoding efficiency, and cognitive and naming speed. As fluency drops, it becomes less and less likely that the needed information is still active in working memory, making comprehension less and less likely (Kirby, 2003). Fluency is important in reading then, because it affects how well readers understand what they read (Rasinski, n.d.). In addition, scientifically-based research reviews (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Rasinski, n.d.) have established that reading fluency is a critical component of learning to read. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (2005) found that nearly half of American fourth graders had not achieved a minimal level of fluency in their reading, which was associated with significant difficulties in comprehension while reading silently. Fluency is more than reading fast: it is reading at an appropriately fast rate with good expression and phrasing that reflects solid understanding of the passage (Rasinski, n.d.).

Table 1: Effect of Gender and Grade Level to Reading Interests of Pupils, Value a Pupil Places on Reading, Self-concept as a Reader and Attitude toward Recreational and Academic Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R-value</td>
<td>R-value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Interest</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>-.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
<td>Not Significant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value a Pupil</td>
<td>.245(**) (low)</td>
<td>-.172(**) (low)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
have more positive attitude toward academic and recreational reading than do boys. This finding is supported by Hughes-Hassell and Lutz (2006) when they confirmed in their study the need to promote reading with boys as more boys than girls expressed a negative attitude toward reading. The same finding came out in Clark and Foster’s (2005). In addition, Chiu and Ko (2005) found out that boys had more negative reading attitudes than girls, and girls had more positive reading attitudes than boys. More girls than boys said that reading makes them feel calm and happy. Furthermore, females had more positive attitudes toward reading, with recreational reading attitudes more positive than academic/school reading attitudes (Fitzgibbons, 1997).

The same table above uncovers that grade level has a significant correlation with the value a pupil places on reading, and with a pupil’s attitude toward academic and recreational reading but not with the pupil’s self-concept as a reader. This suggests that grade 6 pupils are more likely to have the lowest value placed on reading and the least positive attitude toward academic and recreational reading. Chua and Kwok’s (2010) study found that the value of reading is associated with the frequency of interaction with parents in reading activities. Clark and Foster (2005) reported that parents and others are more likely to read with younger children. Their findings reported more primary than secondary pupils reading with and talking about reading with a variety of people. More primary than secondary pupils not only reported being encouraged to read by their mother and father but also reported that their mother and father spend a lot of time reading. The results of this study likewise coincide with Howard and Jin’s (2004) findings that reading appeared to decline with age. Moreover this result is backed up by Clark and Foster (2005) who found out in their study that reading enjoyment declined with age, with primary pupils enjoying reading significantly more than secondary ones. More primary than secondary pupils said they read outside school every day and held more positive attitudes toward reading.

Table 2: Relationship of Gender, Grade Level, Reading Speed, Reading Level, Availability of Materials, Value a Pupil places on Reading, Self-concept as a Reader and Attitude Toward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Places on Reading</th>
<th>Significant at .01</th>
<th>Significant at .01</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-concept as a Reader</td>
<td>.226(***)(low)</td>
<td>.004 Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward Academic Reading</td>
<td>.197(***)(low)</td>
<td>.188(***)(low)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward Recreational Reading</td>
<td>.216(***)(low)</td>
<td>.138(***)(low)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 reports that there is no effect of gender and grade level to the reading interests of pupils as suggested by the computed r-values .081 and -.048, respectively. This is perhaps due to the fact that pupils are exposed to the same kinds of reading materials or that they borrow the same materials from the school library being their top preferred place for reading. Clark, Osborne, and Akerman (2008) found out in their study that young people believe that their friends’ reading materials largely mirror their own reading choices. Further, Hopper’s (2005) study disclosed that adolescents choose books that their peers have enjoyed, and which validate reading as a peer group cultural experience.

In addition, the table above shows that gender is in a positive low correlation with the value a pupil places on reading, pupil’s self-concept as a reader, and pupil’s attitude toward academic and recreational reading. This means that girls put more value on reading, have better self-concept as readers, and have more positive attitude toward academic and leisure reading than boys. In line with previous studies, girls reported greater enjoyment of reading than boys and were likely to do so more frequently (Clark & Foster, 2005). Clark, Osborne, and Akerman (2008) in their study found out that more boys than girls believed that reading is more of a girls’ thing. This helps explain the gender difference in terms of value placed on reading. The same holds true with pupils’ self-concept as readers. Girls have better self-concept as readers than boys. Exploring the connection between gender and seeing oneself as a reader, more girls than boys saw themselves as readers. Boys were more likely to say that no one in their family thinks they are a good reader and that more reading and non-reading girls than boys indicated that their friends think that they are good readers (Clark, Osborne, and Akerman, 2008). On attitude toward academic and recreational reading, boys and girls differ. Girls
Recreational and Academic Reading with the Amount of Time Spent in Leisure Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Amount Of time spent in leisure reading</th>
<th>R-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.246(**)</td>
<td>Significant at .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade level</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Speed</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Level</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of materials</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value a pupil places on reading</td>
<td>.347(**) (moderate)</td>
<td>Significant at .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-concept as a reader</td>
<td>.360(**) (moderate)</td>
<td>Significant at .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As gleaned on table 2, gender has a positive low correlation with the amount of time spent in leisure reading as an activity. This implies that gender affects the pupils’ allotment of time to leisure reading as an activity. This implies further that girls spend more time in leisure reading than boys do. Hughes-Hassell and Lutz (2006) revealed in their paper that females were more likely to read for pleasure than males (78% versus 64%). This trend is confirmed by the findings of Zvonovskii and Lutseva (2004) that one and a half times more women than men are daily readers of literature (39 percent and 23 percent, respectively), probably due to differences in amount and nature of their free time.

Moreover, in the foregoing table, value a pupil places on reading, self-concept as a reader, and attitude toward academic and recreational reading have a moderate positive correlation with the amount of time spent in leisure reading as indicated by the computed r-values of .347, .360 and .356, respectively. This finding hints that the higher the value a pupil places on reading, the better the pupil’s self-concept as a reader, and the more positive the pupil’s attitude toward academic and recreational reading, the more time he/she spends in reading leisure materials. Clark, Osborne, and Akerman (2008) in their study discovered that most pupils associated reading with positive feelings, such as feeling calm and happy. In one study, pupils said that they would read more if they had more time and if they enjoyed it more (Clark and Foster, 2005). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2007) unveiled that students who spend more time reading for pleasure read more varieties of materials and those who show more positive attitudes towards reading tend to be better readers. In addition, McKool (2007) found a significant positive correlation between out-of-school voluntary reading and self concept. Her study suggested that students who have positive self-concepts as readers are more likely to engage in voluntary out-of-school reading than students with less positive self-concepts.

Finally, findings show that a pupil’s grade level, reading speed, reading level and availability of materials have no significant correlation with the amount of time a pupil spends in leisure reading. This insinuates that a pupil’s grade level, reading speed, reading level and availability of materials for his/her reading do not affect a pupil’s decision as to how much time he/she spends in leisure reading. Nestle UK Ltd. (2003) in one of its studies found out that the biggest barrier to reading is time, with over half saying they would read more if they had more time.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Measurement is a central component to understanding reading comprehension. Since there exist many very different methods of measuring reading comprehension, and since there is a growing recognition that these different measures do not necessarily assess the same things (Kirby, 2003), it seems lucid that what is desirable is an encompassing, broad and inclusive approach to assess pupils’ reading level, the kind that tailor fits the types of task to the purpose of the assessment and the kind where the test scores after reading a passage is partly but not the sole basis.

Pupils generally exhibit positive antecedents of their leisure reading and that at home and in school, they are provided with varied reading materials, however, these do not guarantee their spending of a great chunk of time in reading leisure materials as the findings show that most of them opt to spend only one a hour a day in perusing recreational materials. Pupils are still in need of a tap, a touch or even a push, from parents and school staff (teachers, librarians, etc.) to engage them in leisure reading.

Gender differences exist in most of the antecedents. Reading, particularly for leisure, is still a female-dominated intellectual activity. Efforts to
even out gender deviation in matters of reading should be concerted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results, the following are strongly recommended as legacies of the study:

1. For teachers in the elementary to formulate and implement a progressive recreational reading program that would let pupils read passages and answer comprehension questions after. This is a good exercise to improve their reading level.

2. Considering that girls put more value on reading, have better self-concept as readers, have more positive attitude toward academic and leisure reading and spend more time in leisure reading compared to boys, the teachers are recommended to formulate and implement a recreational reading program that would cater to boys. Teachers should consider how to engage boys with reading.

3. For teachers to require pupils in the higher grades to do activities that can only be done after a serious and thorough reading such as preparation of book reports or book reviews, simple term papers, etc.

4. Many reading programs targeting learners have been designed and launched, including sustained silent reading (SSR), free voluntary reading (FVR), drop everything and read (DEAR), daily independent reading time (DIRT), and uninterrupted sustained silent reading (USSR). These programs share some common features, such as letting students read silently, freely, and without interruption. It is recommended that any of these reading programs be implemented among higher grades in the institution to address older pupils’ seemingly waning interest in reading and weakening attitude toward academic and leisure reading.

5. That there should be sustainability in the implementation of reading programs specially in the higher grade level to increase the value pupils place on reading and improve pupils’ attitude toward academic and recreational reading, which will boil down to their allotment of longer time in leisure reading.

6. For the library staff to come up with a more aggressive campaign for love for reading among higher grades through the conduct of storytelling contests, book talks, readers’ theaters, book quizzes or book marathons, showing films based on books, etc. These activities help in enhancing pupils’ attitude toward reading in general and leisure reading in particular.

7. For the school to support the putting up of a leisure reading nook to accommodate leisure readers.

8. For future researchers to conduct similar studies after the implementation of the above recommended programs to see if there is an improvement in the pupils’ reading level, attitude, self-concept as a reader and value placed on reading. Further, aspiring researchers should see the possibility of conducting similar studies in the high school and college departments.

REFERENCES


60. Pablo, D. A. (2006). Literary reading comprehension skills of the senior high school students of the University of Saint Louis Tuguegarao.


Antecedent is an earlier clause, phrase or word to which a pronoun, another word or a noun refers back. Difference Between Antecedent and Postcedent. These terms are opposite to one another, as antecedent refers to in front of or before. It is an expression that gives meaning to a proform (a noun, pronoun, pro-adverb or pro-verb). Hence, proforms follow their respective antecedents such as “Elizabeth says, she likes coffee.” Sometimes these proforms or pronouns precede them that are called postcedents, meaning behind or after such as, “when it gets ready, I shall definitely get my cup of tea.” Common Examples of Antecedent. David plays football in the courtyard. All the children have gathered together, or antecedent, behavior, consequence is a behavior-modification strategy often used with students with disabilities, especially those with autism. Antecedent: The antecedent refers to the action, event, or circumstance that occurred before the behavior. Also known as the “setting event,” the antecedent is anything that might contribute to the behavior. It may be a request from a teacher, the presence of another person or student, or even a change in the environment. Behavior: The behavior refers to what the student does and is sometimes referred to as “the behavior of interest” or “target behavior.” Since antecedent constraints may suppress the preference for a particular leisure activity as a consequence of either the lack of awareness of or interest in that activity, the likely result is non-participation. The notion of antecedent constraints was found to be a useful concept and a welcome addition to the existing conceptualization of leisure constraints (for review, see Jackson, 1988). Leisure scholars would attribute such choices to a combination of antecedent and intervening constraints. The antecedent constraints could include the effects of gender socialization, while intervening constraints could include the difficulty of finding partners or overt discrimination against those of one's sex participating in the activity.