

Superbrain Yoga: Impact on the Reading Comprehension and Behavior of Slow Readers

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Abstract

Improving the reading comprehension skills and classroom behavior of high school remedial reading students is a very big challenge since the saying applies, “Bend the twig while it’s young.” To hasten their improvement on these areas, this study was aimed at determining the impact of Master Choa Kok Sui (MCKS) Superbrain Yoga on the reading comprehension skill and classroom behavior of the grade 7 remedial reading students in a span of two months grading period in Pavia National High School, SY 2017-2018. It is a mixed method of pre-experimental design and qualitative-thematic narratology. In gathering data, the following researcher-made instruments were used: adopted validated questionnaire on classroom behavior and the selected elementary Phil-IRI items in comprehension test. All the instruments were given for pretests and posttests. A focus group discussion was also done among the randomly selected subjects. The statistical tools used included the mean and the paired samples t-test. The significant difference was computed at 95% confidence level or at 0.05 margin of error. The quantitative findings of the investigation showed that the Master Choa Kok Sui Superbrain Yoga made a significant difference in the reading comprehension skill and classroom behavior as revealed by the improved scores of the participants during the posttests of the subjects. The focus group discussion indicated that the students improved attitude towards reading, learning and social life. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the Master Choa Kok Sui Superbrain Yoga impacted the performance of the students in reading comprehension and in their classroom behavior. It is recommended that more action researches should be done using the intervention, the Superbrain Yoga, to verify its impact. Further, it is also recommended that the Department of Education should explore the benefits of this intervention and give it a chance to prove its worth. Being the second study of its kind in the Philippines, the impact of this study showed improvement of the reading comprehension skills and behavior of the remedial reading students in Iloilo who practiced the simple exercise. Feedback revealed that students overcame restlessness and became focused and calmer as Superbrain Yoga energizes the brain and balances emotions. Likewise, those who religiously practice became healthy aside from being mentally alert.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension Skills, Classroom Behavior, Superbrain Yoga

Rationale

One of the serious problems in education is the increasing number of high school slow readers. Most of them finished elementary grades and enter high school with reading level and comprehension skills that of grades one to four only. If not given attention, these learners would not be able to cope with their high school lessons, suffer from low academic achievements and eventually drop out of school.

Another concern about this type of learners is their undesirable behavior and attitude towards their studies. Their restlessness and inability to focus on learning the desired competencies make their situations even worse.

Context of the Study

The researchers identified several high school students who were slow readers. They were English majors passionate about reading who also acted as community volunteers in reading remediation. Concerned of the literacy problem of the learners, they desired to help

them improve their reading abilities.

The students manifested slow progress in reading and exhibited numerous misbehaviors from the very start. These learners found it hard to understand the texts they were reading and exhibited numerous classroom misbehaviors. This group of learners found reading an ordeal and showed negative attitude towards it.

As trained Superbrain Yoga practitioners for years and convinced of its benefits in improving the mental capacities of learners and their behavior, the researchers wanted to assist the slow readers improve their reading comprehension and their overall behavior towards learning through the use of Superbrain Yoga.

Reasons for the Conduct of the Study

This study, “Superbrain Yoga: Impact on the Reading Comprehension and Behavior of Slow Readers” aimed to determine the effect of Superbrain Yoga on the reading comprehension skill and behavior of slow readers with poor comprehension skill from September to October 2018.

The conduct of this research was compelled by the problem of the said type of learners whose reading comprehension problem affected their studies. Moreover, this study attempted to ascertain the effect of the intervention on students' misbehavior, a perennial problem which further retards learning.

The researchers believed that the result of this investigation would help slow readers improve their reading comprehension skill, behavior and academic achievement in general. This investigation would also give hope to teachers and the parents for learners with academic and behavior problems to achieve their dreams.

The Intervention – “Superbrain Yoga”

Superbrain Yoga is a technique or an exercise advocated by Master Choa Kok Sui which was scientifically verified for its usefulness and safety and employed by medical doctors and psychologists. This is done by simply squeezing the earlobes while doing squats (Sui, 2005).

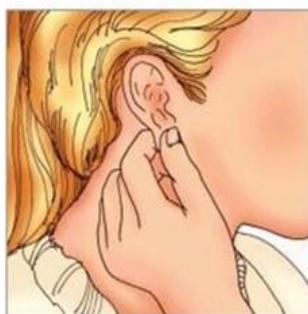


Figure 1

Figure 1. *The Correct Finger Position. The thumb must be placed on the outer part and the index finger must be on the inside when gently pressing the ear lobe (Sui, 2005).*



Figure 2

Figure 2. *Energizing and Activating the Left Brain. (Sui, 2005). The right ear lobe corresponds to the left brain while the left ear lobe corresponds to the right brain.*

(The illustrations, Figures 1 and 2, were taken from the book by Master Choa Kok Sui, MCKS Superbrain Yoga, Pp 34-35, 2005).



Figure 3

Figure 3. *Energizing and Activating the Right Brain*



Figure 4

Figure 4. *Correct Arm Position in Energizing and activating the Left Brain*

(The illustrations, Figures 3 and 4, were taken from the book by Master Choa Kok Sui, Superbrain Yoga Pp 36-37. 2005)

Accomplished in more or less 2-4 minutes only, the Master Choa Kok Sui (MCKS) Superbrain Yoga has an enormous and lasting effect on mental and psychological aspects of a person. With the Law of Correspondence as its main basis, the study on Superbrain Yoga maintains that the ear coincides to the whole body. Hodgson (2011) stated that when specific points of the auricle of the external ear is properly stimulated, some body parts are relieved of certain ailments. This fact supports that nerves of the external ear corresponds to specific parts of the brain which has reflex connections to the body.

When this type of exercise is performed, energies from the lower energy centers are transmuted into higher subtle energies which become beneficial to the upper energy centers. When those centers are highly energized, the brain gets activated, thus functions with greater efficiency and effectivity (Sui, 2005).

Aside from energizing and activating the brain, Superbrain Yoga likewise aids in balancing the energies of the heart, throat, ajna, forehead and crown energy centers. With prolonged practice of the Superbrain Yoga, the practitioner generally becomes smarter, stress-free and more psychologically balanced.

The performance of the Superbrain Yoga was done every morning before the remedial reading class began

with the supervision of the researchers. Every morning, the trained slow readers followed the procedure in doing the Superbrain yoga. They faced East, squeezed their earlobes correctly and did the squatting position for seven times as they inhaled in going down and exhaled in going up. This technique has been popular in many countries around the world which has benefitted children suffering from depression, low self-esteem, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and compulsive disorders.

Research Questions

The main purpose of this study is to determine the impact of Master Choa Kok Sui (MCKS) Superbrain Yoga on the reading comprehension skill and classroom behavior of grade 7 slow readers. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the mean pretest and post-test scores of the slow readers in terms of reading comprehension skills?
2. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and post-test scores in the reading comprehension skill?
3. What are the mean pretest and post-test scores of the slow readers in terms of behavior?
4. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in the student's behavior?
5. What are the benefits and experiences that the slow readers derived from the practice of MCKS Superbrain Yoga?

Literature Review

Procedure in Doing the Superbrain Yoga

1. Face East.
2. Connect your tongue to your palate.
3. Preferably invoke for Divine blessing.
4. Spread your feet shoulder width apart.
5. Squeeze the right earlobe with your left thumb and left index finger.
6. Squeeze the left earlobe with your right thumb and right index finger.
7. The left arm must be inside and the right arm outside. This is the correct arm position.
8. When squatting down, inhale simultaneously. This breathing instruction must be followed and must not be changed.
9. When standing up, exhale simultaneously. This breathing instruction must be followed and must not be

changed.

10. Repeat steps 8 and 9, seven times for the first seven days, then 14 times after 14 days and 21 times after 21 days. That's the highest number of sets.

11. Release your finger from your earlobes.

12. Say a prayer of thanksgiving.

DON'Ts in Performing MCKS Superbrain Yoga

According to Sui (2005) in his book Superbrain Yoga, in the practice of MCKS Superbrain Yoga, the subjects must be made to understand that it is very vital to keep their physical and energy body clean. Following are the don'ts: 1) Avoid smoking. Smoking dirties the physical body and energy body. It causes heart problems, hypertension and other problems; 2) Avoid excessive alcohol intake. Alcoholism is physically and psychologically detrimental to a person, and at the same time harmful to one's family; 3) Addictive and hallucinogenic drugs must be avoided because they dirty the energy body and damage the physical body; 4) Avoid eating pork because it is energetically very dirty and 5) Avoid eating fish with no scales such as eel and catfish because they are also energetically dirty. Meat and fish may be taken in moderation.

Once a person is drunk, high in drugs or has eaten pork within two days, he or she will be made to refrain from doing the MCKS Superbrain Yoga to avoid adverse effects on body like insomnia, weakening of the body, pain and discomfort. He or she can do the exercises again after two days.

Students' Reading and Comprehension Skills

In this modern time that is dubbed as the technological era, students' interest on reading the black and white pages has been challenged. Learners nowadays especially those in elementary and high school are hooked with the lures of new technologies such as online games as well as animated and colorful presentation in digital outfits making them bored with reading plain letters.

Researchers also enumerate other factors that contribute to students' low academic performance such as poor study habits and attitude (Crede & Kuncel, 2008; Hussain, 2006; Riaz et al., 2006).

One of the notable deterrents to successful learning and academic success is low English proficiency most especially on reading comprehension.

One study proved that there is significant positive relationship between language proficiency and academic achievement (Sahragard et. al., 2011).

Fakeye (2014) further confirmed in his study that there is a significant impact of English language proficiency on students' overall academic achievement.

Students' Behavior and Academic Achievement

Accordingly, for learners to be successful in their studies, their classroom behaviors need to conform to the teachers' rules, demands and academic expectations and must promote socialization with peers. However, the daily classroom setting in the field has always been beset with students' misbehavior. These problem behaviors involve learners' explicitly breaking the established rules, violating the teachers' expectations, behaving inappropriately in a classroom setting and distracting the teaching and learning process (Sun et al., 2012).

In schools, productive teaching and learning are hindered when students misbehave (Bryant et al., 2000). In addition, studies revealed that prolonged school misbehaviors became worse that lead to poor academic achievement and increased delinquent behavior (Weeman et al., 2007).

Consequently, the need to improve students' reading comprehension proficiency and classroom behavior is deemed necessary to improve students' academic achievement. In the Philippines, curriculum developers keep on finding out pedagogical methodologies to make schooling interesting and productive. In the past decades, the Department of Education (DepEd), in-charge of the basic education in the country, has been testing out methodologies that might work best for the Filipino students. Among these are understanding by design (UBD), which suffered a natural death, and the most recent is the K to 12 curriculum. All of these transformations in the department aim to improve students' achievement in school.

However, researchers in the United States and other parts of the world have discovered that one way of helping students achieve more is by improving physical and mental health first. In 1968, Maslow noted what he considered to be the main qualities of a healthy person – clarity of thought, greater efficacy in perception of reality, increased integrity and wholeness, increased spontaneity and liveliness, a firm self-identity, autonomy, and the ability to love. But, in order for students to attain this self-actualization, they must first be taught ways to cope with all sorts of stress in a productive way, like meditation or yoga, especially since much of students' stress comes from the demands of education itself (Janowiak, 2003).

Superbrain Yoga and Students' Academic Performance

In a three-year study in the United States conducted by Siar (2007) on "Improving Academic and Behavioral Performance in Students: Superbrain Yoga," the students made a significant improvement in their academic and achievement and behavior.

Kauts and Sharma (2009) also studied the effect of yoga on academic performance of students. The result show that the students who practiced yoga performed better in academics. The study further showed that low-stress students performed better than high-stress ones, stressing the effects of stress in the students' performance.

Superbrain Yoga and Students' Behavior

Siar (2007) conducted a study on "Improving Academic and Behavioral Performance in Students: Superbrain Yoga", with the participants composed of students struggling with behavioral problems such as depression, low self-esteem, ADD, ADHD and compulsive disorders. The study helped them access greater opportunity to know themselves better and modify their habits to their advantage. As a result of the study, the students gave favorable comments on the inner changes that happened to them.

The study of Thakar and Sharma (2012) also showed that yoga training had a significant effect on the behavior of the students. They were less likely to react in given situations and completed the given complex tasks with satisfaction of their performances. Faces that used to be anxious and fearful of school projects became smiling and glowing. These exercises created a positive connection between learning, taking risks and connecting with others.

Methodology

Sampling

The subjects were composed of 15 Grade 7 slow readers who were enrolled in Pavia National High School. They were obtained through purposive random sampling.

Instruments

In gathering the data needed for this research, two instruments were used: the reading comprehension test adapted from the elementary Philippine Informal

reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), and the Questionnaire on Student's Classroom Behavior.

The first instrument, the reading comprehension test, was a validated instrument that intended to measure the learner's reading comprehension level. It consisted of a 20-item graded and selected comprehension test with reading levels that of grades 1-4 since the subjects' reading abilities were within such range.

The second instrument, the questionnaire in classroom behavior, was a researcher-made questionnaire which was subjected to validity and reliability test. It was divided into four areas of behavioral concerns: classroom learning activities, towards school authorities, exams and hyperactivity, restlessness and focus. Each area contained nine specific questions.

The questionnaire had the following frequency rating options: 1=always, 2=sometimes, and 3=never. The students were instructed to encircle the letter of their answer on the test paper.

Data Gathering Procedure

Pretest

The reading comprehension test was given for pretest. The students read the reading selections for comprehension and encircled the letter of the correct answers on the test paper. The test was accomplished for 40 minutes.

The questionnaire for classroom behavior was also administered for pretest. In answering it, the students ticked the column that reflected their answers.

The test scores and responses of the slow readers were checked and encoded in Excel.

Intervention Phases

Phase 1. *Preliminary Activity (Seminar-Workshop on Superbrain)*

For the preliminary phase, the identified students together with their parents and teacher were given an orientation and a half-day seminar-workshop about Superbrain Yoga by an authorized trainer one week before the onset of the experiment proper.

Phase 2. *Signing of Agreement*

The parents of the students signed a waiver or a full consent allowing their children to participate in such an educational research. In this way, the parents or

guardian were encouraged to follow-up their children's habits and help them be reminded of the don'ts in the practice of MCKS Superbrain Yoga.

In like manner, the students concerned also signed a waiver which signified that they were willing to cooperate and be part of the study.

Phase 3. *Actual Practice of Superbrain Yoga*

The next phase was the actual practice of Superbrain Yoga on a daily basis. The students performed the intervention proper which is the MCKS Superbrain Yoga in the span of two months from September 2, 2018 until October 31, 2018.

Every morning, the learners gathered in a reading room and performed the MCKS Superbrain Yoga with the supervision of the researchers to make sure that they were doing it right. The students were also encouraged to continue doing it at home on weekends as they woke up in the morning.

The subjects were made to finish seven cycles of the exercise for the first seven days. Once the students had performed the seven sets in one week, they were made to perform the intervention for 14 cycles. Then, they increased to 21 times of the MCKS Superbrain Yoga after completing 14 sets. That's the highest number of sets they had to perform the intervention onward.

Midtest and interview

A midtest was also conducted on September 30, 2018 to verify the progress of the students in terms of reading comprehension and classroom behavior as they applied the intervention.

An interview of the subjects was also conducted to get the subjects' views about the research.

Posttest

After two months of practicing the intervention, the posttest on reading comprehension and classroom behavior was also given to the subjects. The same sets of pretest were used during the posttest. The scores and the responses were again encoded in Excel and submitted to Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Interview, Observation and Focus Group Discussion

To gather qualitative data, the researchers conducted an interview after the two-month investigation. A



Focus group Discussion (FGD) was also facilitated by the researchers among the randomly selected participants. The responses were recorded, transcribed and analyzed thematically.

Ethical Issues

The school head's consent was sought before the conduct of the study. The parents of the subjects were likewise gathered for a conference. The researchers thoroughly explained to them the nature of the research. Then, their consent was sought first to officially allow their children to participate in the study. During the meeting, they voluntarily signed the parental consent letter.

The parents were assured of the confidentiality of the data gathered relative to the study. It was made clear to them that no harm would happen to their children because the technique has been scientifically validated and has already gained popularity especially in other countries. The researchers explained that they themselves had been practicing the MCKS Superbrain Yoga and had gained so much benefits from it especially on cognitive, psychological and behavioral aspects. The subjects were also convened and made to understand the main purpose of the research.

They were likewise asked to sign a contract of their participation in the research.

A certified trainer on Superbrain Yoga was invited to equip the students with enough knowledge and skills so that they could perform the intervention correctly.

Plan for Data Analysis

This study used both the quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis specifically the pre-experimental design and thematic analysis.

For the quantitative data, mean was employed to analyze the results of the students' pretest and posttest in reading comprehension skill and classroom behavior while the paired-sample t-test was used to determine the significant difference in the pretest and posttest results in the same areas using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

For the qualitative data, interviews, teacher observations and a Focus Groups Discussion (FGD) were undertaken to draw responses from the subjects. The thematic narratology analysis was employed in grouping the responses.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study.

A. Quantitative Results

Table 1 shows that the mean posttest score of Classroom Behavior is 93.47. It is 12.94 higher than the mean pretest score which is 80.53.

Table 1. *Mean Pretest and Posttest Scores of Classroom Behaviour (CB)*

Areas	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
CB Pretest	80.5333	15	6.749250	1.74265
CB Posttest	93.4667	15	6.67476	1.72341

Table 2 results show that in terms of Reading Comprehension, there was a significant difference ($t = -5.150$, $p = 0.000$) of the students' pretest ($m = 17.27$, $sd = 5.20$) and posttest scores ($m = 22.07$, $sd = 4.74$). This reveals that there was an improvement in the Reading Comprehension of the students (as evidenced by the increase in their mean scores in pretest and posttest). It can therefore be said that Superbrain Yoga, a technique which energizes and activates the brain, proved itself to be an effective way of improving students' reading comprehension.

The same table shows that on classroom behaviour, results reflect that there was a significant difference in the Classroom Behavior (CB) ($t = -6.21$, $p = 0.000$) of the students in terms of their pretest ($m = 80.53$, $sd = 6.75$) and posttest scores ($m = 93.47$, $sd = 6.67$). This means that there was an improvement in the classroom behaviour of the students (as evidenced by the increase in their mean scores in pretest and posttest). Thus, Superbrain Yoga was found to be an effective way of improving students' classroom behaviour as it helped in making the students regulate their emotions and control themselves.

Table 2. *Paired T-test Results of Reading Comprehension (RC) and Classroom Behaviour (CB)*

Areas	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
RC Pretest-RC Posttest	-5.150	14	.000
CB Pretest-CB Posttest	-6.210	14	.000

B. Qualitative Results

1. Based on the interview and observation, the remedial reading students showed improved performances on the following aspects.

a. *Attitude towards reading and reading comprehension*

It was observed that they would always get books in the shelves and read. They could read faster and could answer the questions that I would ask them about the story.

b. *Classroom Behaviour*

The participants became less restless. They became more well-behaved and could focus to the discussion. When I talked to them, they were more attentive and were able to give sensible answers to my questions.

2. Responses based on the thematic analysis of Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

a. *Improved Reading Comprehension and Interest in Reading*

The participants said that they got interested in reading stories when before they disliked it. They said that they enjoyed reading because they started understanding the text.

b. *Enhanced Emotional Control*

It was claimed by the learners that they were not easily irritated when their seatmates disturbed them or would provoke them. Even at home, they were more patient with their siblings.

c. *Improved Class Focus*

During class hours, the students were less distracted by passers-by in the corridors because they attuned themselves to the lesson. They said that they did not mind the noise outside and the noise of their classmates.

d. *Improved Stamina*

They noticed they became more industrious at home. They liked to work and help their families with the household chores for they felt strong until late evening.

Conclusion

This study proved that the practice of the intervention – Superbrain Yoga among the remedial reading students proved beneficial in improving their reading comprehension skills and their classroom behavior as shown in their increased means in posttests of both areas.

The results further showed that there was significant difference on the achievement of the participants in reading comprehension and classroom behavior.

Poor reading and comprehension skills and classroom misbehaviors among students are prevalent in most schools. These may be the results of various factors including lack of family and parental support and follow-up, curriculum inadequacies, teacher factor, peer influence and personal issues. These concerns need to be addressed at once if the school desires to help the learners cope with their lessons and finish their studies.

The use of the intervention, The Master Choa Kok Sui Superbrain Yoga, has given light and hope to problems like these in school. This simple technique is very useful for the holistic development of the individual. When everything else fails and when educators and society seem to be in the brink of giving up to the educational challenges, Superbrain Yoga is here to answer it all.

When students learn well and are able to control their emotions, they can better cope with the demands in higher education and the challenging life ahead. Holistically developed youth become productive citizens in the country and in the world.

All problems have solutions. If all teachers find time doing action researches to solve classroom issues and improve their teaching practices in school, much will be achieved by the academe and many more learners will be able to harness their highest potentials for life.

Strengthening the development of the culture of research among teachers in schools is a must!

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. More action research should be done using this intervention, the MCKS Superbrain Yoga, to verify its

impact.

2. Teacher-researchers should conduct more studies in high schools using the same intervention as one of the answers on the deteriorating academic achievements in Philippine education as well as the worsening behavioral problems of students.

3. Longer periods of time, months, and years should be devoted in research applying this intervention on various areas.

4. More trainings and symposia should be conducted in the Philippines as to the benefits of Yoga for the awareness and appreciation of Filipinos of this technique.

5. All educators, not only Master Teachers, should be required to conduct action researches every year to address classroom problems.

6. True experimental research in various schools in public and private high schools should be ventured into by researchers covering various academic areas to further verify the results of the investigation using this intervention.

7. A study on the MCKS Superbrain Yoga in Philippine education should be done in different levels: kinder, secondary, tertiary and graduate studies.

8. Improved methodologies, experimental designs and research instruments should be applied in verifying the effectiveness of the MCKS Superbrain Yoga on the whole aspects of a person's development including emotional, spiritual, psychological and physical attributes.

9. The Department of Education should finance researches on the MCKS Superbrain Yoga if it desires to keep pace with the educational breakthroughs in other countries.

10. Teachers in the Philippines should be required to get a free training on the MCKS Superbrain Yoga so they themselves will be convinced of its priceless benefits and be able to facilitate and encourage students to practice it without fail.

11. After proving the benefits of the MCKS Superbrain Yoga in the total aspects of a person's personality, the DepEd and CHED it would be best that they should include this technique every morning in the Philippine education curriculum.

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