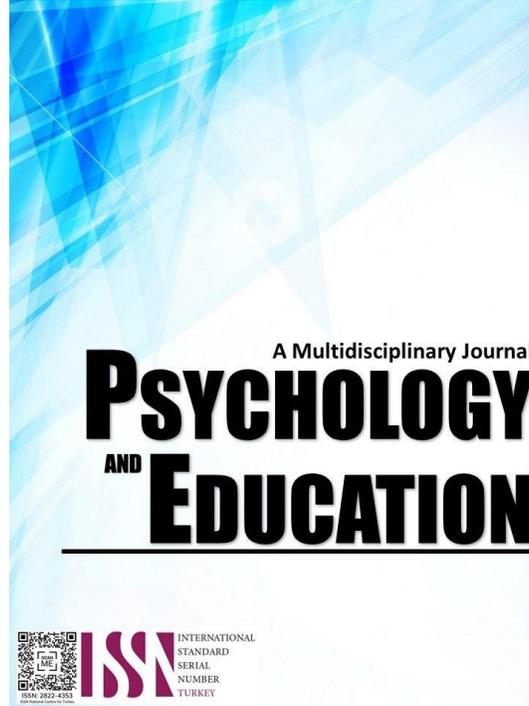


DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE EXTENSION PROGRAM TO ENHANCE ENGLISH READING PROFICIENCY



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Developing a Sustainable Extension Program to Enhance English Reading Proficiency

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Abstract

Learning the English language requires proficiency in various aspects, including decoding, vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehension. However, many students struggle to achieve proficiency in these areas, which can hinder their ability to fully engage with and understand written material. Thus, this study investigated the level of reading proficiency among 12th-grade HUMSS students, the factors that influence their proficiency, and the ways in which these factors influence their proficiency. The study employed an explanatory sequential design to gain a more holistic understanding and a richer exploration of the issue. Aside from the students, this was also participated in by the parents and teachers. Quantitative data were gathered through standardized instruments, while in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to collect qualitative data. Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine the level of reading proficiency. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1984) analytical framework to identify the factors that influence reading proficiency and their mechanisms of influence. Results revealed that decoding and reading skills were high, vocabulary skills were moderate, and comprehension skills were low. Moreover, four main factors influencing reading proficiency were identified: socio-economic, learning environment, background knowledge, and motivation and interest. These factors have influenced the participants positively and negatively. Furthermore, the study proposed a Sustainable Program of Extension for English Language Reading. It concludes that learners' reading proficiency is moderately developed, with strengths in decoding and fluency, but weaknesses in vocabulary and comprehension, and is influenced positively and negatively by different factors.

Keywords: *decoding, mixed methods, reading intervention, reading proficiency, senior high school*

Introduction

The English language holds immense significance in today's interconnected world, enabling communication not only among friends and family but also across cultures and nations (Kim, 2020). It serves as the principal medium of instruction in education at nearly every level, and its role as a global language continues to expand, making English proficiency increasingly essential for academic and professional success (Ilyasova, 2020). Central to achieving mastery of English are the macro skills, particularly reading, which is fundamental in strengthening speaking and writing abilities (Bostock, 2024) and lies at the heart of foreign language acquisition. Research by Alshumaimeri et al. (2005) further confirms that reading activities in language teaching not only foster a love of reading but also improve proficiency over time.

To effectively ground this analysis, reading comprehension is viewed through a lens that integrates cognitive and socio-environmental dimensions. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory posits that learning is a social process, deeply influenced by cultural context and interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). Similarly, Schema Theory emphasizes that comprehension relies on the reader's existing knowledge structures (schemata) to assimilate new information (Rumelhart, 1980). These theoretical perspectives are critical to understanding reading proficiency, which is conceptualized here as the dynamic interaction between the foundational skill of decoding (word recognition), the higher-order process of comprehension (meaning-making), and the pervasive influence of socio-environmental factors (like motivation, access to resources, and teaching strategies). This conceptual framework suggests that deficits in reading are often a product of this complex interplay, not merely a single cognitive failure.

However, recent assessments indicate a troubling gap: many students are not reaching the expected levels of reading proficiency despite years of English study. For example, in numerous countries where English is part of the curriculum, learners continue to struggle with reading skills (Sereyath, 2022). Even in contexts where English has evolved into a second or foreign language and become widely recognized as World English, students—such as those in Cambodia—face persistent challenges. In China, despite more than a decade of English instruction, students frequently have difficulty with all language skills, including reading, and rarely achieve fluency by the time they enter university (Luo, 2013; Yuntao, 2019).

Reading is regarded as the most stable skill among second language modalities, meaning learners often demonstrate greater reading comprehension than speaking or writing (Bernhardt, 1983; Singhal, 2003). Nonetheless, international evaluations highlight significant deficits. In the Philippines, the results from the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) reveal that students are five to six years behind in their learning competencies, ranking in the bottom 10 out of 81 participating countries in reading comprehension, mathematics, and science (Servalos, 2023). These outcomes have prompted targeted interventions, such as dedicating Fridays to improving reading and critical thinking, as part of the educational response for the school year 2023–2024.

Local evidence further illustrates this issue. For instance, the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHILIRI) at Ramon E. Bacaltos National High School in Simala, Sibonga, Cebu, showed that 52.9% of students were classified as instructional readers in the school

year 2022–2023. Instructional readers depend on teacher guidance to understand texts and are not independent (Madrid, 2012), signalling a need for more effective reading support.

Despite extensive research on English language pedagogy, a significant gap remains in understanding the specific factors that influence reading proficiency among senior high school students in under-resourced contexts. Many studies have not sufficiently addressed the interplay of vocabulary knowledge, motivation, teaching strategies, socio-economic background, and access to reading materials—all critical elements that can hinder or promote reading development. Furthermore, there is limited research on sustainable models of intervention that respond to the unique needs of learners in such settings.

The present study seeks to address these gaps by determining the reading proficiency levels of Grade 12 students, identifying the key influencing factors, and exploring the mechanisms by which these factors contribute to or hinder reading achievement. The findings will provide the foundation for developing a Sustainable Program of Extension for English Language Learning Reading (SPELL-Reading), designed to offer targeted, long-term support for students. By addressing these research gaps, the study aims to inform educators and policymakers, contribute to a deeper understanding of the field, and ultimately enhance English reading proficiency among learners in the Philippines and similar contexts.

Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate the level of reading proficiency, its factors, and the influence of those factors on the reading proficiency of the Grade 12 - Senior High School students of Ramon E. Bacaltos National High School in Simala, Sibonga, Cebu, specifically in the Humanities and Social Sciences Strand, as a basis for a proposed Sustainable Program of Extension for English Language Learning in Reading. This research aimed to address the following questions.

1. What is the participants' level of reading proficiency in terms of:
 - 1.1. decoding;
 - 1.2. vocabulary;
 - 1.3. reading; and
 - 1.4. comprehension?
2. What are the factors that influenced the reading proficiency of the participants?
3. How do these factors influence their reading proficiency?
4. What Sustainable Program of Extension for English Language Learning Reading can be proposed based on the study findings?

Methodology

The research methodology highlighted the importance of guaranteeing the validity and reliability of the study's results. By clearly describing the research design, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods, the researcher aimed to provide a thorough explanation of how the study was conducted and how the conclusions were drawn.

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-method approach, specifically an explanatory-sequential design. Mixed methods were employed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem, as they facilitate a richer exploration of complex issues. Moreover, mixing the methods helped validate the findings by cross-verifying results from different sources through triangulation. With this, the validity of the results was strengthened. Furthermore, the explanatory-sequential design occurs when quantitative data is collected and analyzed first, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data based on the quantitative results. The qualitative data is used to explain the quantitative data (Creswell, et.al, 2018). In this study, quantitative data revealed the level of reading proficiency among students, and qualitative data examined the factors that influence their reading proficiency and the mechanisms by which they exert their influence.

Participants

The participants of this study were the Grade 12 Senior High School students under the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand, along with parents and teachers for the School Year 2023-2024. The student-participants were represented by 50% of the total student population within this grade level and strand, ensuring a significant sample size for the quantitative aspect of the research. The total number of Grade 12 HUMSS students was ninety-two (92), from which forty-six (46) students were randomly selected to participate in the survey. In most quantitative studies, forty participants are an appropriate number for conducting the study (Budiu et al., 2021). The random sampling method was employed to ensure that every student had an equal chance of being selected, thereby reducing bias and enhancing the generalizability of the findings (Creswell, 2010). In connection with the selection of the specific strand and grade level, the HUMSS strand emphasized subjects that require competent reading and comprehension skills, such as literature, social 16 studies, and communication. Therefore, the study can directly assess reading proficiency in a context where it is particularly critical. Moreover, Grade 12 students are at a pivotal stage in their educational journey, preparing for higher education or the workforce, where reading competency is best studied at this transitional stage because it is when students are expected to interact with complex texts and acquire advanced literacy skills. In addition, for qualitative data, an in-depth interview was conducted that involved twelve (12) student-participants across all three levels - who were part of the quantitative survey. Four (4) for High, four (4) for Middle, and

four (4) for Low level. To strengthen and verify the data, two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted. Each FGD consisted of six (6) participants: six (6) parents of the interviewed student-participants and six (6) teachers. The selection of parents and teachers aimed to explore their perspectives on the factors influencing reading proficiency among Grade 12 HUMSS students. The selection of participants for qualitative data was done purposively. Participants for the FGDs were chosen based on their involvement with the student-participants' academic lives. Parents were selected based on their children's enrollment in the HUMSS track and involvement in the survey, while teachers were chosen based on their direct engagement with these students in relevant subjects. This purposive sampling method allows for the inclusion of individuals who can provide rich, relevant information regarding the research topic (Patton, 2015).

Instrument

The instrument that was utilized in determining the level of reading proficiency was standardized instruments adapted from different sources: (1) Decoding: Pseudoword Decoding Tool (The Rector and The Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, 2009), which was composed of five sets. (2) Vocabulary: English Vocabulary Test (by Matthew Barton of English Current, 2021), which was composed of three (3) levels. A2- Elementary Level, B1- Intermediate Level, and C1- Advanced Level; (3) Reading: "Urban Garden"-Narrative Text (University of Utah Reading Clinic, 2022), which was all about a passage where the author narrates her urban garden, and the readers were assessed based on three (3) reading levels: Frustration-, Instructional, and Independent Level; and (4) Reading Comprehension: Generic Questions, Prompts, and Probes for Narrative (Beck, et.al, 2001), produced by the University of Utah 18 Reading Clinic, 2022, which has three comprehension levels: Literal Level—answers are explicitly stated in the story; Inferential Level—ability to read between the lines; and involves readers going beyond the text to reflect on their own beliefs and thoughts in relation to the content, allowing them to assess and form judgments about the passage. Moreover, to determine the factors influencing reading proficiency and how it affects students, an interview guide was developed by the researcher and validated by the research adviser and two other experts in the field. The interview guide was composed of introductory, main, and concluding questions.

Procedure

The data gathering procedures for this research were organized into three systematic phases: pre-gathering, gathering, and post-gathering. Each phase ensured that the process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation was conducted ethically and efficiently. During the pre-gathering phase, the researcher began by obtaining an approval letter addressed to the school principal, explaining the objectives and significance of the study on the Sustainable Program of Extension for English Language Learning Reading (SPELL Reading). Upon receiving approval, the researcher prepared all necessary materials, including standardized instruments and an adequate number of copies to accommodate all respondents. This phase established the groundwork for effective and well-organized data collection.

In the gathering phase, the researcher collected data using both standardized instruments and a researcher-designed interview guide. Quantitative data were obtained through standardized assessments, while qualitative data were gathered via in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Before the actual collection, the researcher conducted an orientation session to inform participants about the study's purpose, procedures, and ethical considerations. Throughout the process, participants were guided to ensure genuine and voluntary participation, with strict adherence to confidentiality and informed consent. Data tabulation and analysis plans were also prepared during this phase to facilitate systematic processing of results.

In the post-gathering phase, the researcher carefully reviewed and organized all collected data. Quantitative data were tabulated and subjected to appropriate statistical treatments to identify trends and patterns. Meanwhile, qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were transcribed and analyzed thematically to extract key themes and insights. This final phase concluded with a comprehensive interpretation of results, formulation of conclusions, and recommendations for a sustainable reading program based on the findings.

The procedural flow of the data gathering process can be represented as follows:

Pre-Gathering → Preparation and Approval → Instrument Distribution → Data Collection → Orientation and Facilitation → Ethical Compliance → Data Tabulation → Data Analysis → Interpretation and Program Development.

This flow ensured a structured, ethical, and methodologically sound approach to collecting and analyzing data, resulting in credible and meaningful research outcomes.

Data Analysis

To determine the level of reading proficiency of the participants using standardized instruments assessing decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension, descriptive statistics were applied. Simple percentages were calculated for each component to determine participants' proficiency levels, while frequency distribution showed how many participants fell within different levels of proficiency. Moreover, to explore the factors influencing reading proficiency, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1984) framework. Qualitative coding was done manually using Miles and Huberman's framework, supported by NVivo for organization. The researcher identified key themes and patterns by coding the data, highlighting significant statements and phrases directly related to factors such as socio-economic status, learning environment, and motivation. The data analysis followed four main stages: Data Reduction, Data Display, Conclusion Drawing, and Verification. In the Data Reduction stage, the researcher

coded and condensed qualitative data, identifying recurring themes and key patterns related to reading proficiency. During the Data Display stage, the reduced data were organized into tables and charts to facilitate clear presentation and interpretation of themes, while illustrative participant quotes provided context and depth. The Conclusion Drawing stage involved analyzing the displayed data to determine which factors most significantly influenced reading proficiency, supported by participants' narratives. Finally, in the Verification stage, findings were validated through triangulation—comparing interview and FGD data with quantitative results—to ensure credibility and reliability. Through these stages, the analysis yielded comprehensive insights into the factors affecting reading proficiency. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative findings ensured that the results were credible, meaningful, and reflective of the participants' lived experiences.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The trustworthiness of this study was paramount, as it highlighted the integrity and validity of the research findings. By actively engaging with participants, the researcher aimed to translate the knowledge generated through this research into practical applications. This study emphasized that trustworthiness is central to the positivist ideals of validity and reliability, ensuring that the results are both authentic and credible. The data gathered were sourced from Grade 12 – HUMSS students, parents, and teachers of Ramon E. Bacaltos National High School, who possessed direct knowledge relevant to the research issues. This reliance on participants with firsthand experience enhanced the credibility of the findings, as they are rooted in the lived realities of those directly affected by the phenomena under investigation. Moreover, the research design explicitly sought to ensure that the interpretation of participants' responses was not influenced by the researcher's motivations or preconceived narratives. To strengthen the trustworthiness of this study, the researcher applied the framework proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which consists of four key criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These elements serve as essential benchmarks for assessing the overall quality and validity of the research. First is Credibility, which pertains to confidence in the truthfulness of the findings. In this research, credibility was enhanced through the use of triangulation, where the researcher compared and cross-verified data from multiple sources, including interviews, focus group discussions, and quantitative surveys. This approach helped ensure a well-rounded perspective on the elements affecting reading proficiency. Second is Transferability, which involves demonstrating that the findings can be applicable in other contexts. The researcher addressed this by providing rich, thick descriptions of the research setting, participant demographics, and the specific conditions under which the data were collected. These detailed accounts allow other researchers or practitioners to assess whether the findings are relevant to their own settings, thereby facilitating broader applicability. Next is Dependability, which emphasizes the repeatability, stability, and consistency of the study's findings over time and across similar conditions. This was achieved by establishing standardized procedures for data collection and analysis, ensuring that the study could be replicated in similar contexts with consistent results. The researcher made the process transparent, outlining the steps taken to gather and analyze the data, which increases the reliability of the findings. Finally, Confirmability refers to the objectivity of the findings, ensuring that the results were derived from the participants' input rather than being influenced by the researcher's personal biases or assumptions. To ensure confirmability, the researcher engaged in critical self-reflection, acknowledging and addressing any potential biases that could have shaped the research process. This reflexivity helped to have findings that were not unduly influenced by the researcher's personal views, but rather were grounded in the participants' perspectives.

Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are essential for maintaining scientific integrity, upholding human rights and dignity, and fostering collaboration between science and society. These ethical principles ensured that participation in this study was voluntary, informed, and safe for all research participants. Ethical clearance was granted by the School Principal prior to data collection. The study adhered to the ethical principles outlined by Amdur and Bankert (2011), ensuring Respect for Persons, Beneficence, and Justice. Participation was entirely voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all participants, who were fully aware of the study's purpose, benefits, and potential risks. They retained the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Confidentiality was strictly maintained, and all personal information was kept anonymous. To uphold beneficence, the researcher minimized possible risks and avoided physical, social, and psychological harm by refraining from asking sensitive or personal questions that could negatively affect participants. Appropriate tools and methods were used to ensure accurate data collection and analysis. Justice was promoted by providing equal opportunities for all participants through random sampling, ensuring fairness and impartiality. The study was conducted with integrity, free of plagiarism or misconduct, thereby strengthening the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the level of reading proficiency, its factors, and the factors' ways of influencing the Grade 12 - HUMSS students of Ramon E. Bacaltos National High School. Moreover, the findings serve as the basis for designing a Sustainable Program of Extension that will enhance students' reading proficiency. This reveals the presentation of the results of the gathered data, both quantitative and qualitative data, together with the analysis and discussion of the results.

Table 1 presents the reading proficiency levels of the participants across four key domains: decoding skills, vocabulary skills, overall reading skills, and reading comprehension.

The results indicate that a substantial majority of participants, 29 out of 46 (63.04%), demonstrated a high level of decoding skills.



Meanwhile, 17 participants (36.96%) reached a middle level, and notably, none fell into the low category. The predominance of students with high decoding proficiency suggests that Grade 12 students are generally adept at transforming printed words into phonetic codes and reading them with accuracy (Yusun, 2014). This reflects steady improvement and mastery in foundational reading processes.

Table 1. *Level of Reading Proficiency*

Level	High		Middle		Low		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Decoding	29	63.04	17	36.96	0	0		
Vocabulary	8	17.39	30	65.22	8	17.39		
Reading	24	52.17	22	47.83	0	0	40	100
Comprehension	15	32.16	8	17.39	23	50		

With respect to vocabulary, most participants, 30 out of 46 (65.22%), were found to possess skills at the middle level. The high and low proficiency categories each had 8 participants (17.39%). The distribution implies that vocabulary attainment among senior high school students is commonly moderate, potentially indicating that while basic word knowledge is strong, mastery of advanced vocabulary remains limited for many.

For overall reading skills, 24 participants (52.17%) were identified at a high level, and 22 (47.83%) at a middle level, with no participants falling into the low category. The dominance of the high-level group underscores the fluency developed by 12th-grade students, likely a result of years of practice and regular exposure to increasingly complex texts. Such exposure helps foster automatic word recognition and efficient decoding. As Yusun (2014) notes, reading fluency involves not only speed but also accuracy, both of which tend to be well developed by students at this stage.

In contrast, the data on comprehension skills reveal a more concerning trend. Half of the participants (23, or 50%) exhibited low levels of reading comprehension, while 15 (32.61%) demonstrated high proficiency, and the remaining 8 (17.39%) fell into the middle category. This suggests that, despite strong decoding and reading fluency, many students are challenged when it comes to understanding and extracting meaning from texts. Similar patterns have been highlighted in previous research; Kang (2011) argues that true reading proficiency encompasses more than just speed and accuracy, and it is equally dependent on comprehension. Yusun (2014) further emphasizes that accurate and fluent reading is of limited value without a genuine understanding of the material.

The observed trends may be explained by educational practices that prioritize the development of foundational literacy skills such as phonemic awareness and phonics (Lovett, 2012). While these skills are critical, mastery of advanced vocabulary and higher-order comprehension often requires targeted instruction and sustained effort (Astika, 2016). Many students, even at senior levels, may have limited exposure to sophisticated vocabulary and lack strategies for flexible word use, which constrains their ability to fully grasp complex texts. Additionally, higher-grade students may struggle with making inferences and interpreting deeper meanings (Parrish, 2020), signifying a gap in higher-order cognitive skills.

In summary, while Grade 12 students tend to excel in basic reading processes and fluency, there remains a significant need to enhance vocabulary acquisition and foster advanced comprehension abilities. The results suggest that instructional approaches should place greater emphasis on strategies for vocabulary learning and comprehension development to prepare students for the demands of higher education and beyond.

Table 2. *Factors Influencing the Reading Proficiency of the Participants*

Themes	Categories
Socio-economic	Access to reading materials
	Parents/Family
	Family Background
	Access to digital technology
Learning Environment	Teachers
	Friends/Classmates
	Curriculum/Subject
Background Knowledge	Poor Vocabulary Skills
	Low Comprehension Skills
	Poor Reading Motivation and Behavior
Motivation and Interest	Lack of Learning Engagement
	Irregular Language Use

Factors influencing the reading proficiency of participants are analyzed through four key themes: Socio-economic, Learning Environment, Background Knowledge, and Motivation and Interest. As Thompson et al. (2004), cited by Cabalo et al. (2019), noted, reading proficiency, while developed in school, is heavily influenced by a reader's interest and intellectual capacity. McGinnis (1992) further emphasized that external factors also play a significant role in this ability (Cabalo et al., 2019).

Socio-economic factors, which are critical in shaping students' reading habits (Cano et al., 2020), were categorized into four areas: Access to reading materials, Parents/Family, Family background, and Access to digital technology. Participants shared how these

factors influence their reading. One participant, identified as "Ed," stated that "watching English movies can really help me... because I enjoy watching movies a lot." Another, "Ky," noted that "I often read manga and comics... because the words I don't know, I can learn. And for words, I don't know how to pronounce, I can also figure them out... since I look them up, I search them." "Ver" explained that "reading stories or poems is really a factor in improving my reading skills... because I can learn new words and use them, especially when I understand their meaning and how to use them." "Jhon" added, "I enjoy reading books... and if there's something I don't understand, I use a dictionary. I also like reading the Word of God... the Bible, because there are deep words in it. To understand better, I also use a Bible in Cebuano Language." An English teacher, "Teacher Ar," highlighted the importance of consistent exposure to wholesome and helpful reading materials to improve proficiency. The influence of family was also a recurring theme. A participant, "Ir," shared, "My parents and family don't like it when I stay quiet, they want me to be talkative. That's where my confidence improved, and also my communication and reading skills." A parent, Mrs. Abado, agreed, stating that "we, the parents... can also help with their reading because we are always together at home." However, another teacher, "Teacher Ue," pointed out that "another factor is family background, maybe the family lacks enough educational background." Access to digital technology presented a mixed influence. A parent, Mrs. Aela, said that a gadget is one of the factors "because it can help them," while a teacher, "Teacher Ly," noted that students use "their cellphones, because they use cellphones instead of studying." This was echoed by another teacher, "Teacher Lia," who said, "Some of the factors might be that they don't spend more time reading because most of their time is spent on playing online games and engaging on social media." Participant "Ad" also confirmed this, stating, "We spend more time on gadgets on social media, we can't focus on reading to learn something." Participants acknowledged that while access to reading materials and visual media is helpful, a lack of family educational background can be a hindrance (Cadiz et al., 2021). While gadgets are useful, they can also be a significant distraction (Bhatti et al., 2022).

The second theme, Learning Environment, consists of three categories: teachers, friends/classmates, and curriculum/subject. A supportive learning environment is essential for developing second language skills, including vocabulary and reading comprehension (Yang, 2018). Participant "Ad" noted that "the teachers are a factor... because they teach you and help you when you're struggling." "Arj" shared that their "classmates... are really the ones who influenced me, especially since I have a classmate who is very good in English... I really learned a lot from him." A parent, Mrs. Fe, also recognized this, saying, "even their friends... can really help them." The curriculum itself was also cited as a factor. Participant "En" and "Teacher Ar" both stated that the "subject itself" and the "curriculum content" are factors. Effective teaching, positive peer influence, and a well-designed curriculum are all vital components of a successful learning environment (Cano, 2020).

The third theme, Background Knowledge, was found to have two negative categories: low vocabulary skills and low reading comprehension skills. Participant "Jhon" highlighted the "lack of knowledge of the words... because some aren't very familiar, and there are also some whose meanings that I don't know." Teacher "Eg" noted that "low comprehension" is a problem "because they cannot answer the questions asked unless it is translated... They struggle in understanding texts or passages... but they can read." Participant "En" also stated that the "level of reading comprehension is also a factor." These knowledge gaps are significant barriers to learning, as limited vocabulary and poor comprehension make reading a challenging task, leading to frustration (Imam, 2014).

The final theme, Motivation and Interest, was categorized into poor reading motivation and behavior, lack of learning engagement, and irregular language use. Teacher "Ue" stated, "The factor that influences the reading proficiency of the students, is they don't have the love for reading. Students don't like to read books; the library is of no use today." Teacher "Ly" agreed, saying that a factor is "the lack of habit of studying or poor learning interest because they are very relaxed and I guess, they just go to school for compliance only so that they will graduate soon." Teacher "Eg" added that "another factor is the non-usage of the language in their daily conversation. They say, practice makes perfect, and since they are not practicing it, they don't develop their skills." These statements emphasize that poor motivation and habits can hinder reading development. As Cadiz et al. (2021) concluded, a positive attitude toward reading is strongly linked to higher academic performance. Since reading is a layered skill that integrates word recognition, understanding, fluency, and the reader's motivation (Leipzig, 2001, as cited by Cadi, 2021), fostering a love for reading is essential for long-term academic and personal growth.

The research's principal goal is to evaluate the self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and academic achievement of senior high school students. The purpose of this research is to explore the effect of these expectations on their academic success. Thus, this analysis used the descriptive-correlational analysis approach to define the respondents' profile in terms of self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and academic success. The research also established the magnitude of impacts that occur between and within the variables in this study. Specifically, it established a substantial influence between the respondents' self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy on their academic success.

Cross-Analysis: Connecting Low Comprehension to Qualitative Factors

The key quantitative finding—that 50% of students exhibit low reading comprehension (Table 1)—is strongly corroborated and explained by the qualitative themes, particularly Background Knowledge and Motivation and Interest. The students' demonstrated fluency (high decoding and overall reading scores) suggests that the problem is not a deficit in basic word recognition, but rather in the higher-order cognitive skills required for meaning construction, a process that is highly dependent on vocabulary and engagement.

The qualitative data on Background Knowledge explicitly identifies "Poor Vocabulary Skills" and "Low Comprehension Skills" as



major categories. Participant "Jhon's" comment about the "lack of knowledge of the words" and Teacher "Eg's" observation that students "struggle in understanding texts or passages" directly reflect the low comprehension scores. The students possess the mechanical skill of reading but lack the lexical bridge and prior knowledge necessary to fully decode the meaning of complex texts.

Furthermore, the theme of Motivation and Interest is critical. Teacher "Ue's" blunt assessment that students "don't have the love for reading" and Teacher "Ly's" mention of the "lack of habit of studying" provide the behavioral and attitudinal context for the quantitative deficit. A low motivation to read translates to less exposure to challenging texts, which in turn stifles the growth of advanced vocabulary and the development of comprehension strategies. This is compounded by the Socio-economic factor of technology as a distraction, where time spent on online games and social media (as noted by "Teacher Lia" and "Ad") supplants time that could be dedicated to building these crucial reading habits. The lack of engagement and consistent practice, confirmed by the qualitative data, is the underlying mechanism that prevents students from moving from fluent reading to deep comprehension.

Table 3. *Ways of Influence of Reading Proficiency Factors*

<i>Ways of Influence</i>	<i>Reading Proficiency Factors</i>	<i>Categories</i>
provides access to reading resources	Socio-economic	Language skill development
motivates for reading skills improvement		Parental and social support
hinders literacy development		Family educational background deficiency
provides educational support yet distracts learners	Learning Environment	Dual role of technology in learning
teaches reading yet lack of monitoring, leads to undeveloped skills		Instructional support and oversight
motivates meaningful learning		Social motivation
enriches reading skills but the pile of tasks hinders quality learning	Background Knowledge	Curriculum pressure
hinders quality learning		Reading proficiency deficiency
creates disengagement		Motivation and Interest

Table 3 shows the study findings, the factors that influence the reading proficiency of participants can be categorized into four themes: Socio-economic, Learning Environment, Background Knowledge, and Motivation and Interest. These factors have both positive and negative influences, revealing a complex interplay of access and support.

Socio-economic factors positively influence reading proficiency through access to reading materials, visual media, and parental support. Participants like "Jhon," who is a fan of the Harry Potter series, noted that watching movies with British accents and mimicking dialogues from subtitles helped improve their pronunciation and language skills. Another participant, "Arj," explained that reading comics helped them learn new terms and apply them in subjects like English, particularly in sentence construction. Other participants, like "Ad" and "Ir," found that books and dictionaries were instrumental in learning new vocabulary and factual information. This aligns with Au et al. (2011), who found that readily available reading materials increase reading frequency and voluntary reading, leading to improved proficiency.

Parental and family support also play a crucial role. A parent, Mrs. Abado, mentioned how families can "inspire and motivate" their children to study. Participant "Ir" said that their parents were always there to "support me... and they are the ones who help me practice if I don't know something." Teacher Eg confirmed this, stating that the family "has a great part of the reading proficiency of the students" because learning starts at home. Conversely, socio-economic factors can also have a negative impact. Teacher Ue pointed out that a parent's insufficient educational background can hinder a child's learning. This is consistent with Cano (2020), who noted that children of parents with lower educational attainment are more likely to struggle with reading.

Access to digital technology is a double-edged sword. A parent, Mrs. An, and Teacher Ar both acknowledged that gadgets can be useful for research and looking up word meanings. However, participant Eyn and teachers Ue and Ly highlighted the negative side, noting that time spent on online games and social media can divert focus from reading. Eyn specifically mentioned that "shortened or texted with wrong spelling" messages on gadgets negatively affect their spelling and grammar. This underscores Alghamdi's (2016) point that while technology offers educational benefits, it also presents significant distractions that can hinder a student's reading development.

The learning environment, including teachers, peers, and curriculum, also has both positive and negative influences. Participant "Orge" said that their English teachers' use of English and correction of errors helped them learn. A parent, Mrs. Davy, added that students can ask teachers for help to "assess if what they've read is correct." However, Teacher Smith noted that due to workload, teachers may have limited time for "sufficient monitoring" of students' reading progress. This highlights a common challenge for English educators (Cadiz, 2021).

Friends and classmates were identified as positive motivators. Participant "Ad" mentioned that their friends and classmates help them when they are "having a hard time, especially with English" and encourage them to read. The curriculum was also seen as both a positive and a negative factor. Participant Ema said that English subjects helped them learn by requiring them to read and translate unfamiliar words. Conversely, teachers Ly and Smith noted that the curriculum's "plenty of subject areas" and "overwhelmed with activities" can distract students and prevent them from engaging in deeper reading.

Background knowledge was identified as a critical negative factor, as insufficient knowledge directly hinders reading proficiency, particularly comprehension. Participant Eyn explained that "if I find it difficult to understand the words, I get even more confused with the sentence." Similarly, "Ver" noted that reading quality is poor when a sentence's meaning is "too deep." Teacher Ar also confirmed that students struggle with "higher level of comprehension." These findings align with Cadiz et al. (2021), who recommended intervention programs to address these knowledge gaps and help students become autonomous readers.

Motivation and interest were also found to strongly and negatively influence reading skills, linking directly to the low comprehension scores. Teachers, July and Eg, both noted that students' "lack of 'love for reading' and limited 'practice' resulted in low proficiency. They added that the non-usage of English in daily conversation leads to "weaker vocabulary and no deeper understanding." Ahmadi (2013) supports this, stating that reading motivation is crucial for language acquisition. Without interest, students are less likely to practice, which hinders their development of fluency and comprehension (Wills et al., 2023). This emphasizes the importance of fostering a genuine passion for reading, which requires consistent exposure and practice with engaging materials.

Conclusions

The study concludes that learners' reading proficiency is moderately developed, with notable strengths in decoding and reading fluency but significant weaknesses in vocabulary and comprehension. This result is influenced both positively and negatively by several key factors: socio-economic status, learning environment, background knowledge, and motivation and interest. These findings confirm Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which argues that cognitive development, including literacy and reading skills, is largely shaped by social interactions, cultural contexts, and the resources available within the learner's environment. Furthermore, this supports Piaget's Cognitive Constructivist Theory, which holds that students actively construct their understanding of reading comprehension through interactions with their surroundings and experiences.

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