

Reading Problems Faced by Students in Secondary Schools of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Reading plays an important role in the intellectual development of students at his academic journey. The goal of the current study was to examine how reading affects students' overall development and the challenges that secondary school students' encounter when they read in class, as well as how reading development and reading beliefs are affected. The study was quantitative in nature using descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised all the secondary schools' students of Frontier Children Academy (FCA), Frontier Youth Academy (FYA), and Frontier Science Academy (FSA) at Hayatabad Peshawar, which includes 735 secondary school students. The sampling was carried out using Raosoft online sample calculator. A total of 220 students were selected using simple random sampling technique. A self-structured three points Likert's scale questionnaire with 16 items was used to collect data from the sampled students. The data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The study findings show that a significant number of students were found having problems in reading and comprehension of the reading materials. The results of the research indicate that most students require repeated reading in order to fully comprehend a given subject. Analysis revealed that when students received the right support and a remedial strategy, they improved their reading comprehension by roughly 90% and had more positive views about working hard to become better readers than their comparative peers. The ramifications for designing effective peer-mediated learning environments for use in high school education classes are emphasized. The study recommends that specific time for reading during the school hours may be given for resolving the severe reading difficulties. Moreover, Teachers may implement strong motivating mechanisms and provide reading resources to students during class.

Keywords: *Frontier Children Academy, Frontier Science Academy, Frontier Youth Academy, Reading, Reading Problems, Holistic Development*

INTRODUCTION

Language competency requires listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading is the best way to learn. The students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa study books but rarely speak, listen, or write concluded that tourism workers and students needed reading the most. They

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had to read incoming passenger cards, traveller statements, and customs declarations. Reading is considered to be an extremely significant skills in the learning process (Spear & Swerling, 2016). Reading makes one more conscious of the whole range of human experience. This consciousness fosters the development of empathy and compassion for others. Not only does reading increase our social consciousness. It also improves our capacity for accomplishment and leadership. It goes without saying that reading improves mental clarity and acuity. It improves mental function.

It has been demonstrated that students who practice reading well do better on exams and in the classroom. It also improves leadership skills and social awareness. Reading kinds like artistic fiction has been displayed to build one's Hypothesis of Brain, or the capacity to understand others' convictions. Initiative capacities are additionally improved by reading as it empowers pioneers to accumulate new data that their associations need effectively. Reading likewise gives open doors to solid profound commitment. In this sense, reading can go about as both a close to home departure and a profound preparation ground where individuals can figure out how to see themselves in a more beneficial light.

Ultimately, reading can prompt more noteworthy life span because of its intellectually fortifying impact (Wagstaff, 2020). Reading skills are defined as being very important in the learning process (Cirino et al., 2019). The Pakistani government mandates that all students in junior and senior high schools study English as a mandatory subject (Maqsood et al., 2021). This demonstrates why it is necessary to acquire the English language with good reading skills (Zarei et al., 2019). Whereas, Educators have, over the course of many years, looking for strategies to boost students' reading abilities in primary schools, typically by focusing on the reading materials, programs, or instructional approaches that are currently being utilized by instructors (Chong & Reinders, 2022; García & Frede, 2019; Wright, 2010).

The recent emphasis placed on coaching is just one additional effort being made to improve reading education (Eather et al., 2022). Through supporting teachers in their attempts to instruct students, coaching directs the attention directly to the goal of elevating the standard of education received in the classroom (Bentley, 2012). Even though coaching has been enthusiastically welcomed, there are still issues regarding whether or not it genuinely makes a difference in the teaching practices of educators and the levels of achievement of students (Fritzsche, 2022). There is some evaluative research literature that addresses this efficacy issue, but there is little empirical evidence to suggest that coaching affects teaching practices or enhances student learning (Amua-Sekyi, 2016).

The majority of people who write about coaching believe that one of the fundamental roles of the coach is to offer teachers some form of professional development (PD) (Postholm, 2012). In point of fact, research and theory place a strong emphasis on the significance of authentic, job-embedded teacher learning that is conducted in a collaborative setting, places an emphasis on a particular subject matter and offers ongoing support and feedback to teachers about their instructional practices (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022). It would appear that coaching includes all of these components of effective PD, and as a result, this strategy makes intuitive sense as a method for enhancing teaching

practices and academic performance in students (Caena & Vuorikari, 2022). Substantially more of what is taught is transmitted into teachers' classroom practices when coaching is included with the teaching of theory, demonstration, and practice (Wolf & Peele, 2019). The majority of a coach's time as a professional developer should be spent communicating with teachers either one-on-one or in small groups, observing classrooms, and conferring with teachers (Desimone & Pak, 2017).

On the other hand, there are some scholars who believe that the act of coaching might encompass more than simply delivering PD to instructors (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011). Their notion that coaches truly assist whole-school reform and develop whole-school capacity is shown in Neufeld and Roper's use of the terms "change coaching" and "capacity coaching," which they employed (Lofthouse, 2019). They describe a function that encompasses more than just working directly on professional development with teachers (Wood et al., 2016). This function of coaching does not necessarily exclude an interest in classroom instruction but rather sees classroom instruction as a component of wider systems change required in the schools (Hammond & Moore, 2018). The basis of this argument is that change or capacity coaching can lead to systemic educational reform (Basma & Savage, 2018).

Similarly, after conducting a 2-year study of a literacy campaign in Georgia, that principals viewed their coaches as directors and mentors (Walpole & Blamey, 2008). This was revealed in their finding that principals recognized their coaches. This categorization of coaches is comparable to what Neufeld and Roper (2003) describe as those in the coaching profession. Directors are tasked with a huge range of responsibilities, some of which require coordinating efforts across the entire school and entail activities other than working directly with teachers (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). It is possible for director coaches to be responsible for guiding the implementation of state and district change activities, coordinating professional development, and facilitating the interpretation and use of data in their respective schools (Cilliers et al., 2022). The responsibilities of coaches in their roles as change agents would go well beyond those of mentors for teachers (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011).

Chawwang (2008) discovered that doctors, engineers, teachers, and hoteliers needed reading skills to read newspapers, academic textbooks, and journals. KP professionals and students must read because most textbooks and science and technology sources are in reading, students must read (Morris, 2013). Students who are learning English as a second or foreign language sometimes struggle with reading comprehension because complex and very long phrases make the language difficult to grasp (Dara, 2019). Sentences are considered to be complex when they contain a significant number of clauses or reduced clauses (Li, 2010). According to Aebersold and Field's research from 1997, complex sentences also include those that contain coherent terms. In addition, complex noun groups, nominalizations, coordinating conjunctions, participial phrases, and prepositional phrases are the primary causes of problems in the reading comprehension of the students. This is due to the fact that these elements make texts more complicated and challenging to comprehend for students (Rahman, 2018).

KP students struggle with reading and have poor comprehension skills. The results of a study by Chawwang (2008) on the English proficiency revealed that the students' reading proficiency fell short of the required standard. Additionally, examine the English proficiency of Mathayomsuksa students and arrived at the same conclusion—the students' reading proficiency was low.

In addition, Ponmanee and Sinsuwan (2001) conducted a study to compare 60 graduate students teaching KP and social science to those teaching English to determine their demands and usage issues in the schools. All disciplines of study required all four English skills, and poor reading was the main issue (Ali et al., 2022). Studies shows that in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) students had trouble understanding literature due to vocabulary and sentence structure issues. KP students are poor readers, according to this study (Fareed et al., 2018). Songsiri (1999) found that students in KP had poor English reading skills.

Students' inadequate vocabulary, syntax, and grammar and inability to predict meaning from context caused issues in skimming for main ideas, scanning for details, making inferences, identifying the reference, restating, sequencing facts from views, and determining the author's mood and tone (Khalid & Anjum, 2019). Adunyarittigun (2002) revealed that poor language structure and vocabulary were the main reasons participants struggled to predict meaning in context (Fareed et al., 2016). Chuenta (2002) also observed that participants had trouble understanding the primary idea, reading rapidly due to limited vocabulary, summarising the material, and using appropriate reading strategies.

Tanghirunwat (2003) observed that Pakistan engineers struggled with technical jargon from other fields, new technologies, and telecommunications. Poor vocabulary and sentence structure impair reading comprehension. Vocabulary knowledge guesses word meanings, while sentence structure knowledge determines word order and language patterns (Sahito et al., 2017).

The researcher realizes that vocabulary and sentence structure issues prevent students from understanding texts (Mirza et al., 2021). These two areas affect their higher-level studies, which require skilful reading of textbooks and other materials (Mirza et al., 2021). Few studies have examined Nakhonratchasima students' sentence form, vocabulary, and reading comprehension issues (Haider, 2004). This study examined 12th-graders' sentence construction, vocabulary, and reading comprehension issues. The study also examined reading ability gaps between students (Asad et al., 2021).

Research Objective

The study aimed to:

1. Analyse the effect of reading on student's holistic development
2. Analyse the reading problems faced by secondary school students

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is quantitative in nature using descriptive research design.

Population and Sample of the study

The population of the current study includes all the students at secondary level in Frontier Children Academy, Frontier Science Academy and Frontier Youth Academy Hayatabad Peshawar. The total population comprised 735 secondary school students. The sampling of the study was carried out using simple random sampling technique. The sample size was determined as 220 by Raosoft online sampling calculator.

Tool of Data Collection

The data was collected from the students using close ended self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised 16 items on a 3 points scale consisting Yes, No and do not know. The questionnaire comprised of the items regarding students reading problems and the impact of reading on the holistic development of the student. The tool items were validated from experts in the field before distribution and data collection.

RESULTS

The questionnaires were distributed among the sample students and their responses regarding reading problems and its impact in their academic wellbeing were recorded. The collected data were rectified and analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Table.1: Students responses to various questions items regarding reading and its impact on their academic well-being.

S.No.	Questions	Yes	No	Don't Know
		F (%age)	F (%age)	F (%age)
1	Do you read books other than course books?	134 (60.9%)	79 (35.9%)	7 (3.2%)
2	Does reading help you in enhancing your creative abilities?	180 (81.82%)	31 (14.09%)	9 (4.09%)
3	Does reading help you in vocabulary building?	189 (85.91%)	18 (8.18%)	13 (5.91%)
4	Does reading develop your communication skills?	172 (78.18%)	20 (9.09%)	28 (12.73%)

S.No.	Questions	Yes	No	Don't Know
		F	F	F
		(%age)	(%age)	(%age)
5	Does reading help you in scoring better in your academics?	123 (55.91%)	57 (25.91%)	40 (18.18%)
6	Can you continue your reading habit along with your course study?	101 (45.91%)	95 (43.18%)	24 (10.91%)
7	Does your school provide you library facility at school?	140 (63.64%)	62 (28.18%)	18 (8.18%)
8	Does the social media distracts you from reading books?	139 (63.18%)	66 (30%)	15 (6.82%)
9	Does your parents allow you to study books other than course books?	194 (88.18%)	18 (8.18%)	8 (3.64%)
10	Online reading is more effective than physical book reading?	38 (17.27%)	156 (70.91%)	26 (11.82%)
11	It is difficult for me to read words quickly and smoothly.	75 (34.09%)	120 (54.55%)	25 (11.36%)
12	It is difficult for me to understand the main ideas of what I read.	89 (40.45%)	113 (51.36%)	18 (8.18%)
13	I often reread the text to understand it.	102 (46.36%)	96 (43.64%)	22 (10%)
14	I find reading boring and tiring.	72 (32.73%)	136 (61.82%)	12 (5.45%)
15	I feel confident in my reading abilities.	107 (48.64%)	96 (43.64%)	17 (7.73%)

S.No.	Questions	Yes F (%age)	No F (%age)	Don't Know F (%age)
16	I need help from others to understand new words.	112 (50.91%)	84 (38.18%)	24 (10.91%)

The results obtained shows the students responses opinions about reading and reading problems, table 1 indicates a detailed picture of student's responses to the questionnaire. Item 1, shows that majority (60.9%) respondents were of the opinion that they read books other than course books, while a 35.9% respondents oppose the statement. Item 2, shows that 81.82% respondents believe that reading help them in enhancing their creative abilities while a small number of 14% respondents disagreed to the statement. Item 3, reveals that a significant number of the respondents i.e., 85.91% finds reading helpful in building their vocabulary whereas a small number of 8.18% did not find so.

Item 4, indicates that majority (78.18%) of the respondents opined that reading is helpful in building communication skills while a small number of 9.09% respondents were against the statement. Item 5, shows that 55.91% of the respondents opined that reading help them scoring better in their academics, while 25.91% disagreed to the statement. Item 6, reveals that 45.91% respondents agreed that they can continue their reading habit along with their course study, however 43.18% disagreed to the statement.

Item 7, shows that a significant number (63.64%) of respondents were of the opinion that their school provide them the facility of library where as 28.18% respondents were of the opinion that no such facility is provided by their schools. Item 8, reveals that majority (63.18%) of the respondents believe that social media distracts them form reading books, however a small number (30%) of the respondents did not think so.

Item 9, shows that majority (88.18%) of the respondents opined that their parents allow them to study books other than their course books, whereas a small number (8.18%) respondents oppose the statements. Item 10, reveals that majority (70.91%) believed that physical reading is more effective as compared to online reading whereas 17.27% respondents found online reading more effective as compared to physical reading.

Item 11, shows that majority (54.55%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement that it is difficult for them to read smoothly and quickly, while a notable number (34.09%) agreed to the statement. Item 12, reveals that a significant number (40.45%) of respondents opined that it is difficult for them to understand the main ideas of what they read, whereas majority (51.36%) respondents oppose the statement. Item 13, indicates that majority (46.36%) respondents agreed to the statements that they reread the text to understand it, however, a significant number (43.64%) of respondents disagreed the statement.

Item 14, shows that majority (61.82%) of the respondents finds reading interesting while a significant number (32.73%) of respondents finds it boring and tiring. Item 15, shows that majority (48.64%) of the respondents feel confident in their reading abilities while a significant number (43.64%) has low confidence in this regards. Majority (50.91%) of the respondents opined that they need help from others to understand new words while 38.18% were of the opinion that they do not need help from others to understand new words.

CONCLUSION

Reading has a vital role in the overall development and academic growth of students at all educational levels. It is evident from various studies that intensive reading has significant impact on individuals' academic well-being and intellectual development. The current study aimed at the problems faced by students at secondary level. The study findings show that a significant number of students were found having problems in reading not only reading in smooth and clear way but also most of the students were found to face difficulty in the comprehension of the reading materials.

Furthermore, the findings of the study reveals that majority of the students' needs reading time and again to understand a particular concept. It was further found that in various cases the parents were found not allowing their children to read books beside their course books, which most of the students finds tiring and boring. Furthermore, with the advancement of technologies the preference is shifted towards online reading, but the study findings show that most of the students find it difficult to read online instead they prefer reading physically.

The study concluded that students at secondary level face different reading problems in terms of comprehension. Further, the study concludes that it is voice of the time to provide the students extensive opportunities of reading, reading various kind of material beside the course books, which in returns will help them further expands their knowledge, vocabulary, comprehension and will lead towards their intellectual development. Findings show that promoting reading comprehension growth among high school students reading at grade levels 6 through 9 is more than typical high school programming, and these students report working harder to improve their reading ability. The results were very favourable at the same time. Whereas the school students show potential progress in reading fluency, and their involvement with teachers had a great impact on their general attitudes toward reading and their desire to become better readers.

According to the study's findings, the proposed solution of provision of extra specific time for reading during the school hours, have a lot of potential as a crucial tool for resolving the severe reading difficulties that many school students continue to experience.

As a result, this study serves as the foundation for further research into how to develop and expand students' interest in remedial reading and special education classrooms in high school. Future research should look at ways to increase these students' fluency and expand the strategies to include the subgroup of high school non-readers. Future research

should concentrate on ways to increase these students' motivation for learning as well as solutions to the related logistical issue of giving them engaging, age-appropriate reading material.

It is further concluded that Practitioners must deal with the difficulties posed by raising awareness of reading ability while the field continues to modify and expand borders for the students.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends some solutions that are effectively employed in remedial and special education classes at the high school level. Teachers may implement strong motivating mechanisms and made a multitude of engaging reading resources and strategies to obtain good results. Teachers may foster more powerful instructing techniques. Comprehend and conquer obstructions to grown-up student persistence, keep grown-ups adequately returning to accomplish their objectives by offering sensible help administrations, like nearby childcare and a few types of guidance and counselling.

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