



Reading habits of learners: patterns, preferences, and influences

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Abstract

This study explored the reading habits of Grade 7 learners at Sta. Maria Integrated School in Tagbina, Surigao del Sur, specifically focusing on their reading patterns, preferences, influences, and performance levels. Using a descriptive research design, data was collected from 76 identified least learned Grade 7 students through questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and structured observations. The study revealed moderate reading frequency (WM=3.15) and duration (WM=3.4), with stronger engagement in reading activities (WM=3.65) than in consistent reading habits. Students demonstrated preferences for comics, religious texts, and quiet reading environments like libraries. The strongest influences on reading habits were personal motivation and interest (WM=3.78) and access to reading materials (WM=3.71), while digital distractions emerged as the most significant challenge to sustained reading. Reading performance assessments indicated adequate comprehension (WM=3.14) and fluency skills (WM=3.10), but only satisfactory vocabulary development (WM=2.78). A significant relationship was found between reading habits and reading performance, with institutional support programs like "Catch-Up Friday" showing positive impact on reading consistency. Based on these findings, a structured intervention program is recommended to address digital distractions, enhance parental involvement beyond verbal encouragement, and strengthen vocabulary acquisition through interest-driven reading activities.

Keywords: Reading Habits; Reading Performance; Grade 7 Learners; Comprehension; Fluency; Vocabulary; Digital Distractions; Parental Influence; Reading Preferences; Motivation; Intervention Program

1. Introduction

Reading is essential to educational development, especially during the transitional phase to secondary school. This study explores the reading habits of Grade 7 learners, focusing on patterns, preferences, and influencing factors. It draws upon theories such as Social Constructivism, Motivation Theory, and Sociocultural Theory to analyze how reading behaviors are formed and sustained. The study addresses a significant research gap in understanding localized, contextual factors that influence the reading habits of least-learned learners in a rural Philippine setting.

2. Materials and method

This study employed a descriptive research design to explore the reading habits of Grade 7 learners at Sta. Maria Integrated School. The approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive analysis of students' reading patterns, preferences, and the influences shaping their behaviors without manipulating variables. The study was conducted within the local context of Sta. Maria, Tagbina, Surigao del Sur, focusing on 54 identified least-learned learners in Grade 7.

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Data collection involved the use of a structured questionnaire to gather quantitative data and a semi-structured interview guide to provide qualitative insights. The instruments were designed to assess reading frequency, duration, materials, comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and external influences such as parental involvement and access to reading resources. Prior to full deployment, the instruments were pilot-tested for reliability and clarity.

Additionally, observations were made during classroom and home settings to complement survey responses and ensure the authenticity of student reading behaviors. For data analysis, statistical tools such as the weighted mean and Likert scale interpretations were used to describe reading habits and challenges, while the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was employed to determine any significant relationship between reading habits and reading performance. These methods provided a structured yet flexible means of capturing and analyzing the complex dynamics of reading behavior among the target learners.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Reading Habit: Pattern

Table 1 Reading Pattern of the Students on Reading Frequency

Reading Frequency Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I engage in reading activities daily.	3.52	Agree
I read every morning or evening.	3.06	Neutral
I dedicate long hours on weekends or holidays to finish reading books or any reading materials.	3.35	Neutral
I read 10 pages per day or one book per month.	2.33	Disagree
I read multiple textbooks and notes intensively for weeks before examination period.	3.50	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.15	Neutral

The data reveals moderate reading frequency among students, with an overall weighted mean of 3.15, indicating occasional reading habits. Students show stronger engagement in daily reading activities (3.52) and intensive textbook reading before examinations (3.50), both categorized as "Reads Regularly." However, there's a concerning pattern regarding consistent reading volume, with students disagreeing (2.33) with the statement about reading 10 pages daily or one book monthly, suggesting inadequate regular reading quantity. This aligns with findings from Merga and Gardiner (2018), who identified that while students may engage in reading, the volume and consistency often fall below recommended levels for academic development. Their research emphasized that even motivated readers often struggle to maintain regular reading habits amid competing digital distractions and academic pressures, noting that sporadic intensive reading (such as before exams) doesn't produce the same cognitive benefits as consistent daily reading practices.

Table 2 Reading Pattern of the Students on Duration of Reading

Reading Duration Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I read a few pages of a book, news article, or blog for 10 minutes during lunch breaks.	3.09	Neutral
I read 15-30 minutes each day.	3.35	Neutral
I read for at least 30 minutes every day.	3.17	Neutral
I read less than an hour on weekends.	3.15	Neutral
I read more than an hour on weekends or holidays	2.94	Neutral
Overall Weighted Mean	3.40	Neutral

The table presents a consistent pattern of occasional reading across all measured timeframes, with an overall weighted mean of 3.4. Students reported neutral responses (ranging from 2.94 to 3.35) across various duration metrics, including reading during lunch breaks, daily reading sessions, and weekend reading time. The highest mean score (3.17) was for reading at least 30 minutes daily, while the lowest (2.94) was for reading more than an hour during weekends or holidays. These findings correspond with research by Clinton et al. (2020), who found that modern students tend to engage in shorter reading sessions rather than extended deep reading experiences. Their study, which tracked actual reading duration versus self-reported estimates, demonstrated that students commonly overestimate their reading time while underestimating their digital distraction intervals, revealing that the majority of undergraduate students rarely sustain reading sessions beyond 30 consecutive minutes without checking digital devices.

Table 3 Reading Pattern of the Students on Consistency of Reading

Consistency of Reading Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I have a specific time of day dedicated to reading.	3.30	Neutral
I track the amount of time I spend reading each week.	2.98	Neutral
My reading habits are regular and consistent.	3.31	Neutral
I follow a set of routines for my reading activities.	3.06	Neutral
I participate the school reading program every week, such as "Catch-Up Friday".	4.06	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.34	Neutral

The data shows an overall weighted mean of 3.34, indicating occasional consistent reading habits among students. Most measures received neutral ratings, with means ranging from 2.98 to 3.31, suggesting moderate consistency in reading routines. Notably, participation in school reading programs such as "Catch-Up Friday" received the highest rating (4.06), categorized as "Reads Regularly," indicating that structured institutional support positively influences reading consistency. This pattern aligns with research by Torppa et al. (2020), who found that reading consistency is heavily influenced by institutional structures and social reading opportunities. Their longitudinal study demonstrated that students who participated in regular, scheduled reading programs showed significantly higher reading persistence and consistency compared to those relying solely on self-directed reading habits. The researchers emphasized that even brief but consistent reading routines contributed more significantly to reading development than sporadic intensive reading sessions.

Table 4 Reading Pattern of the Students on Types of Reading Activities

Types of Reading Activities Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I engage on the text by highlighting key points, making notes, or asking questions about what I am reading.	3.93	Agree
I engage on casual reading.	3.44	Agree
I read faster while understanding the material.	3.44	Agree
I read for leisure as well as for educational purposes.	4.02	Agree
I engage in focused academic reading.	3.44	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.65	Agree

The table reveals the strongest overall results among all categories, with a weighted mean of 3.65, indicating regular reading across various reading approaches. All five indicators received "Agree" ratings, ranging from 3.44 to 4.02. The highest-rated activity was reading for leisure and educational purposes (4.02), followed by engaging with text through highlighting, note-taking, and questioning (3.93). These findings suggest students are more engaged in how they read rather than how often or how long they read. This pattern is supported by research from Burin et al. (2022), who found that reading comprehension and engagement are significantly enhanced when students employ active reading strategies across both digital and print materials. Their comparative study demonstrated that students who regularly utilized annotation strategies, engaged in purposeful questioning, and balanced leisure with academic reading showed

substantially higher reading comprehension scores and reported greater reading satisfaction. The researchers noted that the quality of reading engagement often compensates for limitations in reading frequency and duration, particularly among time-constrained college students.

3.2. Reading Habit: Preference

Table 5 Reading Preference of the Students on Reading Medium

Reading Medium Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I prefer reading digital/e-books over printed books.	3.37	Neutral
I prefer reading online articles and blogs.	3.31	Neutral
I prefer reading books over watching television.	3.35	Neutral
I prefer reading printed comics or digital version.	3.72	Agree
I prefer reading on tablet or smartphones.	3.00	Neutral
Overall Weighted Mean	3.34	Neutral

The data on reading medium preferences reveals students have moderate inclinations across various formats, with an overall weighted mean of 3.34, indicating occasional use of different reading media. Comics (both printed and digital) received the highest preference rating (3.72), categorized as "Reads Regularly," suggesting students are drawn to visually engaging content. Digital/e-books (3.37), books over television (3.35), and online articles/blogs (3.31) all received neutral ratings, while tablet/smartphone reading showed the lowest preference (3.00). This balanced distribution between digital and traditional reading formats aligns with research by Delgado et al. (2021), who found that modern students often practice "media multiplexity" – strategic selection of reading mediums based on content type rather than rigid preference for digital or print. Their study demonstrated that students increasingly select reading mediums pragmatically, choosing digital formats for quick information access and social reading, while gravitating toward print for deep learning and extended reading sessions. The researchers emphasized that medium choice is more situation-dependent than previously thought, with students showing significant adaptability across formats rather than strict preferences.

Table 6 Reading Preference of the Students on Genre/Type of Material

Genre/Type of Material Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I love reading fiction like fantasy movies more than nonfiction, such as news.	3.69	Agree
I enjoy reading magazines and newspapers.	3.30	Neutral
I enjoy reading short stories and novels.	3.57	Agree
I love reading religious and spiritual texts.	3.80	Agree
I enjoy reading informational and educational books.	3.39	Neutral
Overall Weighted Mean	3.55	Agree

The data shows an overall weighted mean of 3.55, indicating regular reading across various genres. Religious and spiritual texts received the highest preference (3.80), followed closely by fiction like fantasy (3.69) and short stories/novels (3.57), all categorized as "Reads Regularly." Informational/educational books (3.39) and magazines/newspapers (3.30) showed moderate interest with neutral ratings. This pattern reveals stronger engagement with narrative and faith-based reading compared to purely informational content. These findings correspond with research by Kwasińska and Chatzipanagiotidou (2022), who explored genre preferences among contemporary students using ethnographic approaches. Their study found that spiritual and narrative reading often serves psychological and identity-formation purposes beyond academic requirements, creating stronger emotional engagement. Particularly noteworthy was their finding that students who engaged regularly with religious texts and fiction demonstrated greater reading persistence across all genres, including academic texts, suggesting that emotionally resonant reading experiences foster broader reading motivation that transfers to less intrinsically motivating materials.

Table 7 Reading Preference of the Students on Reading Pace

Reading Pace Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I prefer skimming and finishing books quickly.	3.69	Agree
I prefer reading efficiently with good understanding.	4.33	Neutral
I prefer taking my time to process information.	3.89	Agree
I prefer reading carefully and revisiting sections often.	3.70	Agree
I prefer reflecting on the text while reading.	3.31	Neutral
Overall Weighted Mean	3.78	Agree

The data reveals thoughtful and deliberate reading approaches, with an overall weighted mean of 3.78, indicating regular engagement with various reading speeds and strategies. Reading efficiently with good understanding received the highest rating (4.33, "Reads Consistently"), followed by taking time to process information (3.89), reading carefully and revisiting sections (3.70), and skimming to finish books quickly (3.69), all rated as "Reads Regularly." Reflecting on text while reading received a more moderate rating (3.31, "Reads Occasionally"). This pattern demonstrates students value comprehension-focused reading strategies while maintaining efficiency. These findings correspond with research by Liu and Cole (2023), who examined reading pace preferences among university students across disciplines. Their study found that successful readers strategically adjust their reading pace based on purpose rather than adhering to a single approach. Most significantly, they identified that students who reported comfort with multiple reading paces demonstrated substantially higher reading comprehension scores than those who relied exclusively on either slow, careful reading or rapid skimming. The researchers emphasized that metacognitive awareness of reading pace choice—knowing when to slow down or speed up—was more strongly correlated with academic achievement than raw reading speed or volume.

3.3. Reading Pattern: Influences

Table 8 Reading Influence of the Students on Parental Support

Parental Support Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
My parents have encouraged me to read regularly.	4.00	Agree
My parents provide me books and any reading materials at home.	3.24	Neutral
My parents choose a book for me to read and discuss together.	3.06	Neutral
My parents provide me scrabble, crossword puzzles, or word searches.	3.28	Neutral
My family has encouraged me to join a bible reading or a bible study every Sunday.	3.19	Neutral
Overall Weighted Mean	3.35	Neutral

The data reveals moderate influence on students' reading habits, with an overall weighted mean of 3.35, indicating occasional parental reading support. General parental encouragement received the highest rating (4.00, "Reads Regularly"), suggesting verbal support is more common than active involvement. All other parental support measures received neutral ratings ranging from 3.06 to 3.28, including providing reading materials, choosing books together, offering word games, and encouraging Bible reading. This pattern suggests a gap between parental verbal encouragement and practical reading support activities. These findings align with research by Lau et al. (2022), who conducted a longitudinal study examining parental reading support among adolescents. Their study revealed that while general verbal encouragement from parents remains influential through adolescence, active parental involvement in reading activities typically declines during secondary education years. The researchers emphasized that quality of parental reading interactions proved more impactful than frequency, with even infrequent but meaningful literary discussions showing substantial benefits compared to more frequent but superficial reading encouragement.

Table 9 Reading Influence of the Students on Access to Reading Material

Access to Reading Material Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
The availability of books influences how often I read.	3.63	Agree
Exposure to different materials like newspapers, comics, and blogs can keep my reading interest.	3.61	Agree
Reading educational books, textbooks, and reference materials improves my knowledge and school performance.	4.00	Agree
Having access to books by my favorite authors or on topics makes my reading fun and exciting.	4.07	Agree
Keeping books in places like my bedroom, living room, or schoolbag makes it easier to read during my free time.	3.24	Neutral
Overall Weighted Mean	3.71	Agree

The table demonstrates strong influence on reading behavior, with an overall weighted mean of 3.71, indicating regular impact of material accessibility. Access to books by favorite authors received the highest rating (4.07), followed closely by educational resources (4.00), suggesting personal interest and academic needs strongly drive material access importance. General book availability (3.63) and diverse reading materials exposure (3.61) also received "Reads Regularly" ratings, while convenient book placement received a more moderate neutral rating (3.24). This pattern highlights how access to engaging and relevant materials significantly shapes reading habits. These findings correspond with research by Merga and Roni (2018), who investigated the relationship between book access and reading engagement across socioeconomic backgrounds. Their study found that perceived access to interesting reading materials was a stronger predictor of reading frequency than sheer volume of available books.

Table 10 Reading Influence of the Students on Motivation and Interest

Motivation and Interest Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
My personal interest and motivation drive my reading habits.	3.91	Agree
Reading competitions or challenges motivate me to read.	3.76	Agree
The influence of teachers contributes a big impact to sustain my reading habits.	3.56	Agree
I read sports, favorite movies, history, or science fiction—anything that excites me.	3.91	Agree
School reading program ignites me to read more.	3.78	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.78	Agree

The data demonstrates the strongest influence among all categories, with an overall weighted mean of 3.78, indicating regular impact of intrinsic motivational factors. Personal interest received the highest rating (tied at 3.91) alongside reading about favorite topics like sports and movies (3.91), suggesting interest alignment powerfully drives reading habits. School reading programs (3.78), reading competitions (3.76), and teacher influence (3.56) all received "Reads Regularly" ratings. This pattern highlights how both intrinsic interest and extrinsic structure meaningfully shape reading motivation. These findings align with research by McGeown et al. (2020), who examined reading motivation profiles among adolescents across educational contexts. Their study identified interest alignment as the most significant predictor of sustained reading engagement, particularly when combined with supportive institutional structures.

3.4. Students' Reading Level Performance

Table 11 Reading Level Performance of Students on Comprehension

Comprehension Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Students can understand the main idea of a text.	3.46	Proficient
Students can connect the text to their own experiences.	3.04	Satisfactory
Students can analyze the author's purpose in a text.	2.80	Satisfactory
Students can make inference based on the text.	3.37	Satisfactory
Students can identify key details in reading passage.	3.02	Satisfactory
Overall Weighted Mean	3.14	Satisfactory

Based on the table, students demonstrate varying levels of proficiency across different comprehension skills. The highest mean score is observed in "understanding the main idea of a text" (3.46), reaching the "Proficient" level, indicating strong competence in this fundamental skill. Students also show reasonable proficiency in "making inferences based on the text" (3.37). However, they display only "Satisfactory" levels in "connecting the text to their own experiences" (3.04), "identifying key details" (3.02), and particularly in "analyzing the author's purpose" (2.80), which has the lowest mean in this category. The overall weighted mean of 3.14 indicates that students generally possess "Adequate Skill" in reading comprehension. This aligns with research by Wigfield et al. (2019), who found that "adolescent readers typically develop literal comprehension skills more readily than analytical and evaluative comprehension abilities." Their study demonstrated that students often master identifying main ideas before developing more complex comprehension skills like analyzing authorial intent, which supports the pattern observed in this data.

Table 12 Reading Level Performance of Students on Fluency

Fluency Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Students can read aloud with appropriate speed.	3.00	Satisfactory
Students can read with proper intonation and expression.	3.06	Satisfactory
Students can read smoothly without frequent pauses.	3.22	Satisfactory
Students can recognize words quickly and accurately.	3.15	Satisfactory
Students can self-correct when they make reading errors.	3.09	Satisfactory
Overall Weighted Mean	3.10	Satisfactory

The table reveals consistent "Satisfactory" performance across all measured aspects of reading fluency. Students show highest competence in "reading smoothly without frequent pauses" (3.22), followed by "recognizing words quickly and accurately" (3.15). The skills of "self-correcting reading errors" (3.09), "reading with proper intonation and expression" (3.06), and "reading aloud with appropriate speed" (3.00) follow closely behind. With an overall weighted mean of 3.10, students demonstrate "Adequate Skill" in fluency aspects. This consistent performance pattern correlates with findings by Rasinski et al. (2021), who noted that "fluency development tends to progress in a relatively even manner across its component skills when students receive balanced reading instruction." Their research emphasized that "automaticity in word recognition and appropriate prosody develop in tandem to support overall reading fluency," reflecting the relatively uniform scores observed across fluency indicators in this data.

Table 13 Reading Level Performance of Students on Vocabulary

Vocabulary Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Students can understand the meaning of new words in context.	2.96	Satisfactory
Students can identify root words in the selection.	2.56	Developing
Students can use new vocabulary words in their writing.	2.89	Satisfactory

Students can identify synonyms and antonyms of words.	2.41	Developing
Students can spell vocabulary words correctly.	3.07	Satisfactory
Overall Weighted Mean	2.78	Satisfactory

Based on the data, students show more varied performance. The highest mean score appears in "spelling vocabulary words correctly" (3.07), followed by "understanding the meaning of new words in context" (2.96) and "using new vocabulary words in their writing" (2.89), all at "Satisfactory" levels. However, students demonstrate only "Developing" skills in "identifying root words" (2.56) and "identifying synonyms and antonyms" (2.41), indicating these are areas of emerging ability. The overall weighted mean of 2.78, while still categorized as "Satisfactory," is noticeably lower than the means for comprehension and fluency. This corroborates research by Li and Wang (2022), who found that "vocabulary knowledge develops more unevenly than other reading components, with contextual understanding typically developing before morphological awareness and relational word knowledge." Their study highlighted that "students often struggle with word relationships and structural analysis even when they can understand meanings in context," which matches the pattern observed in this data where students performed better on contextual understanding than on identifying root words, synonyms, and antonyms.

3.5. Correlation Between Reading Habits and Level of Reading Performance

Table 14 Correlation between Reading Level and Reading Habits

Sources of Relation		r value	Degrees of Correlation	p-value	Analysis
Reading Level	Reading Habits	0.167	Weak Positive Correlation	0.227	Not Statistically Significant

The correlation matrix presents the relationship between reading level and reading habits using Pearson's correlation coefficient (r). The reported correlation coefficient ($r = 0.167$) suggests a weak positive relationship between the two variables. This suggests that as Reading Habits improve, Reading Level tends to increase slightly, but the relationship is not strong. However, the p-value ($p = 0.227$) is greater than the level of significance (0.05), indicating that the correlation is not statistically significant.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the reading habits of Grade 7 learners at Sta. Maria Integrated School, focusing on their patterns, preferences, influences, and reading performance. Findings revealed that students generally read occasionally, with stronger engagement in specific types of reading activities and preferences for quiet and structured environments. Key influences included access to reading materials, parental and peer support, and digital media. Although students demonstrated satisfactory levels in comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary, the relationship between reading habits and performance was not statistically significant. These results highlight the need for targeted intervention to cultivate consistent, interest-driven reading practices and improve literacy outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Structured Reading Programs:** Expand and strengthen structured reading programs like "Catch-Up Friday" that have demonstrated success in enhancing reading consistency. Implement daily dedicated reading time (15-20 minutes) across all grade levels to build sustainable reading habits.
- **Active Reading Partnerships:** Move beyond verbal encouragement to establish active reading partnerships with children. This includes setting family reading times, discussing books together, and modeling reading behaviors at home.
- **Reading Habit Development:** Establish consistent daily reading routines of at least 30 minutes, focusing on gradual increases in reading volume. Set achievable goals such as reading 10 pages daily or one book monthly to build sustainable habits.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research article. Both authors have equally contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, analysis, and writing of this manuscript.

Statement of ethical approval

The present research work does not contain any studies performed on animals or human subjects by any of the authors. Ethical standards and academic integrity were upheld throughout the conduct of the study.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity and confidentiality were assured throughout the research process.

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