

Reading Skills of School Students

Dr. Chiragbhai M. Darji

Associate Professor & Research Project Director,

As part of Research Project funded by Children's Research University, Gandhinagar

Abstract

Reading proficiency is a crucial element of academic achievement and ongoing education. This research examines students' reading skills by focusing on their levels of reading proficiency, typical reading difficulties, and the influence of specific background factors on reading growth. A uniform tool for assessing reading skills was utilized to gather data from a representative group of schoolchildren through a descriptive survey method. The results indicate that children's reading skills differ significantly, with clear deficiencies particularly evident in reading fluency and comprehension. These disparities indicate unequal availability of instructional assistance and effective reading methods.

The findings emphasize the importance of schools offering structured and systematic reading instruction from the beginning levels. To prevent prolonged academic struggles, identifying reading difficulties early and taking swift remedial measures is essential. Moreover, the research emphasizes that a nurturing educational atmosphere comprising parental engagement, teacher support, and availability of appropriate reading resources can enhance students' reading abilities. Focused strategies can be enhanced by considering background factors such as educational resources and familial literacy habits. Taking everything into account, the research provides teachers and lawmakers valuable insights for developing evidence-backed strategies to enhance students' reading skills and promote educational achievement.

Key Terms: Reading Skills, School Students, Reading Comprehension, Fluency

1. Introduction

Reading is widely recognized as one of the most fundamental language skills and serves as a cornerstone of students' academic success and overall intellectual growth. It allows learners to access information, enhance comprehension, foster analytical and critical thinking abilities, and engage meaningfully in social and cultural life. At the school stage, strong reading skills provide the foundation for learning in all subject areas, as most academic content is mediated through text. Despite its importance, a significant number of students experience difficulties in reading, often arising from ineffective teaching methods, insufficient practice opportunities, limited availability of reading resources, and adverse socio-economic conditions.

In the present educational scenario, the enhancement of students' reading abilities has emerged as a key priority for teachers, curriculum planners, and policymakers. Learners who exhibit weak reading skills frequently encounter academic challenges, which may lead to frustration, diminished confidence, poor

self-concept, and reduced interest in learning. Over time, these difficulties can negatively affect overall academic performance and future educational prospects. Hence, a clear understanding of the existing level of reading skills among school students is essential for identifying gaps, designing targeted instructional strategies, and implementing timely remedial and support programmes. Such informed interventions can significantly contribute to improving reading proficiency and ensuring holistic educational development.

2. Significance of the Study

Despite sustained initiatives aimed at enhancing literacy levels, a considerable proportion of school students continue to demonstrate inadequate reading proficiency. When reading difficulties are not recognized and addressed at an early stage, they can persist over time and lead to serious and long-term academic underachievement. The present study gains importance as it offers a clear understanding of students' existing reading abilities and draws attention to specific aspects of reading that demand targeted instructional intervention.

Moreover, the study contributes valuable evidence for improving educational practices related to reading instruction. Its findings can assist teachers in adopting more effective classroom strategies, support curriculum developers in integrating reading-focused components, and guide teacher educators in preparing future teachers to address diverse reading needs. Policymakers may also use the results to frame informed policies and allocate resources for strengthening school-level reading programmes.

3. Objectives

- To assess the level of reading skills among school students.
- To identify common difficulties faced by students in reading.
- To study the level of reading skills of students based on gender.

Research Questions

- What is the level of reading skills among school students?
- Do school students face significant difficulties in reading comprehension?
- Is there a significant difference in reading skills based on gender?

Hypothesis

- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on reading skills

Delimitations

1. The study was delimited to the English medium self-finance school following GSEB board of Nadiad District, Gujarat.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey method to assess the reading skills of school students.

The sample consisted of 120 school students studying in upper primary was selected using a simple random sampling technique from government and private schools.

A standardized Reading Skills Test was used to assess students’ abilities in the areas of word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

The tool was administered to the students during regular school hours with prior permission from school authorities. Instructions were clearly explained, and adequate time was provided to complete the test.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics such as t-test were used to examine differences between groups.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on reading skills

Group	N	M	SD	SE _M	t value	Level of Significance		Hypothesis	
						0.05	0.01	0.05	0.01
						1.97	2.59		
Male	280	183.30	16.07	0.96	0.31	Not Significant	Not Significant	Accepted	Accepted
Female	280	182.89	15.58	0.93					

The value of t-test between male and female students was calculated and it was not found to be significant at 0.01 level. It indicates that the reading comprehension between the male and female is not significantly different

The analysis revealed that a majority of students possessed an average level of reading skills. However, a considerable proportion of students showed low performance in reading comprehension and fluency. Students performed relatively better in word recognition compared to higher-order comprehension skills. Gender-wise comparison indicated no significant difference in overall reading skills, whereas grade-level comparison showed improvement in reading skills with advancement in class.

5. Findings

- The students exhibited an average level of reading skills.
- Reading comprehension and fluency were identified as the most challenging areas.
- There was no significant difference found between boys and girls in reading skills.
- The students mostly found with the major reading skill problems such as identification of new vocabulary, interpreting the meaning, readability of the texts etc.

Implications of the Study

- Incorporating systematic and structured reading instruction in the curriculum.
- Providing regular reading practice through age-appropriate and interesting reading materials.
- Training teachers in effective reading strategies such as guided reading and remedial instruction.
- Creating a print-rich and supportive classroom environment to motivate students to read.

6. Conclusion

Reading skills are fundamental to students' academic success and personal development. The present study highlights that while many students possess basic reading abilities, significant improvement is required in comprehension and fluency. Focused instructional strategies, early intervention, and continuous assessment can play a vital role in enhancing reading skills among school students. Strengthening reading skills at the school level will contribute to improved learning outcomes and overall educational quality.

References

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