Research Article
The Relationship of Personal, Family and Living Environment Factors with Student's Reading Skills A Case Study: Fifth-year Students of North of Iran

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Abstract: Reading comprehension is the most important primary step in the process of education. Book-based training is an intensely effective and fast process that calls for less time and costs than other educational media. Hence, we can say that reading skill is the most important skill that an individual needs to success in his/her studies. This paper intends to examine the relationship of the components of Gardner's multiple intelligences and the thematic and general (personal factors) progression as well as family and school factors with reading skill among fifth-year. The research is a correlative survey. To this end, three questionnaires were used that each measured the questions related to a certain variable and had the average reliability of 0.81 (the average value of Cronbach's Alpha). Three compiled hypotheses were tested and the findings point to the fact that there is a good relationship between reading skills and students'' personal factors (intelligence, general educational progression, thematic educational progression) and family factors (parents' age; number of children; child's ranking; economic, social and cultural status; living environment). Nevertheless, such relationship with students' school factors (teacher's status, teacher's gender, teacher's age and experience, teacher's academic level) is not significant.

Keywords: Family factors, personal factors, reading skill, school factors

INTRODUCTION

Reading and writing refer to the comprehension of the sense and acquisition of the meaning of the written or printed words. Reading practice comprises of 3 major and essential activities. The first practice in reading is to look at the words; the second practice is to distinguish and pronounce the words; and the third practice is to comprehend the read text. These 3 practices are interdependent and complementary. Nevertheless, because of more easiness, they are usually separated in reading comprehension training; also, in order to enhance the learner's efficiency and help to complete all of the 3 practices. In other words, they are considered as 3 different and distinctive skills. Learners should acquire the skill to pronounce some certain letters with their specific sounds for reading every word. Reading words is the basis for reading phrases, magazines, or any complete subject. An individual cannot understand the meaning of a given text unless he has acquired the necessary skill to understand each word. Moreover, he/she should learn to increase reading speed by orderly motion of eyes.

Understanding is the main purpose of reading. In case the purpose is met, other reading purposes are achieved with some attempt. Until the end of primary education, the students should often reach a stage regarding reading instruction at which they can read and comprehend relatively simple texts easily. They should to express various subjects in correct verbal or written sentences so that others can understand them. They should reach a stage at which they find the interest for reading any kind of book and do not spend their time for reading a certain subject.

In addition, student's cognitive and mental growth, concentration ability empowerment, development of interest and talent for study, mind activation and intellectual and moral forces training, practical understating and analyzing ability are among the most obvious objectives of training reading skill in primary level. Teachers are among the main instruments for instructing and empowering reading skill. Teachers can develop and strengthen such a skill in students through good educational materials, especially textbooks. The most important purpose of such materials is the reduction of fixed and hollow eyes as well as the increasing of more attention and senses concentration, which in turn results in the acceleration of thinking procedure (David, 1969).

The type of verbal discourse in the family context conversations have mostly faults in the expression of many words and sentences because of the limitations in the type of intra-family dealings and relationships. The origin of all these issues can be at first attributed to the

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type of governing attitude in the family, lack of reading and media materials. In psychological view, students' hyperactivity and attention deficit disorder derives from the low level of family's mental health. Such an issue weakens the quality of students' reading skill. Bernard (2004) investigated the relationship between family communications and students' success in high school level that showed significant relationships.

Research has shown that the mental ability of individuals is both directly and indirectly effective on the potential capabilities of learning and, as a result, on reading skill in various aspects. These findings suggest that learning and information processing speed of learners are highly dependent on their mental backgrounds and adaptation to the environment. Since it is not possible to consider such a matter equally, in several cases, the research results justify it.

There are four stages at the time of reading: Orthographic information, phonetic information, Phonology, compositional information and semantic information. The well-known author, Goodman, in his 1967 article "A Suggested Plan for Psycholinguistics", believes that readers use 3 specific methods to read texts, which he names them phonetic-orthographic sings, compositional signs and semantic signs. In other words, readers use the knowledge of visual and phonetic composition signs first.

Urquhart and Weir (1998) define strategies as "ways of getting round difficulties encountered while reading". For Carrell (1998), reading strategies include any of a wide array of tactics that readers use to engage and comprehend texts. With respect to the distinction between "skill" and "strategy", there is a fair amount of confusion and a considerable terminological inconsistency both in the in the reading literature and teaching material. Much of the research frequently fails to distinguish between strategies and skills. For example, "inferencing" is a skill for Davis (1968), but a strategy for Olshavsky (1977); skimming and scanning are referred to as strategies by Sarig (1987), while for Munby (1978), they are skills. On the other hand, some writers (Nuttall, 1996; Grabe, 1999) use skills/strategies as if the 2 were interchangeable, whereas for others (Paris *et al*., 1991; Urquhart and Weir, 1998).

The view that reading is a set of discrete skills is based on the assumption that if reading is a skill, then it must be possible to break it down into underlying components skills for the purpose of teaching and testing. Advocates of this view also hypothesize that students may exhibit differences in levels of proficiency across these skills. Williams and Moran (1989) give an account on the current consensus among writers on teaching materials as follows: "While material writers might disagree on the emphasis to be devoted to any particular skill, there seems to be substantial agreement

on such skills as guessing the meaning of unknown words, identifying anaphoric reference, identifying the main idea and inference'.

In the previous researches, the novel methods have been focused in improvement of reading skill and its relation with the educational achievement, but relation of social-mental has not been reviewed with the reading and educational achievement.

In this study, relation of student's individual, social and educational factor with their reading skill will be paid. Also relationship between reading skills and Gardner's multiple intelligence components and relationship between reading skills and overall educational progression will be introduced and analyzed. The results of these researches will be shown these relations are positive and significant.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Regarding information collection, the present paper is a correlative survey and, regarding purpose, it is an applied study. The statistical population of the research is all of the male and female fifth-year students in Northern townships of Iran who were studying in 2011-12 educational year. From this population, 231 students (106 females and 125 males) were selected as the research sample based on Morgan's table and using multistage cluster sampling method. The researcher's questionnaire, which is designed and standardized for the investigation of effective components on reading skills of fifth-year students in Northern townships of Iran, Western Mazandaran, was used in the study. The features of the questionnaire are described in the following lines. Moreover, in order to measure the reading skill, the educational progression tests, first and second phase (TIMSS and PIRLS) that were held throughout the province, was used.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

In this section, the hypotheses are introduced and analyzed.

Personal factors sub-hypotheses:
Sub-hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between reading skills and Gardner's multiple intelligence components.

Sub-hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between reading skills and overall educational progression. In order to tests the above hypotheses, we need to consider the collection of Gardner's multiple intelligence components and to examine whether they have a significant relationship with reading skills. Table 1 indicates the values of correlation coefficient, number of observations and level of significance between the 2 variables, reading skills and linguistic intelligence components.

Table 1: The correlation between multiple intelligence components and reading skill

Variables	Correlation	Number	Sig. (one-tailed)
Reading skill-linguistic intelligence	0.2820	222	0.0001
Reading skill-intelligence of logical and mathematical	0.3580	231	0.0001
Reading skill-intelligence of visual	0.2270	231	0.0010
Reading skill-intelligence of musical	0.2640	231	0.0001
Reading skill-intelligence of interpersonal	0.3550	222	0.0001
Reading skill-intelligence of physical-kinesthetic momentum	0.1113	231	0.0910
Reading skill-intelligence of intrapersonal	0.2130	231	0.0001
Reading skill-intelligence of naturalism	0.1980	231	0.0300
Reading skill-gardner multiple intelligence	0.2250	232	0.0001

Table 2: Correlation coefficient reading skill-general and subjective educational achievement

Variables	Correlation	Number	Sig. (one-tailed)
Reading skill-variable of general educational achievement	0.247	222	0.0001
Reading skill-variable of subjective educational achievement	0.269	231	0.0001

Table 1 shows that only Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence components are not significantly related to reading skill. Its correlation coefficient value is 0.11, the significant level is 0.091 based on the table, which is higher than 5%; so it does not show a significant relationship.

Table 2 indicates the value of correlation coefficient, number of observations and significance level between the 2 variables, reading skills with general and subjective educational achievement.

In Table 2, the first row, the correlation coefficient is 0.247, the significance level is 0.0001, which is lower than 0.05; thus, there is a significant relationship between reading skill and general educational achievement.

In the second row of the table, the correlation coefficient is 0.269, the significance level is 0.0001, which is lower than 0.05; therefore, these is a significant relationship between reading skill and subjective educational achievement.

Sub-hypotheses of family factors: There are relationships between reading skills and family factors-parents' age, number of children, children's ranking, child's ranking, social and economic status and living environment.

Sub-hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between reading skills and the average age of parents (average age of mother and father).

Sub-hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between reading skills and the child's family ranking.

Sub-hypothesis 5: There is a relationship between reading skills and economic, social and cultural status of the family.

Table 3 and 4 shows the value of the correlation coefficient, the number and level of significance between the 2 variables, reading skills and the average age of parents.

The correlation coefficient's value in Table 3 and 4 indicates the direct relationship and its smallness; i.e., 0.133, shows the weak relationship between reading skill and the average age of parents. Because the level

Table 3: The correlation coefficient reading skill-family affairs

Variables	Correlation	Number	Sig. (one-tailed)
Reading skill-average age of parents	0.133	222	0.048
Reading skill-number of children	0.090	221	0.164

of significance - 0.048 - is lower than 0.05, we can claim that there is a significant relationship between reading skills and the average age of parents; thus, the alternative hypothesis is supported.

In order to consider the relationship between reading skill and children number, we can use the correlation coefficient between the 2 variables. Information regarding reading skill and the family's number of children are acquired respectively from TIMSS and PIRLS test, personal specifications questionnaire and students' economic-social status questionnaire.

In Table 3, since the value of correlation coefficient is -0.09 and the significance level is 0.164 in 221 respondents, which is higher than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected. I other words, there is no significant relationship between reading skills and children number.

Of course, we suggest the above hypothesis, as "Can family ranking be effective on students' reading skill?" In order to test the above hypothesis in this form, we use variance analysis table to find whether the average reading skill score is variable in different family rankings or not.

Table 4 provides the descriptive statistics (central tendency and frequency) related to reading skill score of students in different family rankings.

Table 4 shows that there is not such a long distance between the average reading skill score in different family rankings. Table 5 provides the variance analysis related to reading skill score in different family rankings.

With respect to the Table 5, the Fisher's test statistic is 1.108, which is smaller than the tables' Fisher value with the freedom degrees of 5 and 225. Thus, it indicates the assumption of no difference between the average reading skill scores in different family rankings. In other words, family ranking is not effective on reading skill score. Economic, social and cultural status consists of 30 questions that 10 questions

Table 4: Statistical indices reading skill score of students in different family rankings

Child familiar order	N	Reading skill average score	Variance	S.E. mean	Min.	Max.
1	139	69/8	4/2	0.20	22/4	56/15
2	74	45/8	8/1	0.22	78/3	11/13
3	14	30/7	15/1	0.30	33/5	45/8
4	2	11/9	60/6	4.66	44/4	78/13
5	1	9	-	-	9	9
6	1	11/7	-	-	11/7	11/7
Total	231					

Min.: Minimum; Max.: Maximum

Table 5: ANOVA reading skill score in different family rankings

Variable	S.S.	df	MSE	Statistic	Sig.
Between-groups	053.280	5	611.5	1.108	0.357
Within-groups	1138. 853	225	062.5		
Total	1166.906	230			

Table 6: Correlation coefficient reading skill-economic, social, cultural situation

Variables	Correlation	Number	Sig. (one-tailed)
Reading skill-economic, social, cultural situation	0.212	231	0.001

Table 7: The statistic for Kolmogorov-Smirnov

Test statistic Z	Number	Sig. (two-tailed)
1.062	231	0.074

Table 8: The descriptive statistics for reading skill in urban-rural environments

Variables	Number	Avg. reading skill's score	Variance
Urban	135	8.44	1.96
Rural	93	8.57	2.61

Table 9: Test statistic for the average score of reading skills in the urban - rural groups

Variables	Value of statistic	df	Sig.
Reading skill-urban-rural environment	0.414	226	0.679

are respectively included for each component. Further, the questions are designed based on Likert scale with 4 items. The collection of 30 questions is considered as the score for economic, social and cultural status. Pearson correlation coefficient is used to examine the relationship between this score and reading skills.

Table 6 provides correlation coefficient, number of respondents and the significance level of correlation test. In the Table 6, the correlation coefficient is 0.212; with regard to the number of respondents and the level of significance, which is lower than 0.05 (0.001), the hypothesis of no significant relationship between reading skill and economic, social and cultural status is rejected.

Sub-hypothesis 6: There is a significant relationship between reading skills and living environment (urban, rural).

Due to the fact that living environment is a qualitative variable based on nominal scale, we need to use Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for the normality of score at first so that we can test the above hypothesis and the effectiveness of living environment-including rural and urban environment-on reading skill.

Table 7 shows the statistic for Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z-Test and the level of significance.

Because the test statistic value is 1.062 and the level of significance is lower than 0.05, the assumption of the normality of reading skill variable is confirmed. Because of the normality of the data, we can utilize the t-test for 2 independent populations.

Table 8 shows the descriptive statistics for reading skill in 2 urban and rural environments. Table 8 suggests that there is not such a high difference in the average score of reading skills between the 2 urban and rural groups.

Table 9 provides the t-test statistic for the comparison of the average score of reading skills in the 2 urban and rural groups. According to the Table 9, the absolute value of the t-test statistic is +0.414, which is smaller than the table's t value with 95% confidence, which is 1.96 with 226 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis of the effectiveness of living environment on students' reading skill is rejected.

CONCLUSION

In this research, relation of social-individual factors with reading skill was discussed. Individual factors are consisting of student's Gardner's multiple intelligence. In education that is consisting of general and subjective educational achievement is significant relation with reading skill therefore reinforcement of Gardner's multiple intelligence was cause of increasing of reading skill, furthermore increasing of reading will be caused of educational achievement.

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