



**FACTOR AFFECTING READING COMPREHENSION OF MALAYSIAN
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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UALZ 3023 - FYP2 REPORT

**SUBMITTED IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONS) ENGLISH EDUCATION
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE**

JAN TRIMESTER 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study project would be difficult for me to complete without the aid and support of many individuals. My deepest appreciation goes to Dr. Surindar Kaur, my supervisor, for being so enthusiastic in guiding me through this research. Her extensive coaching, patience, inspiration, and feedback only served to motivate me to do better. Following that, I would like to thank University Tunku Abdul Rahman for providing me with the chance and a platform to conduct my research.

Besides that, I would like to thank my beloved parents and supportive siblings for their constant moral support and encouragement throughout the course of this research. Moreover, I would like to specially thank Sarmin, Suvicha, Sean, Sharon, Kelly, and Sukhdeep who have supported me all along, sharing their knowledge in the field of this study, and recruiting participants for the study. I am really grateful to have you by my side. Last but not least, my greatest appreciation to all of the participants who were willing to take part in this study and cooperated throughout the process of completion of this study.

Vachiera A/P Jong Jut

APPROVAL SHEET

This research paper attached hereto, entitled Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension of Malaysian Secondary School Students prepared and submitted by Vachiera A/P Jong Jut in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) English Education is hereby accepted.

ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is the main method of integrating knowledge that promotes training methods and efficient coping in both academic and personal contexts. This research presents the factors affecting the reading comprehension of Malaysian secondary school students and how the affecting factors differ between the genders of the students. According to the findings, the majority of the students chose reading motivation affects the students' reading comprehension. Even though, these students chose reading motivation as the factor that affects their reading comprehension, however, when it comes to the factor that affects them the most, the majority of the students chose vocabulary. Moreover, a strong correlation is found between reading motivation and vocabulary. Noting that the students chose these two factors, students' confidence in their capacity to read and comprehend texts may be impacted by their vocabulary. A strong vocabulary helps enhance reading motivation in students since it increases their sense of security when reading. From the findings obtained from the survey, it was revealed that the factors that affect reading comprehension do differ between the genders of the students. Even though most students chose similar factors, it can be seen that male students chose reading materials as the factor whereby none of the female students chose the factor. On the other hand, the female students, based on the findings obtained, revealed that reading without actually understanding it, the length of reading material provided was too long, and students lost interest in reading and the background knowledge affect their reading comprehension.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension Factors, Malaysian Secondary School Students, Male and female students

DECLARATION

I declare that the material being carried in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement had been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be it printed, electronic or personal.

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Date: 4th of May 2023

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reading text

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

L2 Language 2

SVR Simple View of Reading

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The introduction of this research covers the breakdowns of the main topics required to give readers a deeper understanding of the research topic. Chapter 1 begins by providing a general overview of the background of the research topic before moving specifically into a Malaysian context. It then discusses the problem statement, focusing on reading comprehension, the research objectives, and questions. Additionally, the significance of the research is briefly discussed to shed light on the upsides of conducting the research. The chapter will end with a discussion of the research's limitations to highlight some minor shortcomings.

1.2 Background of Study

The English language is widely recognized as the "lingua franca" or a means of communication. English is widely regarded as one of the world's most important languages for verbal communication and is seen as a valuable resource for growth and information (Rao, 2019). According to World Population Review (2022), more people speak English than any other language. After Spanish and Mandarin (Chinese), it is the third most often used native tongue. The United States and the British Empire played a significant role in English's global expansion during the 17th century, making it the dominant business and communication language worldwide. In addition, English is also an official language in 70 countries, with 375 million people using it as their first language and 750 million using it as a second language (Reddy & Mahavidyalaya, 2016). Globalization amplifies the importance of English. In Malaysia, English is designated as the second language (L2) in the Malaysian educational

system. According to the nation's educational policy, it has been made mandatory for all levels of education, implying that it coexists with strong autochthonous languages, is heavily used as the language of politics, the media, judicial systems, higher education, and other related professions. It also fulfils excellent, occasionally official, intergovernmental duties (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2012).

English is taught formally in classroom settings within the Malaysian educational system. Children are first exposed to and taught the English language in preschool when they are just 5 or 6 years old, and it is continued as a required subject throughout primary and secondary school. To meet the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the growing needs in Science and Technology, the educational system has placed a strong focus on the value of learning English, which dictate that Malaysian students be fluent in the language to compete globally. Furthermore, Malaysia made it compulsory for all Malaysian undergraduates to fulfill the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) requirements before the completion of the study. Moreover, universities in Malaysia now include English language proficiency requirements for admission and placement in academic programs due to the significance of English language proficiency in educational contexts (Abd Samad et al., 2008). For instance, it has been claimed that the need that students have near-native reading ability in addition to other English language proficiency skills, such as writing, listening, and speaking, makes English language proficiency crucial for Malaysian tertiary institutions (Othman & Nordin, 2013).

Reading is one of four skills that are the pinnacles of language that will lift you to new heights (Sadiku, 2015). Reading is a skill that teaches students how to extract ideas from a text and apply that knowledge to deepen their comprehension (Bano, Jabeen & Quitoshi, 2018). Krashen and Brown (2007) stated that reading could increase a person's overall language proficiency. This means that when students advance through the learning process, reading

serves as a mechanism for them to pick up knowledge and information. To gain knowledge, the students must first master their reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is the main method of integrating knowledge that promotes training methods and efficient coping in both academic and personal contexts. Reading comprehension is also known as an active cognitive skill that demands the reader's association with the content of the book (Lim et al., 2018). However, not every student has a strong grasp of reading comprehension. Thus, this study's goals to examine what affects Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension and how the factors differ between genders of the students.

1.3 Problem Statement

Since the early 1960s, there has been a focus on the difficulty of reading comprehension among ESL students (Vellutino et al., 2004). In addition, the MOE indicated that 162,000 Malaysian children in junior school and high school were nonliterate (Kamarundzaman, 2014). This is due to the fact that comprehending language involves more than just a word-level grasp; it also requires the capacity to engage actively with the material and create an image in the mind (Rashid, 2012).

A study conducted by Hayes (2014) on English curriculum in primary schools found that attempts by the government to lower the starting age for language instruction had been unsuccessful. Even though English has been a required subject since the first year, children still struggle to grasp reading abilities, which is a major worry for our educational system.

English was also found to be a foreign language in several Malaysian communities where the locals scarcely spoke it (Zulkelfly & Razali, 2019). When the locals hardly use the language, it would be difficult for them to comprehend it. This indirectly contributes to poor reading comprehension in Malaysia.

Past research on this topic only touches on the variables influencing school students' reading comprehension. Hence, this research is to further address the affecting factors of Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension and to identify whether the factors that affect reading comprehension differ between the genders.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To analyze the affecting factors of Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension.
2. To identify whether the factors that affect reading comprehension differ between the genders of the students.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What affects Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension?
2. Do the factors that affect reading comprehension differ between the genders of the students?

1.6 Hypothesis

Students' reading motivation, vocabulary, and prior knowledge affect Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The Simple View of Reading model by Gough and Tunmer in 1986 will be used to identify the factors affecting reading comprehension. This model suggests that reading comprehension is determined by two primary factors: decoding and linguistic comprehension. Prior knowledge, reading material, reading motivation, and vocabulary all play a role in supporting both decoding and linguistic comprehension, and thus ultimately impact reading comprehension.

The SVR model suggests that readers with more prior knowledge about a topic are better able to understand and remember what they read because they have a larger store of background knowledge to draw upon when reading and are able to make connections between new information and what they already know. Besides that, reading material also plays a critical role in reading comprehension. The SVR model suggests that readers must be able to decode the words on the page in order to comprehend a text, but the complexity and difficulty of the material can also impact comprehension. Moreover, reading motivation is also an important factor in reading comprehension. The SVR model suggests that readers who are motivated to read are more likely to engage with the material and put forth effort to understand it. As per the vocabulary, the SVR model suggests that readers must be able to recognize and understand the meanings of words in order to comprehend a text.

Overall, the Simple View of Reading model suggests that reading comprehension is determined by both decoding and linguistic comprehension, which are impacted by a variety of factors including prior knowledge, reading material, reading motivation, and vocabulary. These factors can work together to support or hinder a reader's ability to understand and remember what they read.

1.8 Significance of research

As mentioned earlier, just 27.2% of Malaysian students were overall literate in English (Fong, 2012). I was driven to conduct this study to what affects Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension most and, simultaneously, to identify whether the factors that affects reading comprehension differ between the genders of the students.

The results of this study are expected to provide insight into how to deal with the affecting factors, mainly when it differs between males and females—knowing that female students perform better than male students when it comes to reading comprehension in English (Corpas Arellano, 2013).

Lastly, insights and recommendations from this study may be helpful to the Education Ministry and the Education Sector in stressing the importance of reading skills and reading comprehension. The teachers can also note the affecting factors of Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension and make improvements accordingly.

1.9 Limitations of Research

Generally, this research focuses on the variables influencing Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension in Malaysia and were only distributed via Google form.

Besides that, it should be noted that the participants of this research are limited to only 24 secondary school students because the research will be using convenience sampling. It is limiting the researcher to find the factors influencing Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension as a whole.

Nonetheless, even though there have been prior studies on the topic, it is still very lacking and undervalued compared to other countries. This shows that more attention must be paid to this particular topic, especially in Malaysia's education world.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

These are some of the terms that were utilized in this research. This is to help the readers comprehend the definitions more clearly as they were written from the perspective of linguists.

1.10.1 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a difficult task that requires multiple processing levels. These processes were separated into lower- and higher-level categories (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Word recognition, graph phonemic, and other lower-level skills are present in lower skills, while higher-level skills include syntactic, semantic, and other processes. Therefore, to comprehend the reading texts, one must be familiar with the text's structure and subject and how to apply them to processing information and word recognition (Pang, 2008).

1.10.2 Reading Motivation

Reading motivation refers to students' motivation to decide whether they are favorable or unfavorable opinions on reading (Hairul et al., 2012).

1.10.3 Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge relates to the identification of a single word's or character's semantic meaning in reading comprehension as well as a semantic schema on passage mental image cognition (Braze et al., 2016).

1.10.4 Prior Knowledge

Prior knowledge refers to all the information one possesses before learning about a subject (Schmidt et al., 2015).

1.10.5 Reading Material

Reading material refers to any written work intended to be read, including books, periodicals, newspapers, and other written works (Jacobs, 2013).

1.11 Summary

In summary, Chapter 1 has briefly explained reading as a whole and how crucial reading comprehension is in today's education world. Chapter 1 also discusses the hindering problems the students face regarding reading comprehension. Furthermore, this chapter also emphasizes the significance of the research topic that can help shed light on what affects Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension, especially when it differs between male and female students. The Simple View of Reading model by Gough and Tunmer in 1986 will be used to identify the factors affecting reading comprehension.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The literature review of this research covers the review of past studies carried out by other researchers relevant to the research topic. This chapter will dive into past studies on the importance of reading comprehension, gender differences in reading, and reading incompetency. These past studies will be reviewed in general contexts, and this will be followed by a more thorough review of pertinent research in Malaysia.

2.1 The Importance of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the key component of reading since it facilitates successfully deriving meaning from written material by drawing on prior knowledge, experiences and other reading techniques (Pourhossein & Sabouri, 2016). Lack of comprehension skills among students often results in lower exam scores (Kaya, 2015). To back this, findings from studies on how reading comprehension affects success in Science and Mathematics by Akbasli, Sahin and Yaykiran (2016) show a connection between reading performance and students' achievement where it has been observed that students who excel in reading comprehension also excel in math and science.

In addition, having problems understanding the context and directions in the reading materials might be caused by a lack of English reading comprehension skills. However, students are more likely to succeed academically if they can decode the content of the reading materials and like the reading activity. (Iftanti, 2015). As a result, English reading comprehension is essential for assisting students in expanding their knowledge base and improving their academic performance (Rohani Ganie et al., 2019). Moreover, reading is crucial to students' academic progress and will greatly impact their future jobs.

A positive attitude toward reading can influence academic success. However, students only read because they are required to for their exams or because they have to. In order to study, students must read in order to comprehend the subjects. This is evident in a study by Pfister (as cited in Sadeghi et al., 2012), which demonstrates that children with open personalities and free form learning styles perform well on reading comprehension tests. Having said that, successful reading comprehension requires the reader to actively participate by starting and organizing the reading process independently (Aksan & Kisac, 2009).

2.2 Gender differences in reading

The term "gender" refers to the various socially created responsibilities and relationships, personal traits, behaviours, and ideologies that society assigns to the two sexes separately, as well as their respective levels of power and influence (Vlassoff, 2007). Gender differences exist in the educational world, especially through how the two genders perceive or view things, especially when involving skills. Gender is added to assess students' attitudes about reading, which are linked to their academic success (Martínez & Gil, 2019).

A study by Uusen and Mürsepp (2012) on 140 students at a basic school in Estonia revealed that boys typically described themselves as mediocre or poor readers. However, the girls are vice versa.

On the other hand, according to a study conducted on 1101 senior secondary school students from 12 public schools in Osun State, it is revealed that boys studied more preceding questions and solutions while girls read more textbooks and subject teachers' notes (Bamise & Akande, 2021).

Another study carried out among 127 students of Bachelor of IT and Bachelor of Arts from International Islamic University Malaysia displayed that male students read significantly more than female students for resources other than academic texts. These sources include the

newspaper, the internet, and books. This finding may come as a surprise given that previous study has indicated that women read more than men (Nor Shahriza, 2006).

2.3 Reading Incompetency

Reading and writing are among the most important skills a child may learn. The foundation of most academic instruction is reading. For a youngster to succeed academically and in life, speaking, counting, and reading comprehension is crucial (Muijselaar et al., 2017). However, the issue of reading incompetency among students continues to plague Malaysia's educational system, and students' failures brought it about in the beginning stages of reading (Tahar et al., 2010). A study carried out on 25 Malaysian undergraduate students displayed that the students struggle to understand what they are reading because of their limited vocabulary, bad reading habits, lack of interest in reading English materials, and time constraints (Edward et al., 2021)

On the other hand, a study by Tahar et al. (2012) on year-one students in Malaysia also revealed that the amount of time spent in kindergarten and one's capacity to read words and syllables might be related. That said, early childhood education and the child's ability to grasp syllables and words are essential in developing reading competency. Inability to do so will lead to reading incompetency when they further their education.

2.4 Gap in Literature

Plenty of research has been conducted on reading habits among students both locally and internationally. However, most studies only emphasized the reading types of material that could affect reading comprehension. Other factors like prior knowledge, vocabulary, and motivation are often identified on the surface level. Furthermore, there is very little research on the reading comprehension of Malaysian secondary students and the factors affecting reading comprehension between genders. Often, the affecting factor of reading comprehension

and the connection between the genders are analyzed separately, even though there is a correlation between them. Moreover, most of the research is only conducted on undergraduate students. Therefore, a locally conducted study could help teachers better understand the hindering factors that limit their students' reading comprehension.

2.5 Summary

This entire chapter has provided a detailed explanation of the past studies that support the notion behind the conduct of this research. Previous studies showed the importance of reading comprehension as a whole. Moving on, this chapter also highlighted the past studies conducted on gender differences in reading and, lastly, reading incompetency. The gap of literature is also being analyzed based on past studies, which contributed to the major purpose of conducting this research to explore further the factors that affect the reading comprehension of Malaysian secondary school students and the relation of the factors between the genders. The methodological method used will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter III:

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

Research methodology is a methodical approach of resolving the research problem (Patel & Patel, 2019). It outlines the methods, approaches, and steps that would be used to evaluate the study. This chapter will go into further detail on the research approach that will be used.

3.1 Research Site

The research will be carried out via google survey form and distributed to secondary school students. Due to the target age group, this study will be conducted in a secondary school. In light of this, it is possible to observe and gather all the data and information required for this study as the researcher had already completed the teaching practice.

3.2 Research Design

The purpose of this study is to analyze the affecting factors of Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension and to identify whether the factors that affect the reading comprehension differ between the genders. Hence, this study will employ a quantitative method of research. The online questionnaire is used as the quantitative component of the research. A set of online questionnaires would be given out to secondary school students via WhatsApp and other social media platforms. The questionnaire will help answer the research questions about what affects Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension and do the factors that affect reading comprehension differ between the genders. The questionnaire would aid the researcher in taking a broader view of the current circumstance. Such a survey could reveal why today's students find it difficult to comprehend

the reading materials, what are their motivation levels when it comes to reading and their prior knowledge which could contribute to the factors affecting their reading comprehension. Google forms will be the medium to create the questions.

3.3 Sampling Procedures

The participants in this research will be selected using systematic sampling. Drawing a systematic sample is easier, especially when sample units are chosen in the field (Martinez-Mesa et al., 2017). In this research, the participants are 24 Malaysian secondary school students. The participants will then be divided into 12 male and 12 female students.

On the other hand, the participating students will be chosen using a convenience sample. Since the researcher only uses the online questionnaire to collect the data, the researcher only able to send out the survey questions to her students, Malaysian secondary school students that the researcher know from the social media as well as posted on her social media page.

3.4 Participants

The participants chosen for this research were Malaysian secondary school students. 24 Malaysian secondary school students will be selected to participate in this research. The participants will then be grouped according to their genders. The rationale for choosing according to gender is that there would not be bias in results, especially when answering the second research question, which is to know do the factors that affect reading comprehension differ between the genders of the students. Besides that, only 24 Malaysian secondary school students will be chosen to partake in this research as they have developed more complex thinking and have four years of learning English experience in secondary school. Hence, they would be able to reason for their decision-making logically.

3.5 Instruments

3.5.1 Online Questionnaire

The online questionnaire would be based on the factors affecting reading comprehension among secondary school students. The questionnaire has questions from a few research publications like the studies conducted by Kiew and Shah (2020) and Al-Saggaf (2020) that are similar to this research. Alterations were made to the questions to fit the criteria and be more suitable to answer the research questions in this study. Google forms will be the platform used to create questionnaires for this research. In Section A, the participants would be told of the research's goal, their agreement to answer the questions, the researcher's contact information, and ethical rules to preserve students' privacy before completing the questionnaire. The students must also fill in their background information, such as names, contact details, and gender.

Upon the completion in Section A, the participants will dive into questions regarding the research topic that mainly adapted from the studies conducted by Kiew and Shah (2020) and Al-Saggaf (2020).

Since it is quantitative research, this questionnaire will adopt a yes or no question, multiple choice questions, opinion-based questions and a Likert scale. Likert scale is a statement in which the participants assess their level of frequency (Albert & Tullis, 2013). The level of the Likert scale is typically based on level 1 to 4 (1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Agree, and 4 – Strongly agree). The rationale of choosing the 4-point Likert Scale is that a "neutral" or "no opinion" response option is often absent on a 4-point Likert scale, which may be preferable if the researcher wants to force participants to choose a position on the topic under investigation (Edward & Smith, 2014). The Google form that contains the questionnaire would be then catered to 12 male and 12 female participants of the research.

3.6 Data Collection and Analysis

As mentioned in the research design, the quantitative method would be adopted to conduct this research. Therefore, the data will be collected using the quantitative method. In order to gather the data, the google form link that contains the questionnaire related to the research topic, which is about the factors affecting reading comprehension among Malaysian secondary school students, would be distributed to 12 male students and 12 female students via Google Form link. The data collected from the Likert scale, multiple choice questions, opinion-based questions, and yes or no questions will then be analysed using Microsoft Excel and descriptive analysis method. The data will be tabulated in a table form as well as pie charts and graphs to ease understanding. The comprehensive data gathered from the questionnaire will be further discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, chapter 3 discussed the methods used to collect the data, data collection, and analyze the data in an in-depth manner. This research will only employ quantitative research involving the online questionnaire via Google Forms that would be distributed to 12 female and 12 male secondary school students in the form of link. The data obtained were then analyzed and tabulated using Microsoft Excel, pie charts and graphs. Lastly, the study's research questions were appropriately addressed in accordance with the data.

CHAPTER IV:

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the method for the quantitative data and data collection procedure for the study. This study's findings will answer research questions 1 and 2. The analysis would employ tables, percentages, and charts to display the data acquired. The data gathered includes respondents' demographic information and the factors affecting their reading comprehension, which includes 13 questions based on a 4-point Likert scale and 2 short answers for open-ended questions. A total of 30 questionnaires were distributed via Google form link to Malaysian secondary school students. The survey was sent to the students using social media platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp. However, only 24 surveys received responses in total. The gathered data was downloaded in Microsoft Excel format before being evaluated.

4.2 Questionnaire

This part presents the gathered data from the survey in tables, charts, and graphs. The first subsection is Section A, which would be the demographic background of the respondents. The second subsection, Section B, is the participants' reading information, which is presented in bar chart. Then subsection C, which includes factors affecting reading comprehension, presented pie charts and table.

4.2.1 Section A: Students' Demographic Data

Demographic Data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender:		
I. Male	12	50
II. Female	12	50
	Total: 24	
Age:		
I. 13-15	4	16.7
II. 16-17	16	83.3

Table 1.0

The tabulated data above shows the total number of respondents who participated in the study. Based on the data, there were only 24 respondents participated in the survey. There were 12 male respondents and 12 female respondents. Finally, there were 2 age groups partake in the survey, 16 respondents were from the age range of 16-17, and 4 respondents were from the age range of 13-15.

4.2.2 Findings

Section B: Reading Information

Figure 1- 10

Do you like reading? (4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree)

24 responses

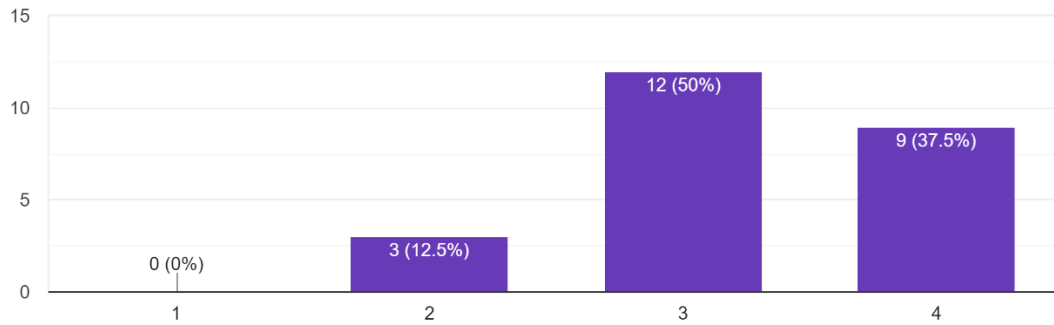


Figure 1

The figure above shows the opinions of the respondents on reading based on a 4-point Likert scale of agreement on whether they like reading. From the bar graphs above, 37.5% who strongly agree, followed by 50% of the respondents agree that they like reading, and only 12.5% who disagree that they like reading.

Do you have confidence in reading greater than other skills? (4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree)

24 responses

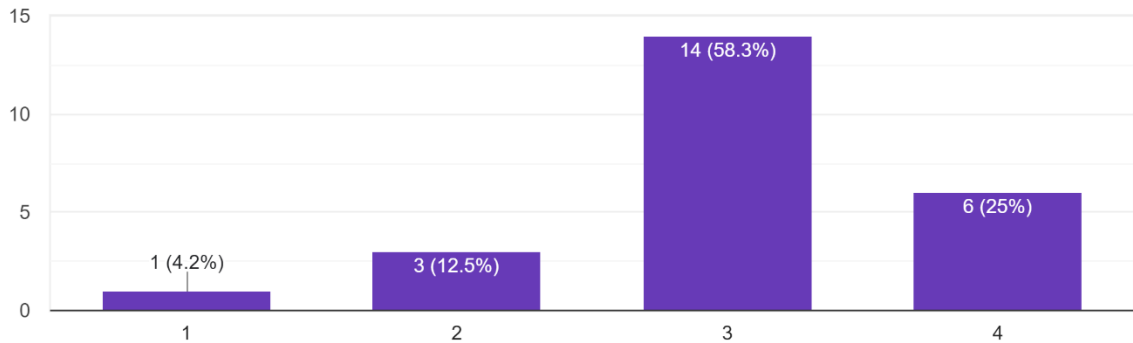


Figure 2

The bar chart above displays the respondents' responses based on a 4-point Likert scale of the agreement of whether they have confidence in reading greater than other skills. The question shows that the majority of the respondents, 58.3%, agree that they have confidence in reading greater than other skills. 25% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement. A minority of 12.5% of the respondent disagree that they have confidence in reading greater than other skills and only 4.2% of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement.

Do you think reading is important? (4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree)

24 responses

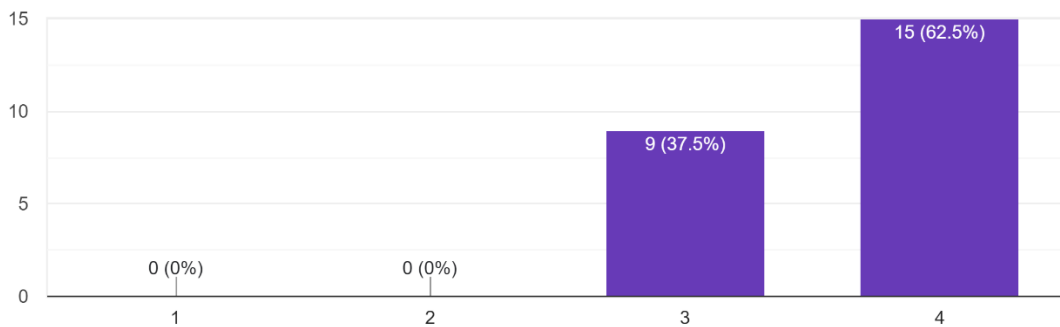


Figure 3

The bar graphs above show the respondents' responses based on a 4-point Likert scale of agreement of the perspectives reading is important. Most respondents, 62.5%, strongly agree that reading is important, followed by 37.5% who agree that reading is important.

Do you usually understand what you read? (4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree)
24 responses

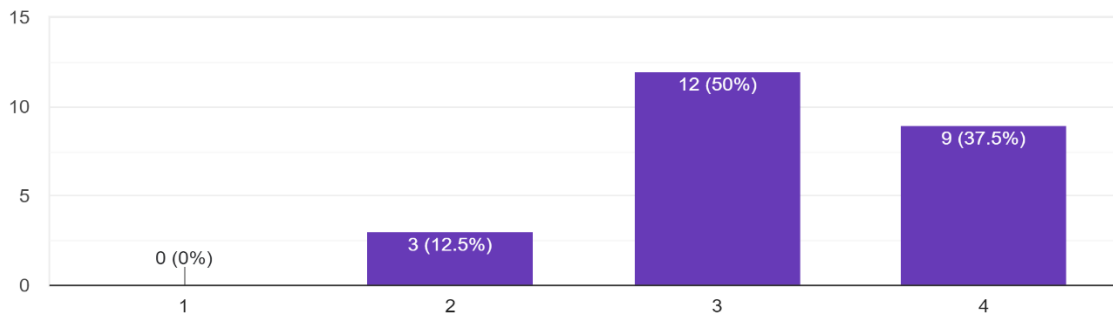


Figure 4

The bar chart in Figure 4 shows the respondents' agreement based on a 4-point Likert scale of agreement of the student's understanding of what they read. The majority of the respondents, 50%, agree that they understand what they read. A total of 37.5% strongly agree that they understand what they read, and only 12.5% of the respondents disagree that they understand what they read.

Do you struggle to comprehend the content of your reading material? (4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree)

24 responses

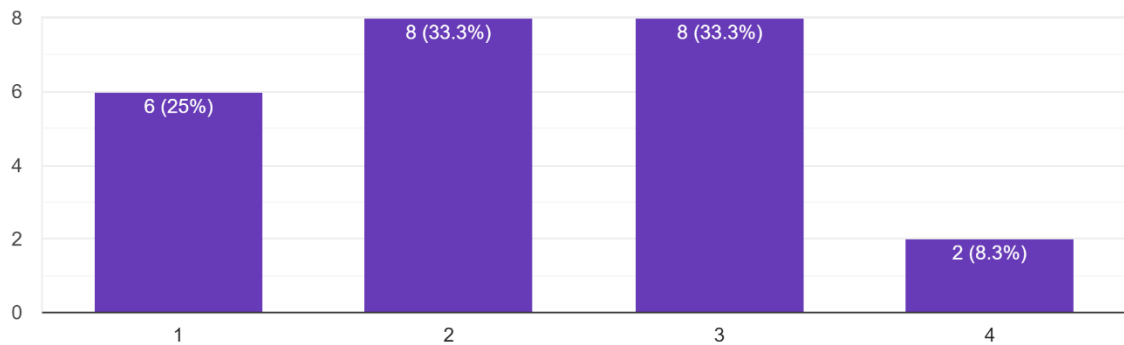


Figure 5

The bar chart in Figure 5 shows the respondents' agreement based on a 4-point Likert scale of agreement of how hard they feel to comprehend the content of the reading material. only 8.3% of the respondents strongly agree that they struggle to comprehend the reading material, followed by 33.33% who agree that they struggle to comprehend the reading material content. A similar percentage of 33.33% of respondents disagree that they struggle to comprehend the reading material, and 25% of the respondents strongly disagree that they struggle to comprehend the reading material.

How often do you use dictionary when you read? (4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree)

24 responses

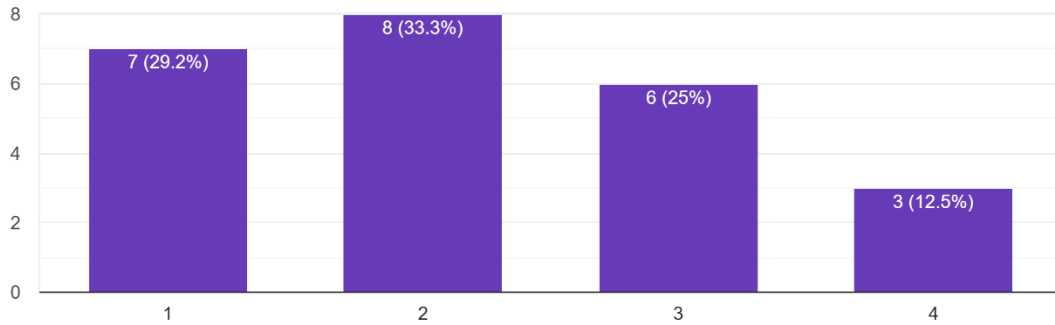


Figure 6

The bar chart in Figure 6 displays the respondents' agreement based on a 4-point Likert scale of agreement on how often they use a dictionary when they read. 12.5% of the respondents strongly agree that they often use a dictionary when they read, and 25% of the respondents agree with the statement. On the other hand, 33.3% of the respondents disagree that they often use a dictionary when they read, followed by 29.2% of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement.

Comprehend what I read will enable me to answer questions and discuss the topic in my own words. (4-Strongly Agree, 3- Agree, 2-Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree)

24 responses

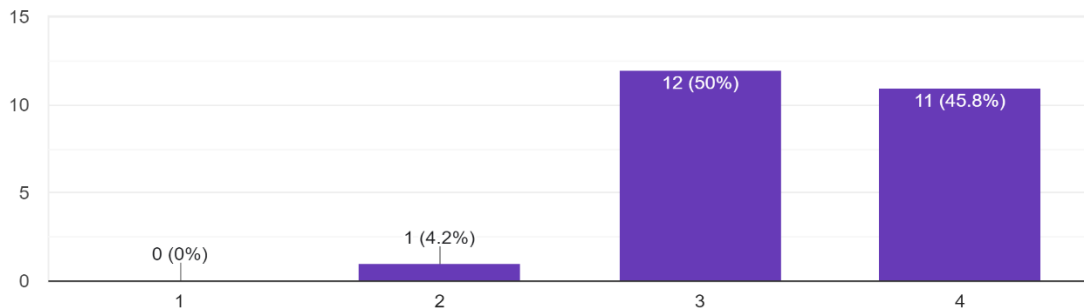


Figure 7

The bar chart in Figure 7 displays the respondents' agreement based on a 4-point Likert scale of agreement on comprehending what they read will enable them to answer questions and discuss the topic in their own words. The majority of the respondents, 50%, agree that comprehending what they read will enable them to answer questions and discuss the topic in their own words, followed by 45.8% strongly agreeing with the statement. Only 4.2% of the respondents disagree that comprehending what they read will enable them to answer questions and discuss the topic in their own words.

I can apply my knowledge to English reading. (4-Strongly Agree, 3- Agree, 2-Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree)

24 responses

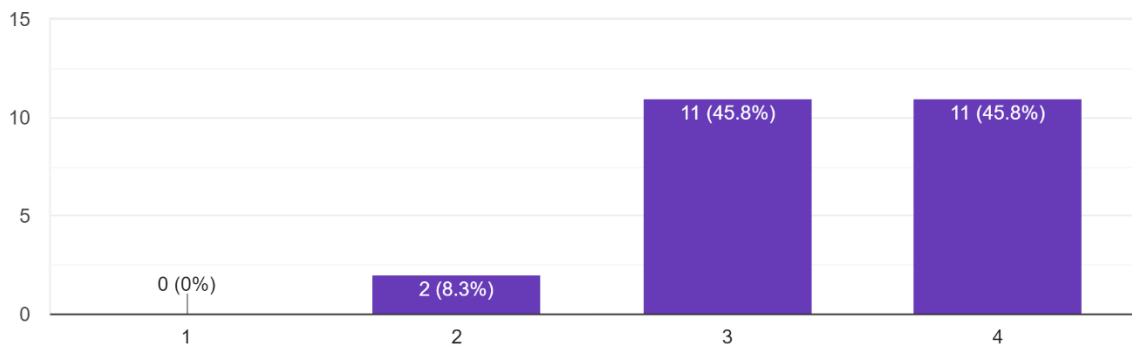


Figure 8

The bar chart in Figure 8 displays the respondents' agreement based on a 4-point Likert scale of agreement on their knowledge application to English reading. A total of 45.8% of the respondents strongly agree that they can apply their knowledge to English reading, followed by the same total of 45.8% of the respondents agree with the statement. Only 8.3% of the respondents disagree that they can apply their knowledge to English reading.

As I have a reading problem, I can employ reading techniques to understand what I am reading. (4-Strongly Agree, 3- Agree, 2-Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree)
24 responses

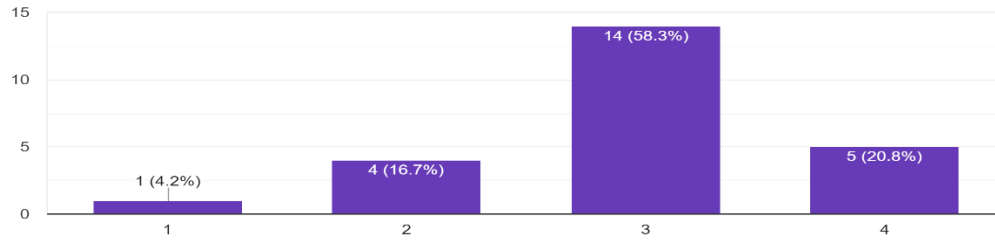


Figure 9

The bar chart in Figure 9 shows the respondents' agreement based on a 4-point Likert scale of agreement as the respondent has a reading problem, they can employ the reading techniques to understand what they are reading. The majority of 58.3% of the respondents agree that as they have a reading problem, they can employ the reading techniques to understand what they are reading. 20.8% of the respondents only agree with the statement. On the other hand, 16.7% of the respondents disagree that as they have a reading problem, they can employ reading techniques to understand what they are reading and followed by 4.2% of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement.

General weakness in English which affects understanding reading texts. (4-Strongly Agree, 3- Agree, 2-Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree)
24 responses

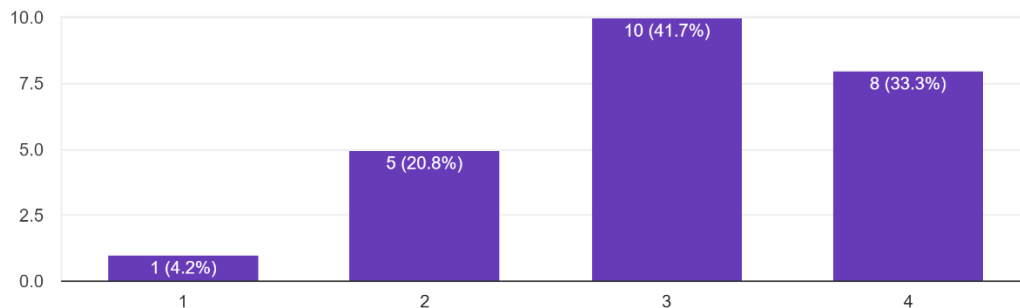


Figure 10

The bar chart in Figure 10 displays the respondents' agreement based on a 4-point Likert scale of agreement of general weaknesses in English which affects understanding reading texts. 33.3% of the respondents strongly agree that general weaknesses in English which affects understanding reading texts. It is followed by the majority of 41.7% of the respondents agreeing with the statement. However, 20.8 % of the respondents disagree that that general weaknesses in English which affects understanding reading texts and followed by only 4.2% of the respondents strongly disagree with the statements.

Section C: Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension

Item	Options	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Item 1: What do you think affects your reading comprehension?	Vocabulary	4	5	9
	Prior knowledge	3	1	4
	Reading motivation	4	6	10
	Reading materials	1	0	1

Table 2.0

Table 1 shows the respondents' responses on what they think affects their reading comprehension. A total number of 10 respondents (4 male and 6 female) think reading motivation affects their reading comprehension. A number of 9 respondents (4 male and 5 female) think that vocabulary affects their reading comprehension. 4 respondents think that prior knowledge affects their reading comprehension and only 1 male respondent think that reading materials affects his reading comprehension.

Item	Options	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Item 2: From the given factors, which factor affects you the most?	Vocabulary	5	6	11
	Prior knowledge	0	0	0
	Reading motivation	4	4	8
	Reading materials	3	2	5

Table 3.0

Table 2 displays the factor that affects the students the most. A total of 11 respondents (5 male and 6 female) stated that vocabulary affects them the most. 8 respondents (4 male and 4 female) stated reading motivation affects them the most and only 5 respondents (3 male and 2 female) stated reading materials affects them the most. 0 respondents chose prior knowledge.

Item	Gender of the respondents		Answers
	Male	Female	
Item 3: Besides the mentioned factors, is there other factor that could possibly affect your reading comprehension? If yes, please explain your answer.		1	Reading without actually understanding it
	1		Reading environment
		1	The length of reading material provided was too long, and students lost interest in reading
		1	Background knowledge
	1		Application of reading contents in real life

Table 4.0

Table 3 displays the other factors, besides the mentioned factors, that could possibly affect the respondents' reading comprehension. Only 5 responses were received, while other respondents stated that there were no other factors. The first female respondent stated that reading without actually understanding affects her reading comprehension. A male respondent wrote reading environment as his answer. 3 female respondents personally stated that the length of reading material provided was too long, and students lost interest in reading and background knowledge as their answers. Another male respondent stated application of reading contents in real life affects his reading comprehension.

Item 4: How does the chosen factor affect you as a secondary school student? (Explain)	Number of Times Mentioned		Total
	Male respondents	Female respondents	
1. Hard to comprehend the reading texts	3	3	6
2. The feeling of embarrassment	0	1	1
3. It is very distractive	1	1	2
4. I failed my English reading comprehension paper	0	1	1
5. Cause laziness to read	0	1	1

6. It helps me to better understand the language, and converse in English	2	2	4
7. No explanation	6	3	9

Table 5.0

Table 4 shows how the chosen factor affects the respondents as secondary school students. 6 respondents (3 male and 3 female) stated that the chosen factor makes it hard for them to comprehend the reading texts. 1 female respondent stated that feeling of embarrassment affected her. 2 respondents (1 male and 1 female) stated that their chosen factor makes them feel distracted. 1 female respondent stated that she failed her English reading comprehension paper. 1 female respondent stated the chosen factor cause her laziness to read. On the other hand, there is a positive effect as well. 4 respondents (2 male and 2 female) stated that it helps them to better understand the language, and converse in English. A total number of 9 respondents (6 male and 3 female) did not provide an explanation.

Item 5: Why do you think the ability to master reading comprehension skills is critical for a secondary school student? (Explain)	Number of Times Mentioned		Total
	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	
1. It can help us to able to answer questions and increase our knowledge	1	4	5
2. To get good results	1	1	2

3. It helps to improve the ability to write clearly and effectively as well as the ability to analyze, understand, and respond to written communication	4	4	8
4. It will help me to understand the material faster and thus improve my skills.	1	0	1
5. It will provide the next generation with a better understanding of any complex concept they stumble upon and solve them with their own solution, therefore the civilization can continue to grow and be better every day	3	2	5
6. Can read in a short time, so will have time to read more	1	1	2
7. No response	1	0	1

Table 6.0

Table 4 shows the opinions on why the ability to master reading comprehension skills is critical for a secondary school student. The majority of the respondents, 8 respondents (4 male and 4 female), stated that it helps to improve the ability to write clearly and effectively as well as the ability to analyze, understand, and respond to written communication. It is then

followed by 5 respondents (1 male and 4 female) stating that it can help us to be able to answer questions and increase our knowledge. Another 5 respondents (3 male and 2 female) stated that it will provide the next generation with a better understanding of any complex concept they stumble upon and solve them with their own solution, therefore the civilization can continue to grow and be better every day. 2 respondents (1 male and 1 female) stated that mastering reading comprehension helps to get good results. Another 2 respondents (1 male and 1 female) stated they can read in a short time, so will have time to read more. Lastly, one male respondent did not respond to the question asked.

4.3 Summary of the Findings

The findings from the survey show that most of the Malaysian secondary school students (50%) that participated in the research agree that like reading and only 12.5% disagree that they like reading. Moving on, 58.3% of the respondents also agree that they have confidence in reading greater than other skills and only 12.5% disagree and 4.2% strongly disagree with the statement. In addition, a total of 62.5% of the respondents strongly agree that reading is important and 37.5% agree with the statement too. Besides that, 37.5% of the respondents strongly agree that they usually understand what they read, followed by a majority of 50% of the respondents agreeing with the statement and only 12.5% of the respondents disagree with the statement. Furthermore, 8.3% of respondents strongly agree that they struggle to comprehend the content of their reading material, followed by 33.3% agree and 33.3% disagree and 25% strongly disagree. Next, 12.5% of the respondents strongly agree that they use a dictionary when they read, followed by 25% agree, 33.3% disagree and 29.2% strongly disagree with the statement. 45.8% of the respondents strongly agree that comprehending what they read will enable them to answer questions and discuss the topic in their own words, followed by 50% agreeing and 4.2% disagree with the statement. When it comes to applying knowledge to English reading, 45.8% of the respondents strongly agree, another 45.8%

agree and only 8.3% disagree with the statement. The majority of 58.3% of the respondents agree that as they have a reading problem, they can employ the reading techniques to understand what they are reading, followed by 20.8% of the respondents only agree, 16.7% of the respondents disagree and 4.2% of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement. Lastly, 33.3% of the respondents strongly agree that general weaknesses in English affect understanding reading texts, followed by the majority of 41.7% of respondents agreeing, 20.8% of the respondents and 4.2% of the respondents strongly disagree with the statements. These results show that the respondents do have good reading information.

When it comes to the factors affecting reading comprehension of Malaysian secondary school students, the majority of the respondents, 41.7% (4 males and 6 females) chose reading motivation, 37.5% (4 males and 5 females) chose vocabulary, 16.7% (3 males and 1 female) chose prior knowledge and 4.2% (1 male) chose reading material. From the given factor, it can be seen that the majority of the respondents (45.8%, chosen by 5 males and 6 females) stated that vocabulary affects them the most, followed by reading motivation (33.3%, chosen by 4 males and 4 females) and reading materials (20.8%, chosen by 3 males and 2 females). Besides the mentioned factors, there are other factors that could possibly affect their reading comprehension namely reading without understanding it, reading environment, and the reading material provided was too long which makes students lose interest in reading, pronunciation, background knowledge and the application of reading contents in real life. These provide the answer to the research question 1. The chosen factors affect them as secondary school students in terms of hard to comprehend the reading texts(6 respondents-3 male and 3 female), the feeling of embarrassment(1 female respondent), it is very distractive(2 respondents – 1 male and 1 female), failing English reading comprehension papers (1 female respondent), causing laziness to read(1 female respondent), and helping them to better understand the language, and converse in English (4 respondents – 2 male and 2 female).

Lastly, the respondents were asked for their opinion on whether the ability to master reading comprehension skills is critical for a secondary school student. The majority of the respondents, 8 respondents (4 male and 4 female), stated that it helps to improve the ability to write clearly and effectively as well as the ability to analyze, understand, and respond to written communication. It is then followed by 5 respondents (1 male and 4 female) stating that it can help us to be able to answer questions and increase our knowledge. Another 5 respondents (3 male and 2 female) stated that it will provide the next generation with a better understanding of any complex concept they stumble upon and solve them with their own solution, therefore the civilization can continue to grow and be better every day. 2 respondents (1 male and 1 female) stated that mastering reading comprehension helps to get good results. Another 2 respondents (1 male and 1 female) stated they can read in a short time, so will have time to read more. These findings provide the answers for the research question 2.

4.4 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has covered on both the quantitative data analysis approach and the method for data collection of this research. Answers to both research questions would be provided by the study's findings. The collected data for the analysis would be displayed in tables and figures. The data includes the demographic information of the respondents, the reading information and the factors affecting reading comprehension. Based on the findings, it can be said that reading motivation affects the respondents' reading comprehension. However, when it comes to the factor that affects them the most, the majority of the respondents chose vocabulary. The findings also revealed that there are other factors there are other factors that could possibly affect their reading comprehension namely reading without understanding it, reading environment, and the reading material provided was too long which makes students lose interest in reading, pronunciation, background knowledge and the application of reading contents in real life. Lastly, the respondents gave their opinions on whether the ability to

master reading comprehension skills is critical for a secondary school student with the majority stating it helps to improve the ability to write clearly and effectively as well as the ability to analyze, understand, and respond to written communication.

Chapter V:

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the discussion of the findings' results, the study's limitations, recommendations, and suggestions on how to improve future studies on the related topic. Lastly, this chapter concludes the entire research.

5.2 Discussion

As was previously discussed in Chapter 1, this study has two research objectives. The two objectives of this study are first to analyze the affecting factors of Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension and second to identify whether the factors that affect reading comprehension differ between the genders of the students. From the data obtained from the questionnaire, both the objectives have been met.

The Simple View of Reading (SVR) model is used when analysing the data where the prior knowledge, reading material, reading motivation and vocabulary all play a role in supporting both decoding and linguistic comprehension, and thus ultimately impact the reading comprehension.

As for the first objective, the results collected show that the majority of the students, which 10 students, chose reading motivation affects the students' reading comprehension. From the findings also revealed that 37.5% of the respondents strongly agree that they like reading, followed by 50% agreeing and only 12.5% disagree that they like reading. This shows that it has a correlation with the reading motivation factor. Research by Dörnyei (2006) and Grabe (2008) revealed a significant influence of motivation on reading comprehension ability. The study showed how motivation relates to all motivational traits, impacts reading comprehension, and makes reading easier for students at various levels. When reading

motivation is high, it will encourage the students to read more, enhancing their decoding and linguistic comprehension as per The Simple View of the Reading model.

Even though, these students chose reading motivation as the factor that affects their reading comprehension, however, when it comes to the factor that affects them the most, the majority of the students (11 students) chose vocabulary. According to the SVR model, readers must be able to identify and comprehend word meanings in order to comprehend a text. The reader's vocabulary can influence decoding and linguistic comprehension since readers with a larger vocabulary are better able to recognise and understand new words. In a study conducted by Fadi (2019), revealed that 2025-word families made up the learners' total vocabulary in Saudi Arabia. Many researchers in this field have noted that this amount enables students to understand 90% of written texts. Therefore, there is a relationship found between vocabulary size and reading comprehension was found in the results.

Moreover, a strong correlation is found between reading motivation and vocabulary. Noting that the students chose these two factors, students' confidence in their capacity to read and comprehend texts may be impacted by their vocabulary. A strong vocabulary helps enhance reading motivation in students since it increases their sense of security when reading. It is evident in the research conducted by Lee et al (2022), whereby the study discovered a statistically significant positive link between students' motivation and their usage of vocabulary learning techniques, indicating that students with higher motivation are more likely to adopt successful vocabulary learning techniques and hence enhances their reading comprehension. Hence, reading motivation and vocabulary are the affecting factors of Malaysian secondary school students' reading comprehension.

Moving on to the second research objective, the second research objective aims to identify whether the factors that affect reading comprehension differ between the genders of the students. From the findings obtained from the survey, it was revealed that the factors that affect reading comprehension do differ between the genders of the students. Even though most of the students chose similar factors, it can be seen that a male student chose reading materials as the factor whereby none of the female students chose the factor. Similarly, to other factors that they have stated, 2 male students stated reading environment and application of reading contents in real life affect their reading comprehension. As stated in the previous study, male students may be more motivated by practical applications of reading. Boys tend to be more interested in reading materials that relate to real-world situations and may be more motivated to read when they see how the content relates to their experiences (Mead,2012).

On the other hand, the 3 female students, based on the findings obtained, revealed that reading without actually understanding it, the length of reading material provided was too long, and students lost interest in reading and the background knowledge affect their reading comprehension. It might be more common for female students to approach reading holistically. Girls are more likely to pay attention to context and how concepts relate to one another, which may cause them to be more concerned with the background information required to completely comprehend the reading material (Yazdanpanah, 2007).

When it comes to the opinion on whether the ability to master reading comprehension skills is critical for secondary school students, female students (4 female students) stated that it can help them to be able to answer questions and increase their knowledge. Meanwhile, male students are keen on the idea that it will provide the next generation with a better understanding of any complex concept they stumble upon and solve them with their own solution, therefore the civilization can continue to grow and be better every day which relates back to the previous discussion whereby male students may be more motivated by practical applications of reading.

Hence, these findings show that the affected factors correlate to each other in reading comprehension as stated in The Simple View of Reading Model.

5.3 Implications

As mentioned in previous chapters, reading is a skill that teaches students how to extract ideas from a text and apply that knowledge to deepen their comprehension (Bano, Jabeen & Quitoshi, 2018). Krashen and Brown (2007) stated that reading could increase a person's overall language proficiency. This means that when students advance through the learning process, reading serves as a mechanism for them to pick up knowledge and information. Therefore, reading comprehension is the main method of integrating knowledge that promotes training methods and efficient coping in both academic and personal contexts (Lim et al., 2018). After conducting the study, the findings revealed that reading motivation affects the students' reading comprehension of Malaysian secondary school students in general. However, when it comes to the factor affecting the students the most, they chose vocabulary. The findings also revealed that the factors that affect reading comprehension do differ between the genders of the students.

Since the early 1960s, there has been a focus on the difficulty of reading comprehension among ESL students (Vellutino et al., 2004). This research would provide insight into how to deal with the affecting factors, mainly when it differs between males and females—knowing that female students perform better than male students when it comes to reading comprehension in English (Corpas Arellano, 2013). As the research suggests, male students stated reading environment and application of reading contents in real life affect their reading comprehension. On the other hand, reading without actually understanding it, the length of reading material provided was too long, and students lost interest in reading and the background knowledge affect their reading comprehension.

Furthermore, this study may be helpful to the Education Ministry and the Education Sector in stressing the importance of reading skills and reading comprehension. The educators actually can prepare the reading materials in advance and make them better suits the student's needs. This may help them to smoothen their lesson delivery process. The Education Ministry and the Education Sector also can come up with programs to assist educators and enhance programs for the students who are still weak in reading. By doing so, this could enhance the reading comprehension skills of the students.

5.4 Limitations

Like all studies, this study too has limitations that must be acknowledged. First of all, the major challenge faced when conducting this study would be the study participants. Since the participants are secondary school students, it was hard to get them to participate in this study as there were semester breaks for the students in Malaysia. Furthermore, it is more difficult to access participants because most of them are selected online using WhatsApp and social media tools. Since all responses are submitted via Google Forms rather than physically distributing the survey forms, the data collection method also slows down.

Next, none of the questions were explicitly described or explained by the researcher, which left room for the participants to interpret the questions on their own, hence leading to some of the participants misinterpreting the questions. For example, the questions where the participants have to choose the affecting factor of reading comprehension and explain why the mentioned factor affected them, may cause confusion and some may misinterpret the question. Even though most of the participants were able to answer the questions posed, there were few who were unable to do so. As a result, questions should be defined more precisely in the future to gather more precise data, which will lead to clearer conclusions and increase the research's contribution.

Lastly, this study focuses on selecting the factors affecting the reading comprehension of Malaysian secondary school students that have already been given by the researcher. Therefore, the results were only based on the factors given by the researcher. Moreover, the opinion of the English teachers was not taken into consideration. As a result, this study's outcomes were entirely dependent on the information the secondary school students provided.

5.5 Recommendation

There are a few recommendations that can be given to assist future researchers. First, future researchers must first make sure that their inquiries are clear and comprehensive in order to gather accurate data. Additionally, it is advised that the researcher be present while the respondents fill out the questionnaire. If the researcher is unable to be physically present, it is advised that the researcher prepare a platform or method for the respondents to use to get in touch with the researchers right away and ask questions.

Next, future researchers also would consider increasing the sample size in order to obtain more accurate and thorough data. In order to do so, future researchers should take note of the Malaysian schools' tentative, so it would be clashing with their semester breaks. Lastly, the researchers also would maybe consider doing research on the perspectives of the teachers as they would have more detailed answers based on their experiences of teaching English to secondary school students.

5.6 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter thoroughly covers the discussion of the results obtained from the study. The data obtained also would benefit the teachers and the Education Ministry and the Education Sector in the study's implications. The limitations of the study were also provided as it was hard to get them to participate in this study as there were semester breaks for the students in Malaysia, which was seen as the major limitation in the study. Lastly, recommendations for upcoming scholars were made to assist them in future research. The findings of the research touch on the affecting factor of reading comprehension among Malaysian secondary school students and how the factors differ between the genders. Therefore, it is important to note the affecting factors that differ between the genders as it could help to tackle student's interest in reading.

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Appendix

5/4/23, 11:36 PM

Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension of Malaysian Secondary School Students

Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension of Malaysian Secondary School Students

Dear Respondent,

My name is Vachiera A/P Jong Jut, an undergraduate student of Bachelor of Arts (Hons) English Education from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), Kampar Campus. I am currently conducting a study on Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension of Malaysian Secondary School Students for my final year project. This survey aims to collect data on the factors affecting reading comprehension of Malaysian secondary school students. Please answer ALL questions asked to the best of your knowledge.

Procedures and Confidentiality

All of the information provided will be strictly kept and remain as private and confidential. The information given for this study will only be used for data analysis and scholarly purposes. Your participation in this research is voluntary.

Consent

By submitting this form you hereby authorize and consent to the processing (including disclosing) your personal data and any updates of your information, for the purposes and/or for any other purposes related to the purpose.

Thank you in advance for your time participating in this research.

If you encounter any problems regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at vachiera99@utar.my or call me at 012-4577178

* indicates required question

1. By submitting this form, you hereby authorize and consent to me processing (including disclosing) your personal data and any updates of your information for this research. By participating in this research, your participation is voluntary and your information will only be used in this research and will be kept confidential to other parties. *

Mark only one oval.

Agree

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1JbQFFWERSDZcHJMases9Fb5KH@K9C7uF0POLV/Y/edit>

1/10

Section A: Demographic Information

All responses and details are to be kept private and confidential and are only used for research purposes.

2. 1. Full Name *

3. 2. Gender *

Mark only one oval.

Male

Female

4. 3. Age *

Mark only one oval.

13-15

16-17

5. 3. Contact details *

Section B: Reading Information

6. Do you like reading? (4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree) *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

7. Do you have confidence in reading greater than other skills? (4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree) *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

8. Do you think reading is important? (4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree) *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

9. Do you usually understand what you read? (4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree) *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

10. Do you struggle to comprehend the content of your reading material? (4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree) *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

11. How often do you use dictionary when you read? *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

12. Comprehend what I read will enable me to answer questions and discuss the topic in my own words. (4-Strongly Agree, 3- Agree, 2-Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree)

Mark only one oval.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

13. I can apply my knowledge to English reading. (4-Strongly Agree, 3- Agree, 2- Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree) *

Mark *only one oval*.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

14. As I have a reading problem, I can employ reading techniques to understand what * I am reading. (4-Strongly Agree, 3- Agree, 2-Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree)

Mark *only one oval*.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

15. General weakness in English which affects understanding reading texts. (4- Strongly Agree, 3- Agree, 2-Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree) *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

4

Strongly Agree

Section C: Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension

16. What do you think affects your reading comprehension? *

Mark only one oval.

- Vocabulary
- Prior knowledge
- Reading motivation
- Reading materials

17. From the given factors, which factor affects you the most? *

Mark only one oval.

- Vocabulary
 Prior knowledge
 Reading motivation
 Reading materials

18. Besides the mentioned factors, is there other factor that could possibly affect your reading comprehension? If yes, please explain your answer.

19. How does the chosen factor affect you as a secondary school student? (Explain) *

20. Why do you think the ability to master reading comprehension skills is critical for a * secondary school student? (Explain)

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