AN INVESTIGATION INTO FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' ENGLISH READING MOTIVATION

Huynh Ngoc Mai Kha*, Nguyen Thi Hong Nhung

The University of Danang - University of Foreign Language Studies, Vietnam

*Corresponding author: hnmkha@ufl.udn.vn

Abstract - This study aimed to explore the reading motivation of students at Skyline School in Da Nang city and its correlation with their overall reading achievement. Data was collected through surveys on 50 students, descriptive analysis, and interviews conducted with students randomly chosen. The researchers sought to understand the reasons behind the students' moderate reading motivation levels, which is proved to relate to complex texts, unfamiliar vocabularies, and intricate sentence structures. Additionally, linguistic barriers were identified as contributing factors. Shifting interests, competing priorities, such as extracurricular activities and social influences, such as peer influence and societal attitudes towards reading, were also found to influence students' reading motivation. Furthermore, the researcher identified limited metacognitive awareness as a hindrance to students' effective engagement with English texts.

Key words - Reading motivation; English texts; intrinsic motivation; extrinsic motivation; language ability

1. Introduction

Reading plays a vital role in the development of vocabulary and language skills for English learners [1]. In Vietnam, students encounter difficulties in comprehending English texts, where motivation becomes a key factor. In the context of primary and secondary education in Danang, the study aims to examine the factors that influence reading motivation and assess its impact on English reading comprehension within Skyline school.

This study is grounded in the theoretical framework of Wigfield and Guthrie [2], who categorized Reading Motivation into two dimensions: intrinsic and extrinsic. Guthrie and Wigfield [3] further discovered that reading motivation plays a predictive role in children's reading behavior and comprehension. They suggested that motivation acts as a mediator in the Matthew effect, wherein enhanced competence leads to heightened motivation and increased reading. Thus, the study is based on the foundational theory of Wigfield and Guthrie regarding reading motivation.

This research investigates the motivation of students at Sky-line secondary school in Danang, Vietnam, regarding their engagement with various types of English texts. It explores the factors that influence their motivation to read in English and examines various challenges that students face, which may affect their motivation to read. Additionally, the study aims to offer recommendations for enhancing Vietnamese learners' motivation to read in English based on the research findings. By addressing these aims, the study contributes to English language education and supports the development of effective strategies for promoting reading motivation among students at secondary schools.

The study has the following objectives:

- Investigate the factors that drive students at Sky-line Lower-secondary School to engage in English reading.

- Identify various challenges that students face, which may affect their motivation to read.

To achieve the aims and objectives mentioned earlier, the following research questions are put forward:

1. What are the factors that motivate students at Sky-line Lower-secondary School to engage in reading English texts?

2. What are some of the challenges encountered by students that could affect their motivation to read?

2. Research methodology

2.1. Research design

In this research, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods is employed to investigate the factors that impact students' motivation to read English and its relationship with reading achievement. The data is gathered through questionnaires and 5- point Likert scales ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1), as recommended by Wigfield and Guthrie [2], and subsequently analyzed using SPSS software. The objective of the findings is to offer suggestions for enhancing students' enthusiasm for reading English. Although the study focuses on Sky-line Lower-Secondary School in Da Nang, Vietnam, the insights gained from this research can contribute to the wider body of knowledge on English reading motivation.

2.2. Research instruments

2.2.1. Population and Sampling

The main focus of this study is to examine the motivation level of students attending Sky-line Lower-Secondary School in Da Nang during the school year 2022-2023. The population of interest consists of a total of 108 students. From this population, a sample of 50 students will be randomly selected to participate in the research. The sample will be drawn from Year 8 to Year 9 students at the school.

2.2.2. Data collection

To carry out this study, data will be collected through the use of questionnaires and in-depth interviews. In order to suit the specific context of Sky-line Lower-secondary School, the study will utilize the motivation reading

questionnaires (MRQ) originally developed by Wigfield and Guthrie [2]. These questionnaires will be administered to students in grades eight and nine. The MRQ consists of 48 items, encompassing eleven indicators. By employing the questionnaires, the researcher aims to gain insights into the reading motivation of students at Sky-line Lower-secondary School and identify various challenges they face in English reading. To enhance the trustworthiness of the research findings, methodological triangulation will be employed, with interviews serving as an additional data collection method.

2.2.3. Data analysis

Data for this study is collected through the administration of questionnaires and conducting interviews. For the data collected using Likert scales, the candidate will calculate the mean values and utilize SPSS software for analysis. Based on the quantitative results, in depth interview is conducted to understand students' motivation in details and explore more about their challenges in seeking and forming reading motivation.

Table 1. *Reading Motivation Mean Scale Range*

No.	Range	Classification
1.	1.00 – 1.49 (rounded to 1)	Very Low
2.	1.50 – 2.49 (rounded to 2)	Low
3.	2.50 – 3.49 (rounded to 3)	Medium
4.	3.50 – 4.49 (rounded to 4)	High
5.	4.50 – 5.00 (rounded to 5)	Very High

Note. Adapted from Best 'theory [4].

3. Literature review and Theoretical background

3.1. Literature review

Regarding the significance of reading in learning, Moreillon [5], Liljequist and Stone [6], and Wallace [7] all emphasize the crucial role of reading, confirming that comprehending not only involves understanding the purpose, context, and information within texts, but also serves as a crucial objective in the EFL environment for academic and life success, and has become an integral part of daily life, especially with the current emphasis on literacy.

From a different approach, Cambria and Guthrie [8], Snow et al. [9], Hasyim [10], and Schunk [11] collectively emphasize the critical role of motivation in reading, confirming that it is not only a prerequisite factor of reading proficiency and a key feature forming one's reading ability, but also that self-efficacy significantly influences this motivation, which varies among students depending on their previous experiences, individual characteristics, and social support.

Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, and Perencevich [12] and Hidi and Anderson [13] all contribute to understanding the dynamics of reading motivation and comprehension through a longitudinal examination of the relationship across grades, an exploration into middle school students' motivation and comprehension, a study on the effects of teachers' autonomy support on motivation and involvement, and the link between interest and reading comprehension.

3.2. Theoretical background

3.2.1. Motivation

Dornyei [14] and Brophy [15] both relate motivation as a conceptual, abstract perception used to describe the thoughts and behaviors of people, referring to it as a construct explaining for individuals' action. In conclusion, motivation clarifies the reasons behind people's choices to behave in all aspects of life.

Motivation is divided into intrinsic and extrinsic types; intrinsic motivation inspires students to learn from a natural, internal expectation without the need for external push underscoring its beneficial effects on creativity, task engagement, and sustained interest, while extrinsic motivation, as Arnold [16] describes, originates from a desire to gain rewards or avoid punishment.

3.2.2. Reading

From the cognitive perspective, reading is seen as an active mental process where interaction between the reader's prior knowledge and the text plays a crucial role. Researchers like Paivio & Sadoski [17], Mayer [18], and Baker [19] describe our understanding of the cognitive processes involved in reading comprehension, such as attention, memory, inference, and metacognition.

The linguistic perspective such as Goodman [20], Adams [21], and Stanovich [22] highlights the language systems and structures essential to reading, underscoring the important role of phonological awareness, orthographic knowledge, syntax, and semantics in the development of reading skills.

The socio-cultural perspective like Bruner [23], Gee [24], and Dyson [25] depicts the influence of social and cultural factors on reading, acknowledging that reading occurs within specific contexts shaped by social interactions, cultural practices, and literacy experiences.

3.2.3. Reading motivation

Reading motivation, as defined by Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt, and Kamil [26], is the ingrained desire to interact with texts that hold personal interest, a critical aspect within educational settings. This motivation drives a reader to explore a text to understand its context and utilize the conveyed information. The purpose of reading is deeply intertweaved with an individual's motives, whether for learning, knowledge acquisition, entertainment, or personal completion.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Intrinsic Factors

The mean score of 4.09 suggests that the aspect with the greatest impact on students' reading motivation is the importance of reading, follows by reading curiosity and reading efficacy. The standard deviation (SD) of .46573 indicates that the data is concentrated around the mean, indicating a strong consensus among respondents. These findings are supported by interview results, where participants emphasized the significance of reading

English text for language proficiency and acknowledged English as a global language:

Interview 1:

T: Do you usually read?

HS1: Yes, I do

T: What kind of text do you read?

HS1: Comic books

T: English or Vietnamese?

HS1: English, Teacher

T: Why do you choose English comic books

HS1: As all people must know English now

Interview 2:

T: Do you usually read?

HS2: Yes sometimes

T: What kind of text do you read?

HS2: Books at the library

T: English or Vietnamese?

HS2: English, Teacher

T: Why do you choose English comic books

HS2: For studying overseas when I grow up

The mean score for reading curiosity is 3.16, the second highest among intrinsic factors. This indicates that respondents value curiosity as a significant factor in their reading motivation. The interviews further support this, as students expressed their curiosity in acquiring information and understanding English texts. However, it is important to note that this study does not extensively explore the biological function, mechanisms, and neural aspects of curiosity.

Table 2. Intrinsic Factors Affect Students' Reading Motivation Level

No.	Dimension	Mean	Category	SD
1	Reading Efficacy	3.11	Medium	.58878
2	Reading Challenge	2.9	Medium	.67401
3	Reading Curiosity	3.16	Medium	.63931
4	Reading Involvement	2.72	Medium	.65849
5	Importance of Reading	4.09	High	.70487
Mean Score		**3.20**	**Medium**	**.46573**

The study found a mean score of 3.11 for reading efficacy. Over half of the students believed that self-efficacy influenced their reading motivation. However, further research is needed to understand how effectively self-efficacy addresses students' challenges.

The mean score for reading challenge is 2.9. Further research is needed to understand how challenge affects reading motivation. However, it is suggested that balancing motivation and challenge is important for idealistic English readers, as it impacts their commitments and societal influence. This finding suggests that motivation and challenge may not significantly influence students with a realistic perspective.

In this study, reading involvement received the lowest

mean score of 2.72, indicating that students generally lacked interest or involvement in specific topics. Participants considered reading involvement problematic, as it requires techniques to enhance comprehension and engagement. Guthrie *et al.* [27] suggested Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) as a solution. However, considering the overall mean score of 3.20 for intrinsic factors, students' reading motivation falls within the medium range.

4.2. Extrinsic Factors

Table 3. Extrinsic Factors Affect Students' Reading Motivation Level

No.	Dimension	Mean	Category	SD
1	Reading Work Avoidance	2.88	Medium	.75297
2	Competition in Reading	3.31	Medium	.74536
3	Recognition for Reading	3.36	Medium	.72359
4	Reading for Grades	3.12	Medium	.70754
5	Compliance	2.65	Medium	.49925
6	Social Reasons for Reading	2.46	Low	.74692
Mean Score		**2.96**	**Medium**	**.30010**

The lowest mean score in the Table 3 is 2.46, which corresponds to the social reasons dimension. This dimension includes four statements. Overall, the mean score of 2.96 for extrinsic factors indicates that students' motivation falls within the moderate range across all dimensions of reading motivation.

Compliance received the second lowest ranking among the indicators surveyed. The mean score for compliance is 2.65, indicating that no one strongly agreed that compliance determines students' reading motivation.

The standard deviation (SD) is a statistical tool that measures scattering within a set of values compared to the mean. In terms of students' reading motivation, the SD provides insights into the impact of extrinsic factors. The average SD value of .30010 reveals how external factors influence students' reading motivation levels. A low SD suggests a consistent impact, indicating that extrinsic factors affect students' reading motivation levels in a relatively uniform manner.

There's a consistency between the quantitative results and qualitative results

4.3. Students' English Learning Motivation

Table 4. Summary on Students' English Learning Motivation

No.	Aspect	Mean	Category
1	Intrinsic Motivation	3.20	Medium
2	Extrinsic Motivation	2.96	Medium
Grand total of mean		**3.08**	**Medium**

The research findings indicate that most students have a medium level of motivation. Motivation is crucial for reading comprehension and academic achievement, especially in English reading. However, defining motivation for grade 8 to 9 students (aged 14-15) presents unique challenges. These challenges include cognitive challenges, linguistic barriers, shifting interests and exploration, social factors and peer influence, and limited metacognitive awareness.

4.4. Several challenges faced by students in reading English

The research findings reveal various difficulties experienced by students that can influence their reading motivation. These challenges encompass cognitive obstacles, language barriers, changing interests and exploration, social factors, and limited metacognitive awareness. Results achieved through interview with research participants revealed detailed challenges that students face reading English. Simultaneously, during the transition from grade 8 to 9, students face several challenges that can affect their motivation to read. These challenges include cognitive difficulties in understanding their motivations due to developing metacognitive skills. Linguistic barriers also limit their ability to communicate intrinsic interests and personal connections to texts.

S5: Okay, sure. Well, the biggest issue for me is definitely the vocabulary. There are just so many words I don't know, even really basic ones.

S5: The sentence structure is so different from Vietnamese.

S6: Well, the main issue for me is definitely the sentence structure.

Additionally, students in this age group may be exploring their identities and interests, resulting in fluctuating or undefined motivations for reading. Social factors, such as peer influence, influence their reading motivations.

Lastly, limited metacognitive awareness means students may engage in reading without consciously considering their motivations or strategies. These challenges highlight the complexity of addressing and enhancing students' reading motivation during this critical stage of their academic journey.

S5: And then on top of that, a lot of the cultural references and background knowledge just go over my head. I feel like I'm missing so much context.

S6: And then on top of that, there are all these idioms and expressions that I just don't understand the meaning of. They're so random and contextual.

5. Conclusion and suggestions

5.1. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the Importance of Reading has the strongest impact on students' motivation to read texts. The findings show that a significant majority of the respondents believe that the Importance of Reading plays a crucial role in motivating their reading habits. This belief is reinforced by the recognition of English as a global language and the belief that studying English is essential.

Conversely, Social Reasons for Reading has the lowest impact on reading motivation. The study shows that no one strongly agreed that Social Reasons for Reading determines students' reading motivation. This indicates that students' motivation to read is not primarily driven by a sense of obligation or Social Reasons for Reading with assigned readings. Taking into account the overall mean score of 2.97 for extrinsic factors, it can be concluded that students' motivation falls within the moderate range across all dimensions of reading motivation in terms of extrinsic factors.

As a result, the Importance of Reading emerges as the aspect with the most significant impact on students' motivation to read texts, while Social Reasons for Reading ranks the lowest. The overall level of students' motivation to read English texts is moderate, and there are multiple challenges that can affect their motivation. Additional research and interventions may be necessary to improve students' reading motivation and address the identified challenges.

To summarize, this study has provided insights into the factors that affect students' motivation to read English texts. The results indicate that intrinsic factors like the importance of reading and curiosity strongly contribute to motivating students to read in English. Additionally, self-efficacy and challenge also influence students' motivation to read. Further research is necessary to delve deeper into these factors and develop effective strategies for enhancing students' motivation to read English texts.

5.2. Suggestions

The study emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivations in students' engagement with English texts. Educators should recognize and nurture these motivations to foster a love for reading. Creating a positive classroom environment that highlights the value of reading and using materials that align with students' curiosity can ignite their passion for reading. Developing students' reading skills and confidence, as well as presenting challenging texts, encourages growth and intellectual development.

Overall, students' motivation to read English texts is moderate, indicating that many students have difficulty pinpointing the specific factors that drive their motivation. The study recommends fostering intrinsic motivation and utilizing extrinsic motivation to engage students in reading activities and improve their overall motivation. However, given the average level of motivation, it is uncertain whether these factors will successfully encourage students to actively participate in reading.

Parents play a crucial role in nurturing children's reading motivation. They can create a reading-friendly home environment with diverse materials and a cozy reading space. Modeling a love for reading and sharing personal experiences inspire children to develop a passion for books. Supporting their curiosity and interests by finding relevant resources fuels their motivation. Celebrating achievements and offering positive reinforcement boosts confidence and a sense of accomplishment. By actively participating in their reading journey, parents become influential role models, fostering a lifelong love for reading in their children.

The study underscores the importance of understanding and leveraging factors that influence students' motivation to read English texts. Schools and society should prioritize supporting literacy through educational programs and initiatives. Recognizing intrinsic motivations, like the importance of reading and curiosity, is crucial.

Emphasizing reading's benefits for acquiring knowledge, broadening horizons, and fostering critical thinking is vital. Providing educators with resources and support enhances students' motivation to read. Continued research funding on curiosity and challenge will valuable insights for developing evidence-based strategies. This study informs teachers, parents, and society on fostering students' reading motivation. By nurturing intrinsic motivations and recognizing self-efficacy and challenge, we can enhance student engagement with reading. Collaboration is key to promoting reading's value and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to develop a lifelong love for it.

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