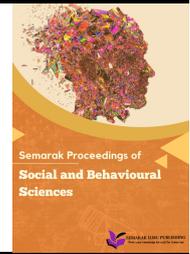




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# Reading Self-Efficacy and Reading Proficiency: A Correlational Study

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### ABSTRACT

Reading is a basic competency that leads to many other competencies, and having proficiency in it means having an advantage in life. This study determines the relationship between reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency among Grade VII students, particularly their self-perception in the achievement of their assigned reading task and the result of their reading competence. Specifically, it investigated the link between their perceived self-confidence and their ability to read and comprehend. A total of 143 respondents took three tests, such as the Reading Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, the PHIL-IRI Oral Test, and the PHIL-IRI Silent and Comprehension Test. These tests determine their self-perception and proficiency in reading, specifically their oral and comprehension competency. The data were gathered through a researcher-made reading self-efficacy questionnaire that measured the learners' belief in students' ability to complete various reading tasks and reach their reading goals, to assess their reading comprehension, vocabulary, and word recognition in oral reading, and to test their reading comprehension in silent reading. The result reveals that the reading self-efficacy among respondents is high, but their reading proficiency was 67.8%, which is described as a frustration level. Lastly, there is a significant but inverse relationship between self-efficacy and reading proficiency, suggesting that positive self-perception does not automatically lead to better reading competency, which is an overestimation of oneself, or delusional confidence, leading to low reading proficiency. Lastly, this study shows the significance of achieving a positive relationship between reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency to ensure an appropriate teaching-learning environment.

**Keywords:** Test; reading self-efficacy; reading proficiency

## 1. Introduction

Reading is the doorway to all other skills, and having proficiency in it means having an edge in school. It is defined as the ability to identify and construct meaning from written texts. It is a crucial foundation in one's learning and an excellent medium for acquiring skills that are vital in a student's education. A person who is good at reading has a certain level of reading proficiency. Reading proficiency is defined as the skill to swiftly and accurately identify a written text with enunciation and understanding of the text [1]. In relation to reading proficiency, Piercey [2], a literacy expert, research shows that a learner with reading proficiency leads to other beneficial results compared to a learner with no or lesser reading proficiency, meaning having a reading proficiency leads the learner to better performance in other academic competencies, which is an edge in academic life. It only shows why proficiency in reading is necessary for every individual. However, not individuals or learners are good readers who can derive, apply, and analyze the meaning of what they read.

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In the Philippines, a study by the PISA in 2018 shows that the learners' reading proficiency, both boys and girls, is the lowest among the 79 participating nations, and with such proficiency [3], it will be difficult for learners to perform activities specifically following instruction and identifying the objectives of an occasion and how to fulfill it [4]. In this, it is necessary to check its relevance in the ground, particularly in high schools.

Another crucial factor in reading is self-efficacy due to its fundamental relation to other learning disciplines. It is defined as the confidence of the person in their respective skill to manifest a behavior in order to perform, achieve, and produce a particular result in that specific performance [5-7]. Bandura [6] asserts that such conviction or belief of the person in their capability to perform on a specific occasion or in many situations to accomplish an objective is crucial motivational behavior. It means that the higher the perceived self-efficacy of the person, the more likely the person will achieve the intended objectives. Hence, it is imperative for students to believe in their ability to read and experience success as readers, especially in the situation of a high school in the Philippines. Therefore, this paper was designed to investigate the correlation of reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency. Two objectives were framed to determine the level of reading self-efficacy among the respondent, the level of reading proficiency among the respondents, the significant difference between reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency and the significant relationship between reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency:

- i. What is the level of reading self-efficacy among the respondents?
- ii. What is the level of reading proficiency among the respondents?
- ii. Is there a significant difference between reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency?
- iii. Is there a significant relationship between reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency?

## **2. Methodology**

The study will utilize a descriptive-correlation design whose goal is to investigate the relationship of the variables without any mechanism to influence the said variable [8]. This design is appropriate in this study because it aims to determine the correlation between reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency of chosen high school learners.

### *2.1 Population and Samples*

The study was conducted among 30 sections of Grade VII learners School Year 2018–2019 at one of the national high schools in Western Visayas. A total of 143 respondents were selected, representing 10% of the total population of 1142 Grade VII learners across the 30 sections. The 10% level was recommended by Walter, Donner & Eliasziw [9]. To avoid bias, the researcher randomly chose the respondents using the fish bowl method from the list provided by the guidance office.

### *2.2 Research Instrument*

The respondents took three tests: (1) Questionnaire on Reading Self-Efficacy; (2) Oral Test; and (3) Silent and Test of PHIL-IRI. The researcher used a self-made reading self-efficacy questionnaire to measure the reading self-efficacy of the respondents. The self-made reading self-efficacy questionnaire measured the extent or strength of the learner's belief in his/her ability to complete various reading tasks and to reach his/her reading goals. The questionnaire that was conducted by the researcher consists of 15 items, each on a three-point likert scale represented by smiley faces;

☺ a lot like me ( 3 points), = a little like me (2 points), ☹ nothing like me(1 point). The researcher gave out the questionnaires to each learner, and each learner encircled the faces that best represented them. Bandura [10] recommended that the precision in showing the construct should be derived from items in self-efficacy, and it focuses on their perceived proficiency. In this study, the statements were constructed in terms of can do instead of will do. The accepted design in determining self-efficacy is constructed and reflected with items showing various stages of activities, and they rate the level of their confidence to perform and finish a task in reading

Mean	Interpretation
1.-1.66	Low self-efficacy
1.67-2.33	Average self-efficacy
2.34-3.00	High self-efficacy

### 2.3 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Before the self-made reading self-efficacy questionnaire was administered to the respondents, the questionnaire first underwent validation. The questionnaire used in this study was validated by expert jurors. They validated the questionnaire utilizing the standard designed for assessing researcher's made survey questions framed by Good and Scates [11]. After the expert jurors went through the questionnaire, the researcher revised the questionnaire following their suggestions and corrections. When the instrument was found valid, it was submitted for test administration to collect scores for reliability testing. To test the reliability of the instrument, pre-testing was done to 30 Grade VII learners in Western Visayas who were not part of the study. The pre-tested self-efficacy questionnaire was evaluated using a test in reliability specifically Cronbach Alpha through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The computed Cronbach Alpha result was 0.828, and since it was greater than the 0.7, the research instrument in self-efficacy was found to be reliable.

### 2.4 Test for Reading Proficiency

This research utilized the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) to determine the reading proficiency of the students. The PHIL-IRI comprises two main assessment tools: PHIL-IRI-Oral and PHIL-IRI-Silent Reading and Comprehension. The PHIL-IRI Oral Reading Test is an informal measure that assesses the learners' word identification, vocabulary, and comprehension skills in oral reading. This test measured students's comprehension level vis-à-vis fluency within the context of oral assessment. The questionnaire consists of a reading passage. The reading passage consists of 5-7 comprehension questions. The questions were categorized into three dimensions, namely: literal, interpretative, and applied. Literal questions are questions whose answers are explicitly stated or given in the story. Interpretive questions are questions that require children to read between the lines to find the answer. The answers are not directly stated in the text. The applied questions are questions that draw from the child's own way of visualizing things based on his own scheme. Also, the researcher assessed and monitored learners' word recognition level via face-to-face oral reading of the passage by the respondents using the Word Recognition Marking System for Graded Passages. The PHIL-IRI Silent Reading and Comprehension Test is an informal measure that assesses the learners reading and comprehension skills in silent reading. This test measured learners' comprehension level based on the reading passage. The reading passage consists of 8 comprehension

questions. First, the student read the selection silently and answered the eight given comprehension tests.

### 2.5 Scale in Measuring Reading Proficiency

#### Phil-IRI Oral Test Criteria Reading Levels

Level	Word Recognition(WR)		Comprehension
Independent	97-100%	and	80-100%
Instructional	90-96%	and	59-79%
Frustration	89% below	and	58%- below

Computation for the level of the pupil in word recognition using the following formula:

$$\text{Word Recognition (WR): } \frac{\text{No. of miscue (M)}}{\text{No. of words in the passage (N)}} \times 100 = \% \text{ of M}$$

$$\% \text{ correct} = 100\% - \% \text{ of M}$$

Example: (to compute for Sandra Santos)

$$\text{Word Recognition (WR): } \frac{\text{No. of miscue (M)}}{\text{No. of words in the passage (N)}} \times 100 = 3\% \text{ (M)}$$

$$\% \text{ correct} = 100\% - 3\% \text{ M}$$

$$\% \text{ correct} = 97\% - \text{Independent}$$

Computation of the pupil's comprehension level using the following formula:

$$\text{Comprehension (C): } \frac{\text{No. of correct answers}}{\text{No. of questions}} \times 100 = \% \text{ of CR}$$

$$\% \text{ correct} = 100\% - \% \text{ of M}$$

Example: (to compute for Sandra Santos)

$$\% \text{ of CR} = \frac{5}{7} \times 100$$

$$\% \text{ of CR} = 71\% - \text{Instructional}$$

The instruments utilized, both the questionnaire on reading self-efficacy and the test on reading proficiency, also underwent ethical review, which was thoroughly studied and approved by the ethical committee.

### 2.5 Data Analysis

To analyze the obtained data, the following statistical tools were utilized: frequency count, percentage analysis, and means for the descriptive data analysis, while chi-square, pearson'r and spearman'r were used for the inferential data analysis. The level of significance used as the criterion for the acceptance and rejection of the null hypothesis was set at .05. All statistical data processing and computations were done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software.

### 3. Result

Table 1 presents the respondents' level of reading self-efficacy taken as a whole group. Data revealed that 11.2% of the respondents have a low level of self-efficacy in reading, 40.6% have an average level of self-efficacy in reading, and 48.3% of the respondents have a high level of self-efficacy in reading. The result also showed that there are 16 respondents who have low reading self-efficacy, 58 respondents who have average reading self-efficacy, and 69 respondents who have high self-efficacy in reading. The reading self-efficacy of the respondents, taken as a group, was determined; the mean for all scores is 48.3% of the respondents, which is described as high level. This means that the level of self-efficacy of Grade VII learners when taken as a whole group was high, which implies that the respondents have high beliefs in their ability to successfully perform various reading tasks.

**Table 1**

Distribution of the respondents according to the level of reading self-efficacy

Reading Proficiency Level	Frequency	Percent
Low	16	11.2
Average	58	40.6
High	69	48.3
Total	143	100.0

Table 2 presents the respondents reading proficiency level taken as an entire group. The data revealed that 67.8% of the respondents were on the frustration reading proficiency level, 24.5% were on the instructional reading proficiency level, and 7.7% of the respondents were on the independent reading proficiency level.

The result also showed that there are 97 respondents who are on the frustration reading proficiency level, 35 respondents were on the instructional reading proficiency level, and 11 respondents were on the independent reading proficiency level.

The proficiency of the respondents as a group was determined. The mean was 67.8%, which described the respondents as on the frustration level. This means that the level of the reading proficiency of the respondents when taken as a group was frustration, which implies that they have low reading proficiency. The result also shows that the readers do not have an adequate background level of the topic and/or cannot meet the criteria for instructional levels of accuracy and rating.

**Table 2**

Distribution of the respondents according to the level of reading proficiency

Reading Proficiency Level	Frequency	Percent
Frustration	97	67.8
Instructional	35	24.5
Independent	11	7.7
Total	143	100.0

Table 3 presents the correlation between reading efficacy and reading proficiency of the respondents. The results of the data showed that the majority of the learners have a high level of reading self-efficacy, which is 48.3% of the learners. Also, the data revealed that the majority of the learners have a frustration level in reading proficiency, which is 67.8% of the respondents.

A Chi-square test was calculated to check the correlation between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The Chi-square results showed that the correlation between reading self-efficacy and proficiency of the respondents was 42.417;  $p < 0.001$ , highly significant.

The data also implied that the higher the reading self-efficacy, the higher the reading comprehension is. The lower the reading self-efficacy, the lower the reading proficiency is.

**Table 3**  
 Correlation between reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency of the respondents

Reading Efficacy	Reading Proficiency						Total	
	Frustration		Instructional		Independent			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	f	%
Low	16	11.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	11.2
Average	52	36.4	6	4.2	0	0.0	58	40.6
High	29	20.3	29	20.3	11	7.7	69	48.3
Total	97	67.8	35	24.5	11	7.7	143	100.0

Chi-square = 42.417;  $p < 0.001$ , highly significant

### 3. Result

Results of the study show that the majority of the learners have a high level of reading self-efficacy, which was 48.3 of the learners. This means that the level of self-efficacy of Grade VII learners at a National High School when taken as a whole group was high, which implies that the respondents have high belief in their ability to successfully perform various reading tasks. The study presents that the majority of the learners have a low level of reading proficiency, which was 67.8% of the learners. This means that the level of the reading proficiency of the respondents when taken as a whole group was frustration, which implies that learners have low reading proficiency. It also means that the readers do not have adequate background level for a topic and/or cannot meet the criteria for instructional levels of accuracy and rating. Thus, they require extensive or even moderate assistance from educators and their parents. Teachers of the respondents do not develop this ability gradually and without proper assistance. It was also observed that the reading material inside the classroom and their library is so small that the respondents used the Grade VI Phil-IRI test, but still their reading proficiency level was frustration. In addition, the study presents that there was a significant correlation between reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency of the grade VII learners which was 42.417;  $p < 0.001$ , highly significant. Thus, that data also implied that the higher the reading self-efficacy, the higher the reading comprehension is. The lower the reading self-efficacy, the lower the reading proficiency is.

The results show that the two variables; reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency, are inversely related to each other while indicating a significant correlation. The reading self-efficacy questionnaire was a researcher-made questionnaire, while the reading proficiency test was a standardized test. There are also reasons why learners' reading proficiency was at a frustration level. It was observed that learners' attitude towards reading was negative. They should motivate themselves to read more reading materials often that will enhance their reading skills. There are related studies that discuss the reading self-efficacy and reading proficiency and their relationship that support the result of this study, such as the study of Schunk and Pajares [12], showing that students with higher self-efficacy do not result in higher academic performance and, in fact, show lower reading proficiency, which is contrary to the showing a positive correlation between self-efficacy and diverse academic performance [7,13,14].

### 4. Conclusion

Despite numerous studies showing a positive correlation between self-efficacy and proficiency [15,16], the results of the study differ from these findings. It shows that high self-efficacy does not

demonstrate higher reading proficiency. This claim is backed by Graham and Harris [17], who claim that students with higher self-efficacy in their reading proficiency do not perform well in reading tests, and their standardized tests show poor performance. There is a possibility that the students taking the reading proficiency test are overestimating their skills (or underestimating the test). They became complacent, thinking that they have high self-efficacy, thereby exerting a lack of effort to learn [5]. According to Schunk and Pajares [12], their presumptuous behavior leads to insufficient commitment with reading activities, resulting in lower reading proficiency. It can also be interpreted as complacency, where students think that they are good readers, and therefore, avoiding tasks and exerting little to no effort in reading activities will not affect their reading competencies, resulting in a diminishment in reading proficiency [18]. Their lack of effort hampers the progress of their reading proficiency.

Lastly, it can also be a lack of accuracy in their self-assessment. Kruger and Dunning (1999) explained that the inability of the students to precisely determine their reading proficiency resulted in higher self-efficacy and originated from their lack of metacognitive skills. As a consequence, the lack of self-awareness of the students in their ability hampers the development of their reading proficiency, and they fail to treat areas that need progress and require fixing. It is suggested that learning to read does not only give the person the ability to learn but also a path toward greater cognitive development in the construction of reality and its meaning and it is an essential routine to obtain knowledge and acquire additional skills in which improve reading proficiency in order to make sure that learners are well-prepared for life both inside and outside school as part of plan of action. It had been recommended to have an enabling mechanism that teaches students metacognitive skills that can assist them precisely in assessing their reading proficiency, and through this it can help identify areas to be targeted and exert more effort to enhance proficiency and to allow self-reflection and constructive criticism to take place in oneself in order to precisely identify their self-efficacy and reading proficiency.

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