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## LEARNERS' READING HABITS AND COMPREHENSION SKILL

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Shaira B. Obligar, Jasmin T. Gadian

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Guimaras State University.

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\*Corresponding Author: Shaira B. Obligar

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the reading habits and reading comprehension levels of junior high school learners, with particular focus on differences across selected demographic variables and the availability of reading materials, as well as the relationship between reading habits and reading comprehension. Employing a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered through a validated survey instrument and a standardized reading comprehension test. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were utilized to determine the levels of reading habits and comprehension, while inferential analyses using the Mann–Whitney U test, Kruskal–Wallis H test, and Spearman's rho correlation were conducted due to the non-normal distribution of the data. Findings revealed that learners exhibited moderate reading habits and high levels of reading comprehension. Significant differences were observed in both reading habits and reading comprehension when grouped according to sex and grade level, while mother's educational attainment showed a significant effect on reading comprehension. In contrast, father's occupation did not yield a significant difference. Moreover, the availability of reading materials—across print, digital, and multimedia formats—was found to significantly influence both reading habits and reading comprehension. Correlational analysis further indicated a very weak but statistically significant positive relationship between reading habits and reading comprehension, suggesting that increased engagement in reading is associated with slight improvements in comprehension performance.

**KEYWORDS:** reading habits; reading comprehension.

### INTRODUCTION

Reading is an essential academic skill and a foundation for learning across all subject areas. It enables learners to acquire new knowledge, expand vocabulary, and develop critical and

evaluative thinking necessary for academic success (Basri, Ananda & Nasir, 2019; Abidin et al., 2020). Recent international and local studies report declining sustained reading habits among students due to digital distractions, limited access to diverse reading materials, and low reading motivation — factors that negatively affect comprehension performance (Bashir & Mattoo, 2020; Yuliani & Fitriani, 2021; Kurniasih, Utama & Susilowati, 2022).

In the Philippine context, studies show that learners who regularly read both Filipino and English materials demonstrate higher comprehension scores, especially in inferential and critical tasks (Dela Cruz & Aquino, 2019; Ramos, 2020). School-based interventions such as Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) and sustained silent reading are cited in DepEd policy as recommended practices to foster reading habits and remediate reading difficulties (Department of Education, 2021). Despite such programs, variability remains in learners' reading exposure at home and at school; consequently, their reading comprehension outcomes also differ. This study examines how the Junior High School learners' reading habits relate to their reading comprehension and how profile variables (sex, year level, mother's educational attainment, father's occupation, and availability of reading materials) may influence both reading habits and comprehension.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to determine the reading habits and comprehension skill of Junior High School learners of University of San Agustin Basic Education Department, Iloilo City, Philippines for School Year 2025-2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the learners' reading habits when taken as a whole and when classified according to sex, grade level, mother's educational attainment, father's occupation, and availability of reading materials?
2. What is the level of learners' comprehension when taken as a whole and when classified according to sex, grade level, mother's educational attainment, father's occupation, and availability of reading materials?
3. Are there significant differences in learners' reading habits when classified according to sex, grade level, mother's educational attainment, father's occupation, and availability of reading materials?
4. Are there significant differences in the level of learners' comprehension when classified according to sex, grade level, mother's educational attainment, father's occupation, and availability of reading materials?

5. Is there a significant relationship between learners' reading habits and comprehension?

## **METHODS**

The study utilized a descriptive–correlational research design to determine the relationship between the reading habits and comprehension skills of Junior High School learners from Grades 7 to 10 at the University of San Agustin – Basic Education Department during the School Year 2025–2026. The respondents consisted of 405 purposively selected learners representing all junior high school levels, with Grade 10 having the highest number of participants. A researcher-made Reading Habits Survey Questionnaire and a standardized Reading Comprehension Test adapted from the Phil-IRI English curriculum-based assessments were used to gather data. The study employed Likert scales and categorized mean score intervals to interpret learners' reading habits and comprehension levels. Non-parametric statistical methods were utilized because the data did not meet the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance. The instruments underwent expert validation and pilot testing to ensure validity and reliability. Data gathering was conducted after securing the necessary permissions, and the results were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, Mann–Whitney U test, Kruskal–Wallis H test, and Spearman's rho were used to analyze the data and determine significant differences and relationships among the variables.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Learners' Reading Habits**

Table 1 presents the learners' reading habits when taken as a whole, yielding an overall mean score of 2.23, which is interpreted as moderate. This indicates that while learners demonstrate some engagement in reading activities, their reading habits are not yet consistently developed and may require further enhancement.

Among the indicators, several obtained a “Good” descriptive rating. These include learners' ability to use context clues to understand unfamiliar words ( $M=2.46$ ), look for the main idea when reading a text ( $M = 2.46$ ), like discovering new ideas through reading ( $M = 2.45$ ), highlight important details ( $M= 2.41$ ), and ask questions when comprehension is difficult ( $M = 2.41$ ). These results suggest that learners possess relatively strong reading strategies and comprehension-related skills, particularly in terms of critical thinking and meaning-making processes.

However, most indicators fall under the “Moderate” level, indicating areas that need improvement. These include reading during free time ( $M = 1.92$ ), reading assigned texts

before class ( $M = 2.08$ ), choosing to read voluntarily ( $M=1.86$ ), and reading for at least 15–30 minutes daily ( $M = 1.89$ ). These findings imply that learners may lack consistent reading habits and intrinsic motivation to read, especially outside of required academic tasks.

These findings show that while learners demonstrate adequate comprehension-related reading strategies, their moderate level of reading habits indicates the need for stronger and more consistent engagement in voluntary and sustained reading activities to further enhance their reading development.

These findings are supported by local research. Dela Cruz and Aquino (2019) found that learners who read beyond required materials demonstrated higher comprehension skills. However, the moderate ratings in voluntary reading behaviors in this study suggest that learners may not be fully engaging in reading beyond academic requirements. Similarly, Ramos (2020) concluded that frequent reading enhances comprehension through improved fluency and vocabulary, which corresponds to the present finding that limited reading frequency may constrain learners' overall reading development.

Moreover, Santos and Bautista (2021) highlighted that learners with strong reading habits exhibit better critical thinking, inference-making, and evaluation skills. While learners in this study showed good performance in some comprehension strategies, the overall moderate reading habit suggests that these skills may not be fully developed or consistently applied.

**Table 1. Learners' Reading Habits when Taken as a Whole.**

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. Read books, magazines, or online articles during free time.	1.92	Moderate
2. Read assigned texts before coming to class.	2.08	Moderate
3. Choose to read even when it is not required.	1.86	Moderate
4. Finish reading materials that started.	2.25	Moderate
5. Read different types of texts (stories, poems, essays, news).	2.28	Moderate
6. Enjoy reading stories or literature selections.	2.27	Moderate
7. Try to understand unfamiliar words by using context clues.	2.46	Good
8. Read for at least 15–30 minutes a day.	1.89	Moderate
9. Look for the main idea when reading a text.	2.46	Good
10. Highlight important details when reading.	2.41	Good
11. Ask questions when not understood a reading text.	2.41	Good
12. Can explain or summarize the text read.	2.28	Moderate
13. Feel motivated to read because it helps me learn better.	2.19	Moderate
14. Feel confident when answering questions about what I read.	2.27	Moderate
15. Like discovering new ideas through reading.	2.45	Good

Scale: 2.35 – 3.00 Good (G); 1.68-2.34 Moderate (M); 1.00 – 1.67 Poor (P)

## **Learners' Reading Habits when Classified in Terms of Sex, Grade Level, Mother's Educational Attainment, Father's Occupation, and Availability of Reading Materials**

Table 2 presents the learners' reading habits when grouped according to sex, grade level, parental background, and availability of reading materials.

In terms of sex, female learners ( $M = 2.28$ ) slightly outperformed male learners ( $M = 2.19$ ), although both fall within the moderate level. This indicates that female learners tend to demonstrate somewhat better reading engagement and habits compared to their male counterparts; however, the difference is minimal and does not indicate a substantial gap.

When classified according to grade level, Grade 7 learners obtained the highest mean ( $M = 2.34$ ), followed by Grade 10 ( $M = 2.25$ ), Grade 8 ( $M = 2.21$ ), and Grade 9 ( $M = 2.14$ ), all interpreted as moderate. This pattern suggests that younger learners (Grade 7) may exhibit slightly stronger reading habits, which may gradually decline in the middle grades before slightly improving again in Grade 10. This could be attributed to increased academic demands or shifting interests as learners progress through grade levels.

With respect to mother's educational attainment, learners whose mothers are college graduates recorded the highest mean ( $M = 2.26$ ), followed by high school graduates ( $M = 2.17$ ) and elementary graduates ( $M = 2.09$ ), all still within the moderate range. This indicates a positive trend where higher maternal educational attainment is associated with better reading habits among learners, possibly due to greater academic support and emphasis on literacy at home.

Similarly, when grouped according to father's occupation, learners whose fathers are government employees obtained the highest mean ( $M = 2.26$ ), followed by those with self-employed fathers ( $M = 2.23$ ) and private employees ( $M = 2.22$ ). Although all are described as moderate, the slight differences suggest that socioeconomic factors may have a minimal influence on learners' reading habits.

A more notable pattern is observed in terms of the availability of reading materials. For print resources, learners with moderate availability (3 types) achieved a good level ( $M = 2.35$ ), compared to those with low ( $M = 2.19$ ) and high availability ( $M = 2.32$ ), both interpreted as moderate. A similar trend is seen in digital/online resources, where moderate availability ( $M = 2.35$ ) is rated good, while low ( $M = 2.19$ ) and high availability ( $M = 2.33$ ) remain moderate. In audio-visual or multimedia resources, moderate availability ( $M = 2.35$ ) also resulted in a good rating, while low availability ( $M = 2.22$ ) was moderate.

These findings indicate that moderate access to a variety of reading materials—rather than merely having abundant resources—may better support the development of reading habits. It

is possible that when resources are manageable and appropriately utilized, learners are more likely to engage in reading activities, whereas excessive or limited resources may not necessarily translate into better reading behavior.

These data indicate that while profile variables such as sex, grade level, and parental background show only slight variations, the availability and type of reading materials appear to have a more meaningful influence on learners' reading habits. Despite these differences, all groups remain within the moderate level, highlighting the need for interventions that promote consistent reading engagement across all learner profiles.

The results are consistent with local studies such as Dela Cruz and Aquino (2019) and Ramos (2020), which found that learners who have access to diverse reading materials and engage in frequent reading demonstrate better comprehension skills. The present study, however, suggests that optimal—not excessive—availability of materials may be more effective in promoting reading habits.

Moreover, the moderate level of reading habits across all profile variables supports the findings of Santos and Bautista (2021), who emphasized that consistent reading engagement is necessary for learners to develop higher-order comprehension skills such as analysis and inference.

**Table 2. Learners' Reading Habits when Classified according to Sex, Grade Level, Mother's Educational Attainment, Father's Occupation, and Availability of Reading Materials.**

Profile		Mean	Description
Sex	Male	2.19	Moderate
	Female	2.28	Moderate
Grade Level	Grade 7	2.34	Moderate
	Grade 8	2.21	Moderate
	Grade 9	2.14	Moderate
	Grade 10	2.25	Moderate
Mother's Educational Attainment	Elementary Graduate	2.09	Moderate
	High School Graduate	2.17	Moderate
	College Graduate	2.26	Moderate
Father's Occupation	Private Employee	2.22	Moderate
	Self-Employed	2.23	Moderate
	Government Employee	2.26	Moderate
Print Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	2.19	Moderate
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	2.35	Good
	High Availability (4-5 Types)	2.32	Moderate
Digital/Online Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	2.19	Moderate
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	2.35	Good
	High Availability (4-5 Types)	2.33	Moderate
Audio-Visual / Multimedia Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	2.22	Moderate
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	2.35	Good
<i>As a Whole</i>		2.23	Moderate

Scale: 2.35 – 3.00 Good (G); 1.68-2.34 Moderate (M); 1.00 – 1.67 Poor (P)

### **Level of Learners' Comprehension**

Table 3 presents the level of learners' comprehension when taken as a whole and in terms of sex, grade level, mother's educational attainment, father's occupation, and availability of reading materials.

When taken as a whole, the results in Table 1 reveal that learners' reading habits obtained an overall mean of 2.23, interpreted as moderate. This indicates that learners demonstrate a fair level of engagement in reading activities; however, their reading habits are not yet fully developed or consistently practiced across different contexts and profile variables.

In terms of sex distribution, females comprised 50.6% (n = 205) while males accounted for 49.4% (n = 200), indicating a nearly equal representation. Female learners demonstrated higher comprehension levels (M = 25.30, Very High) compared to males (M = 22.80, High). This implies that while both groups exhibit strong comprehension, female learners show slightly more advanced interpretative and analytical reading skills.

This aligns with findings of Gustafsson, Jan-Eric et al. (2018), who reported modest but consistent gender differences favoring females in reading-related cognitive tasks.

Grade distribution shows Grade 10 as the largest group (29.6%, n = 120), followed by Grade 9 (25.4%, n = 103), Grade 8 (22.7%, n = 92), and Grade 7 (22.2%, n = 90). Comprehension levels varied across grades, with Grade 10 (M = 25.00) and lower grades (7–8) both achieving Very High comprehension, while Grade 9 recorded a comparatively lower score (M = 22.30, High).

This indicates developmental variation in comprehension skills, consistent with Sullivan, Amanda (2019), who noted fluctuations in reading performance during adolescence due to academic demands and cognitive transition stages.

Most learners had mothers who were college graduates (71.6%, n = 290), followed by high school graduates (27.2%, n = 110) and elementary graduates (1.2%, n = 5). Learners with college-educated mothers obtained higher comprehension levels (M = 25.00, Very High) compared to those with high school-educated mothers (M = 21.40, High). Interestingly, the small group with elementary-educated mothers recorded the highest mean (M = 26.80, Very High), though with a very limited sample size.

This pattern shows that home literacy support plays a significant role in comprehension development, as supported by Dearing, Eric et al. (2017), who emphasized the influence of parental education on literacy-rich home environments.

In terms of father's occupation, respondents were mostly private employees (51.6%, n = 209), followed by self-employed (27.2%, n = 110) and government employees (21.2%, n = 86). Learners with private employee fathers showed the highest comprehension level (M = 24.40, Very High), while the other groups remained in the High category.

This indicates only slight variation across occupational groups, suggesting that occupation may have an indirect rather than direct influence on comprehension, consistent with Sirin (2018), who highlighted the mediated effects of socioeconomic factors on academic outcomes.

When it comes to the availability of reading materials, most learners reported low availability in print materials (68.4%, n = 277), yet moderate and high availability produced higher comprehension levels (M = 25.00–27.50, Very High).

This indicates that greater access to print materials enhances comprehension performance. Allington (2018) emphasized that access to diverse reading materials significantly improves comprehension outcomes.

In digital/Online resources: A majority reported low availability (73.3%, n= 297), while moderate and high availability resulted in the highest comprehension levels (M = 26.60–27.70, Very High).

This indicates that digital access strongly supports comprehension development, consistent with Leu, Donald J. et al. (2017), who highlighted the importance of digital literacy in modern reading comprehension.

Most learners experienced low availability in audio-visual/multimedia resources (88.4%, n = 358), with moderate availability yielding higher comprehension (M = 26.80, Very High).

This shows that multimodal resources enhance understanding and engagement, as supported by Mayer (2020), who emphasized the effectiveness of multimedia learning in comprehension.

**Table 3. Level of Learners' Comprehension when taken as a whole and when classified according to Sex, Grade Level, Mother's Educational Attainment, Father's Occupation, and Availability of Reading Materials.**

Demographic Profile		Mean	Description
Sex	Male	22.80	High
	Female	25.30	Very High
Grade Level	Grade 7	24.20	Very High
	Grade 8	24.60	Very High
	Grade 9	22.30	High
	Grade 10	25.00	Very High
Mother's Educational Attainment	Elementary Graduate	26.80	Very High
	High School Graduate	21.40	High
	College Graduate	25.00	Very High
Father's Occupation	Private Employee	24.40	Very High
	Self-Employed	23.90	High
	Government Employee	23.40	High
Print Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	22.90	High
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	25.00	Very High
	High Availability (4-5 Types)	27.50	Very High
Digital/Online Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	22.80	High
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	26.60	Very High
	High Availability (4-5 Types)	27.70	Very High
Audio-Visual / Multimedia Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	23.70	High
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	26.80	Very High
<i>As a Whole</i>		24.00	High

Scale: 24.01 – 30.00 Very High (VH); 18.01 – 24.00 High (H); 12.01 – 18.00 Moderate (M); 6.01 – 12.00 Low (L); 0.00 – 6.00 Very Low (VL)

### **Significant Differences in Learners' Reading Habits when classified according to Sex, Grade Level, Mother's Educational Attainment, Father's Occupation, and Availability of Reading Materials**

Table 4 presents the analysis of significant differences in learners' reading habits by the Junior High School learners when classified according to sex, grade level, mother's educational attainment, father's occupation, and availability of reading materials.

A significant difference was found in reading habits when grouped according to sex ( $U = 17,540.000$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ). Female learners ( $M = 2.28$ ) demonstrated higher reading habits than male learners ( $M = 2.19$ ). This indicates that sex is a significant factor influencing reading engagement, with females showing slightly stronger reading tendencies. This finding aligns with contemporary literacy research indicating that females often exhibit higher reading

motivation and engagement due to stronger reading preferences and attitudes toward literacy activities (Guthrie, John T. & Wigfield, Allan, 2017).

A significant difference was also observed across grade levels ( $H = 17.700$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that reading habits vary depending on learners' grade level. Grade 7 recorded the highest mean ( $M = 2.34$ ), while Grade 9 obtained the lowest ( $M = 2.14$ ). This indicates fluctuations in reading engagement as learners progress through grade levels, possibly due to increasing academic demands. This is supported by research noting that reading engagement often declines during middle adolescence due to academic pressure and reduced leisure reading opportunities (Sullivan, Amanda, 2019).

No significant difference was found in reading habits when grouped according to mother's educational attainment ( $H = 5.810$ ,  $p = 0.055$ ). Although learners with college-educated mothers had slightly higher mean scores ( $M = 2.26$ ), the difference was not statistically meaningful. This implies that maternal education, while potentially influential, does not significantly differentiate learners' reading habits in this context. However, previous studies suggest that parental education contributes indirectly to literacy development through home literacy practices (Dearing, Eric et al., 2017).

Similarly, no significant difference was found in reading habits across father's occupation ( $H = 0.567$ ,  $p = 0.753$ ). Although government-employed fathers had a slightly higher mean ( $M = 2.26$ ), differences were negligible. This implies that occupational background does not significantly influence learners' reading habits, suggesting that other factors such as school-based resources may play a stronger role. This aligns with findings that socioeconomic indicators often have indirect rather than direct effects on literacy engagement (Sirin, Selcuk R., 2018).

When it comes to the availability of reading materials, a significant difference was found in print resources ( $H = 16.200$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that availability of print materials affects reading habits. Learners with moderate availability had higher reading habits ( $M = 2.35$ ). This shows that access to adequate print resources enhances reading engagement. This is supported by Allington (2018), who emphasized that access to varied reading materials is essential for sustaining reading practice. Significant difference was also observed in digital/online resources ( $H = 15.000$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with moderate availability yielding the highest reading habits ( $M = 2.35$ ). This shows that structured access to digital resources enhances engagement and comprehension. This supports the findings of Leu, Donald J. et al. (2017), who highlighted the importance of digital literacy environments in modern reading development. And a significant difference was found in audio-visual multimedia resources (U

= 6,605.000,  $p = 0.016$ ), indicating that multimedia resource availability influences reading habits. Learners with moderate access demonstrated higher engagement ( $M = 2.35$ ). This indicates that exposure to multimedia learning materials enhances reading motivation and engagement. This aligns with Mayer (2020), who emphasized that multimedia learning improves engagement and comprehension when properly integrated.

**Table 4. Significant Differences in Learners' Reading Habits when classified according to Sex, Grade Level, Mother's Educational Attainment, Father's Occupation, and Availability of Reading Materials.**

Demographic Profile		<i>M</i>	Statistic	<i>D</i> <i>f</i>	<i>P</i>	Interpretation
Sex	Male	2.19	$U=17540.000^*$	1	0.012	Significant
	Female	2.28				
Grade Level	Grade 7	2.34	$H=17.700^*$	3	0.000	Significant
	Grade 8	2.21				
	Grade 9	2.14				
	Grade 10	2.25				
Mother's Educational Attainment	Elementary Graduate	2.09	$H=5.810$	2	0.055	Not Significant
	High School Graduate	2.17				
	College Graduate	2.26				
Father's Occupation	Private Employee	2.22	$H=0.567$	2	0.753	Not Significant
	Self-Employed	2.23				
	Government Employee	2.26				
Print Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	2.19	$H=16.200^*$	2	0.000	Significant
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	2.35				
	High Availability (4-5 Types)	2.32				
Digital/Online Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	2.19	$H=15.000^*$	2	0.000	Significant
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	2.35				

	High Availability (4-5 Types)	2.33				
Audio-Visual/Multimedia Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	2.22	$U=6605.00$	1	0.016	Significant
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	2.35				

\* $p < 0.05$  is significant

### **Significant Differences in the Level of Learners' Comprehension when classified according to Sex, Grade Level, Mother's Educational Attainment, Father's Occupation, and Availability of Reading Materials.**

Table 5 presents the analysis of significant differences in the level of learners' comprehension when classified according to sex, grade level, mother's educational attainment, father's occupation, and availability of reading materials.

A significant difference was found in reading comprehension when grouped according to sex ( $U = 17,144$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). Female learners obtained a higher mean score ( $M = 25.30$ ) than male learners ( $M = 22.80$ ), indicating that females demonstrate stronger comprehension skills. This indicates that sex plays a significant role in reading comprehension performance, with females showing higher engagement in interpretive and analytical reading tasks. This finding is consistent with Gustafsson, Jan-Eric et al. (2018), who reported persistent gender differences in reading achievement favoring females across educational contexts.

A significant difference was also observed across grade levels ( $H = 9.480$ ,  $p = 0.024$ ). Grade 10 obtained the highest mean ( $M = 25.00$ ), while Grade 9 recorded the lowest ( $M = 22.30$ ). This shows that reading comprehension varies as learners progress through grade levels, possibly reflecting developmental and academic differences. This supports the findings of Sullivan, Amanda (2019), who noted that reading performance may fluctuate during adolescence due to cognitive and academic transitions.

A significant difference was found based on mother's educational attainment ( $H = 23.730$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Interestingly, learners with elementary-educated mothers recorded the highest mean ( $M = 26.80$ ), followed by college graduates ( $M = 25.00$ ), while high school graduates obtained the lowest ( $M = 21.40$ ). This indicates that maternal education significantly influences reading comprehension, although the pattern suggests possible contextual or sample-size effects. This aligns with Dearing, Eric et al. (2017), who emphasized that parental education contributes to literacy development through home learning environments and support systems.

No significant difference was found in reading comprehension when grouped according to father's occupation ( $H = 2.407$ ,  $p = 0.300$ ). Although slight variations exist in mean scores, these differences are not statistically meaningful. This shows that occupational background does not significantly influence learners' comprehension levels. This is consistent with Sirin (2018), who noted that socioeconomic indicators such as occupation often have indirect rather than direct effects on academic outcomes.

In terms of availability of reading materials, a significant difference was found in print resources ( $H = 34.900$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with learners reporting high availability obtaining the highest comprehension mean ( $M = 27.50$ ). This indicates that access to print materials strongly enhances comprehension performance. This supports Allington (2018), who emphasized that access to a wide range of reading materials is critical for comprehension development. A significant difference was also observed in digital/online resources ( $H = 38.700$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with high availability producing the highest mean ( $M = 27.70$ ). This suggests that digital access significantly enhances comprehension. This aligns with Leu, Donald J. et al. (2017), who highlighted the importance of digital literacy in modern reading comprehension development. And a significant difference was found ( $U = 5,437.000$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with moderate availability yielding higher comprehension ( $M = 26.80$ ). This indicates that multimedia exposure significantly improves comprehension. This is supported by Mayer (2020), who emphasized that multimedia learning enhances understanding when properly integrated into instruction.

**Table 5. Significant Differences in the Level of Learners' Comprehension when classified according to Sex, Grade Level, Mother's Educational Attainment, Father's Occupation, and Availability of Reading Materials.**

Demographic Profile		<i>M</i>	Statistic	<i>d</i> <i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	Interpretation
Sex	Male	22.80	$U=17144^*$		0.004	Significant
	Female	25.30				
Grade Level	Grade 7	24.20	$H=9.480^*$	3	0.024	Significant
	Grade 8	24.60				
	Grade 9	22.30				
	Grade 10	25.00				

Mother's Educational Attainment	Elementary Graduate	26.80	$H=23.730$ *	2	0.000	Significant
	High School Graduate	21.40				
	College Graduate	25.00				
Father's Occupation	Private Employee	24.40	$H=2.407$	2	0.300	Not Significant
	Self-Employed	23.90				
	Government Employee	23.40				
Print Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	22.90	$H=34.900$ *	2	0.000	Significant
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	25.00				
	High Availability (4-5 Types)	27.50				
Digital/Online Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	22.80	$H=38.700$ *	2	0.000	Significant
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	26.60				
	High Availability (4-5 Types)	27.70				
Audio-Visual/Multimedia Resources	Low Availability (1-2 Types)	23.70	$U=5437.000$ *		0.000	Significant
	Moderate Availability (3 Types)	26.80				

\* $p < 0.05$  is significant.

### Significant Relationship Between Learners' Reading Habits and Comprehension

Table 6 presents the analysis of significant relationship between learners' reading habits and comprehension.

The relationship between learners' reading habits and reading comprehension was analyzed using Spearman's rho. Results revealed a very weak but positive and significant relationship between the two variables ( $\rho = 0.178$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that while reading habits are associated with comprehension, the strength of the relationship is negligible, indicating that other factors may also indicate comprehension performance.

The positive direction of the correlation indicates that as reading habits improve, reading comprehension also tends to increase. However, the low correlation coefficient shows that reading habits alone are not a strong predictor of comprehension outcomes. This finding aligns with the work of Guthrie and Wigfield (2017), who emphasized that reading

comprehension is influenced not only by reading frequency but also by motivation, cognitive strategies, and access to appropriate reading materials.

Similarly, Leu, Donald J. et al. (2017) highlighted that comprehension in modern contexts is a multidimensional process shaped by digital literacy skills, engagement, and the ability to interpret varied text types, beyond habitual reading alone.

**Table 6. Significant Relationship Between Learners' Reading Habits and Comprehension.**

	Comprehension			Interpretation
	Spearman's rho	Df	p	
Reading Habits	0.178*	403	0.000	Significant

\* $p < 0.05$  is significant.

Although learners' reading habits have a significant relationship with comprehension, the weak correlation coefficient ( $\rho = 0.178$ ) indicates that reading habits alone do not strongly influence comprehension levels. This suggests that other factors in today's generation may also contribute to improving learners' comprehension, such as exposure to digital learning resources, educational videos, social media, interactive technologies, teaching strategies, vocabulary development, and learners' motivation. Hence, comprehension skills may improve through various modern learning experiences and not solely through reading habits.

## CONCLUSIONS

The following are the conclusions:

1. This study successfully employed a descriptive–correlational research design to determine the relationship between learners' reading habits and comprehension among Junior High School learners of the University of San Agustin – Basic Education Department, as it allowed the researcher to examine naturally existing variables without manipulation.
2. The purposive selection of 405 respondents from Grades 7 to 10 provided balanced representation across year levels, making the data gathered appropriate and relevant to the objectives of the study.
3. The use of a validated researcher-made Reading Habits Survey Questionnaire and a standardized Reading Comprehension Test ensured that the instruments measured learners' reading habits and comprehension skills accurately, objectively, and comprehensively.

4. The study established the validity and reliability of the research instruments through expert validation, pilot testing, and the use of standardized assessment tools, which strengthened the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.
5. The utilization of non-parametric statistical tools such as Mann–Whitney U test, Kruskal–Wallis H test, and Spearman’s rho was appropriate due to the ordinal and non-normally distributed nature of the data, thereby ensuring accurate interpretation and meaningful analysis of the relationship between learners’ reading habits and comprehension. The availability of reading materials significantly influences both reading habits and reading comprehension, with greater access to print, digital, and multimedia resources associated with higher performance.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions, the following are the recommendations:

1. School heads may strengthen programs that promote sustained reading engagement, as learners demonstrated only moderate reading habits despite high comprehension levels.
2. Teachers are encouraged to implement gender-responsive reading interventions, particularly to support male learners in improving reading engagement and comprehension performance.
3. Grade-level appropriate reading enhancement programs should be developed, with targeted interventions for learners in middle year levels where slight declines in performance were observed.
4. School administrators should prioritize the improvement and equitable distribution of reading materials, ensuring access to adequate print, digital, and multimedia resources to enhance both reading habits and comprehension.
5. Instructional strategies should focus on strengthening reading comprehension skills alongside reading frequency, since the relationship between reading habits and comprehension is weak but significant, indicating the need for integrated reading instruction approaches.

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