In the depths of the mind: The relationship of young readers' reading motivation and reading strategies to reading comprehension

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Abstract

The process of reading would not effectively take place without the motivation to read and the utilization of proper strategies that would aid comprehension. This research aims to gain insights on how reading motivation and reading strategies affect reading comprehension. Data were gathered through the use of two survey questionnaires and a 20-item multiple-choice test administered to 208 secondary students whose age range from 11 to 13 years old. Data were dealt using Pearson's correlation, regression, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Interestingly, results show that there is a weak correlation between reading motivation and reading comprehension. Also, reading strategy is negatively correlated to reading comprehension. Among the categories of reading strategies, the most utilized are global and problem-solving strategies. Despite the weak correlation of reading motivation to reading comprehension, the majority of the respondents manifest a good self-concept as readers. With regard to reading strategies, students need to be made more aware of their use of varied reading strategies.

Keywords: Reading motivation, reading strategies, reading comprehension, reading ability

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1.   Introduction

1.1   Background of the Study

Reading is one of the four basic macro skills essential to learning. It is also a fundamental skill to acquire information (Temur et al., 2010), for it is a process that aids in meaning construction (Yu-hui et al., 2010 as cited in Aloqaili, 2012). As learners engage themselves in various reading activities in schools, teachers of reading put premium on the goal of the process, which is reading comprehension (Kirmizi, 2010).

Several literature anchored on reading cover various concepts that affect reading comprehension such as critical thinking, prior knowledge, inference-making, metacognitive skills, and the like (Aloqaili, 2012). A number of second language (L2) reading research also provide sufficient insights that developing L2 learners' strategy use as well as monitoring enhances reading comprehension (Matsumoto, Hiromori, & Nakayama, 2013b). However, there have been a number of studies that reveal the need for a more intensified teaching of these strategies. For example, Urlaub's (2012) study revealed that reading comprehension strategies pertaining to literary text have remained unaddressed. Another would be the study focusing on the reading strategies of ESL learners by Maasum and Maarof (2012). The study sheds light on the notion that L2 learners lack the skills needed in academic reading. As a result, reading comprehension is affected. Along with these implications from previous research, reading motivation plays an important role in the reading process. After all, motivation affects interest. The challenge to boost reading motivation is an aspect of the reading process that needs attention.

This study explores reading motivation and reading strategies as factors that affect reading comprehension. Also, a simple profiling of students' motivational characteristics as well as the reading strategies they use based on reading ability is presented. The results of this study can contribute to the improvement of reading instruction. Along with well-known approaches like DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time, DIRT (Daily Independent Reading Time), CORI (Content-Oriented Reading Instruction), and Explicit Reading, a new approach may be developed focusing on reading motivation and reading strategies that can complement the reading abilities of students.

1.2   Literature Review

1.2.1   Reading Motivation

Comprehending a text involves both cognition and motivation (Logan, Medford, & Hughes, 2011; Park, 2011; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000 as cited in Swalander & Taube, 2007). In a classroom setup, teachers have expressed great concern on how to stimulate and sustain their students' reading motivation (Park, 2011). Various approaches have been developed and followed by reading instructors such as the CORI (Content-Oriented Reading Instruction) (Guthrie et al., 2007), DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) Time (Tan, Lee, & Pandian, 2012),

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and DIRT (Daily Independent Reading Time) (Tan, Lee, & Pandian, 2012). All of which are aimed at stimulating reading motivation.

Reading motivation plays an important role in the process of text comprehension. It develops in readers the interest in reading. Research shows that the more motivated a reader is, the more books he will read and the more time he will spend in reading, resulting in better reading performance (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Likewise, motivated readers engage themselves in more reading activities that result in increased reading practice. This, in turn, enables the readers to experience improved comprehension (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

While research on the relationship of reading motivation to reading comprehension exists, the relationship between reading motivation and reading strategies should also be investigated. As stated earlier, cognition and motivation go hand-in-hand in achieving comprehension. Reading motivation does not act separately from cognitive skills, but it, in fact, acts as an energizer to stimulate interest (Tabaoda, Tonks, Guthrie, & Wigfiled, 2007). It can be said that reading motivation acts as a stimulus for readers to search for appropriate strategies to aid the reading process. After all, reading motivation is driven by the interest that pushes people to read (Retelsdorf, Koller, & Moller, 2010). Motivation allows a reader to attain maximum comprehension of what is being read; so, strengthened motivation or interest in reading boosts reading comprehension. Therefore, it can be said that a high motivation to read will lead to better reading comprehension.

1.2.2   Reading Strategies

A reading strategy is defined as a systematic plan that readers adopt to facilitate reading comprehension (Haris & Hodges, 1995 as cited in Kirmizi, 2010). There are many strategies which different kinds of readers use to aid in the process of reading. Effective readers, for one, adopt such strategies like relating their background experience with the text, summarizing information, drawing conclusions, and posing questions at the text (McNamara & McDaniel, 2004,; Sporer, Brunstein, & Kieschke, 2009). All these strategies are metacognitive in nature. As Swalander and Taube (2007) state, control strategies are considered cognitive strategies.

Reading instructors should always emphasize the use of various reading strategies to help students. Reading comprehension instruction should include explicit cognitive-strategy instruction (Guthrie et al., 2007). If readers effectively use reading strategies, comprehension will be likely achieved. The ability to know when and how to use an array of strategies and to understand different text types is essential to reading comprehension (Kirmizi, 2010). Knowing and using reading strategies allow a sustained interest in reading (Senay Sen, 2009).

It can be said that reading strategies aid in achieving effective reading comprehension. One's comprehension of a text relies much on the appropriate use of strategies during a reading activity (Nordin et al., 2013). This would pose a great challenge for both teachers and students as the former should explicitly teach these strategies and the latter should utilize these strategies when engaging in a reading activity. Using the most effective strategy defines a successful reading endeavor. Given these views, the students' use of proper reading strategies can greatly affect their reading comprehension.

1.2.3   Reading Comprehension

Once a reading task starts, it is expected that comprehension will take place. As Kirmizi (2010) stated, comprehension is the end goal of reading instruction. Reading comprehension can be defined as the simultaneous process of extracting and constructing meaning (Snow & Sweet, 2003). The skill of comprehending is essential, especially for students who spend most of their time in school engaging in various activities that require effective comprehension. That is why, according to Sporer, Brunstein, and Kieschke (2009), the goal of elementary schools should be directed toward the proper instruction of comprehension because reading comprehension accounts for a substantial amount of learning in secondary schools. This is also the case in a study done by Tarchi (2010), which revealed that text comprehension is one of the most important aspects of learning as it plays multiple roles in the process of acquisition, sharing, and construction of knowledge.

Various skills are needed to achieve comprehension. Ozuru, Dempsey, and McNamara (2009) state determining irrelevant situations, reading strategies, and motivation as some of the factors underlying the skill of comprehension. Although a number of studies have investigated these factors in comprehension, still a further study needs to be done to examine the interplay of strategy use, motivation, and comprehension.

The act of reading is an interactive process. It involves the reader, the text, and the activity (Reutzl, Smith, & Fawson, 2005). Prior knowledge comes into play as the reader tries to relate his background based on what the text indicates. From there, the reader seeks appropriate strategies to aid in the comprehension of the text. Above all these is the fact that readers have to find the interest and motivation to engage in a reading activity. As Moss, Schunn, McNamara, and VanLehn (2011) state, "comprehension is not a simple process of accessing word meanings and then combining them, rather it also involves the construction of a mental representation of the text" (p. 675).

1.3   Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theories that would establish the relationship between reading motivation and reading strategies, and reading comprehension (see Figure 1).

1.3.1   Metacognition

Perhaps, the most common definition one can give about metacognition is that it pertains to knowing about knowing. Metacognition is the theory that talks about the knowledge of learners and how they make use of their own cognitive resources (Temur, 2010). In addition, Temur (2010) emphasizes the three functions of metacognition, namely, awareness, evaluation, and regulation. Along with these functions, metacognition also involves two components: knowledge about cognition and regulation of cognition. Collectively, these functions contribute to the metacognitive awareness of a learner.

It is important to note that reading is a process-oriented skill in which readers use different reading strategies and reading skills whenever they comprehend a text. Metacognition is considered as an essential factor in this meaning-making process. However, in a review done by Maasum and Maarof (2012), previous studies have presented evidence that many L2 learners are not fully equipped to face the demands of academic reading. The most cited reason behind this is that the learners hardly make full use of their cognitive process or metacognition to aid them in the process of reading. The importance of having a full range of metacognitive abilities put in use would make great impact in information processing as learners with metacognitive awareness have the ability to consciously give meaning to the reading process and use strategies effectively while undertaking the reading task. They also have the ability to access and apply these strategies to future reading tasks easily (Sheory & Mokhtari, 2001 as cited in Yuksel & Yuksel, 2012). Metacognitive strategies include activating prior knowledge, summarizing a text, and generating questions to capture the main idea of the passage. Given these three and so much more, metacognition is deemed to be an important facet of the reading process. Thus, it is important to include the explicit instruction of appropriate reading strategies in the teaching of reading. Knowing the different metacognitive strategies used in the reading process and knowing when to use them make up a good reader.

1.3.2 Schemata Theory

A variety of meanings have been given to the word *schema*. It may mean an organized pattern of thought or behavior, a structured cluster of preconceived ideas, a mental structure that represents some aspects of the world, or a specific knowledge structure or cognitive representation of the self. Perhaps, the meaning that captures the essence of this word is that it is an accumulation of knowledge and beliefs specific to a person. This theory gives emphasis to knowledge as an elaborate network of abstract mental structures that represent one's understanding of the world. This means that schema is rich knowledge stored in a person's memory that is accessed whenever there is a need to fill in information gaps.

Schema theory is based on the belief that "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world" (Anderson et al., 1977 as cited in Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983, p. 573). In the context of reading, schema theory plays an important role on how knowledge is represented and organized, and how that representation and organization facilitates the use of a reader's prior knowledge to improve reading comprehension (Aloqaili, 2012). Schema theory plays an important role in helping readers compensate for gaps in a reading text as they search for their background knowledge for information that relates to what is being read. This theory, when applied to reading, emphasizes the interactive approach to reading. This approach views reading comprehension as a process in which students are taught techniques for processing text such as making inferences, activating prior knowledge, and using critical thinking (Aloqaili, 2012).

In this theory, prior knowledge plays a significant role. As readers bring in various cognitive skills into the reading process, the act of searching for background knowledge

comes into the picture. Certainly, as a person becomes a reader, he cannot help but search within him existing meanings, so he can adapt to the given reading material.

Khezrlou (2012) gave emphasis to the fact that in reading, regardless of it being in L1 or L2, the process has to be considered as a top-down/bottom-up interaction between the words printed on the page and the readers' knowledge of the world. The processes involved in meaning making are aided by the existing knowledge in one's mind. This would make the reader effectively interpret what is being read.
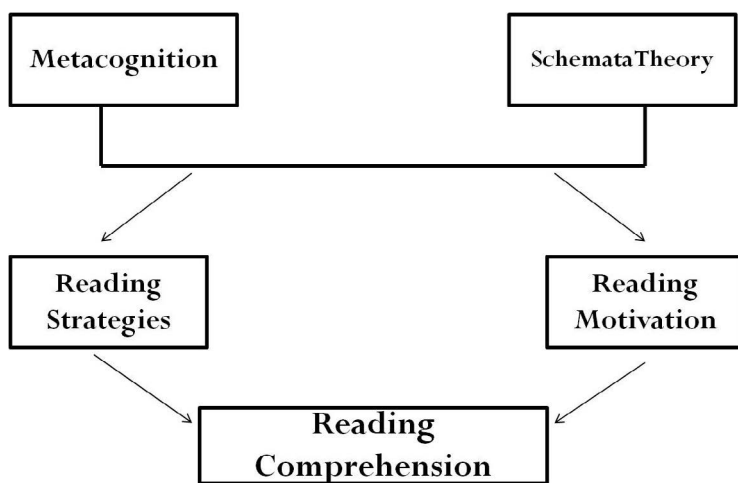
Figure 1. *Theoretical Framework*

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The respondents for this study were 208 grade seven students from a private sectarian high school in the Philippines. All these students took the TOEFL Jr. test, which was administered at the start of the school year.

Classifying the respondents into two groups of readers, namely, the low-reading ability group and the high-reading ability group, was determined based on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) level for reading of the students. CEFR levels pertain to the level of competency of a person with regard to the use of various linguistic skills.

On the one hand, the low-reading ability group is composed of students who obtained a CEFR reading level of A1 (beginner) and A2 (elementary). On the other, the high-reading ability group is composed of students who got a CEFR reading level of B1 (intermediate) and B2 (upper intermediate).

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2.2   Instrumentation

This study utilized two survey questionnaires that pertain to the two variables of this study, namely, reading motivation and reading strategies. Another tool was used in the form of a 20-item multiple-choice test. This test was used to gain objective results for the variable of reading comprehension.

2.2.1   The Motivation to Read Profile

The Motivation to Read Profile, a tool developed by Gambrell et al. (1996), was used to determine the motivational characteristics of the students belonging to the two reading ability groups. The profile is composed of two instruments: the Reading Survey and the Conversational Interview. For the purpose of this study, only the Reading Survey was fielded out to the respondents. The Reading Survey is composed of 20 questions with a four-point response scale. It aims to measure two aspects of a reader, namely, self-concept as a reader and value of reading. Each aspect is composed of ten questions. Items that fall under self-concept as a reader pertain to the students' self-perceived competence as a reader as well as his or her perceived reading performance relative to his or her peers. The items that fall under the value of reading seek to provide information about how the students value various reading tasks and activities focusing on the frequency of engagement in reading-related activities.

2.2.2   Metacognitive Awareness Reading Strategy Inventory

In order to distinguish the different reading strategies employed by the two groups of learners, the Metacognitive Awareness Reading Strategy Inventory (MARSI) was utilized to suit the context of the present study. This survey questionnaire was developed by Mokharti and Reichard (2002). This tool was designed to evaluate the awareness of readers of the strategies necessary for effective reading as well as to uncover the objectives and purposes readers have when reading academic or expository texts. The statements in the survey cover the three categories of reading strategies: global reading strategies, problem-solving strategies, and support reading strategies.

2.2.3   Reading Comprehension Test

A 20-item multiple-choice test was developed to yield an objective result to measure reading comprehension. The 20 questions for the reading comprehension test were all based on a narrative text "The Man Who Had No Eyes" by Makinlay Kantor. Each question contained a single stem and four options. The test went through interrating to establish both face and content validity.

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2.3   Data-Gathering Procedure

In order to categorize the students into high- and low-ability reading groups, the CEFR reading level obtained from the TOEFL Jr. test was utilized. The students who fall under the CEFR level of A1 and A2 were classified as the low-reading ability group while those who fall under the CEFR level of B1 and B2 were classified as the high-reading ability group. Based on the CEFR levels, the students in the low-reading ability group are the basic users of the English language while those in the high-ability group are the independent users of the language.

The researcher and the participants met for two sessions to complete the data-gathering phase of this study. On the first meeting with the participants, the Reading Survey was administered. Each statement in the instrument was read aloud to the students before they indicated their answers. The students finished the test for about 15 to 20 minutes. Following this, the MARSI survey was distributed to the respondents. The last part of the data-gathering procedure was the administration of a 20-item reading comprehension test. This test was validated by an expert in the field.

All responses to the two reading surveys as well as the scores obtained from the reading comprehension test were encoded and statistically treated using SPSS. From here, several descriptive statistical data as well as correlations were obtained as results for this study.

3.   Results

3.1   Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents were male students whose age range from 11 to 14 years old. Also, the demographics show that more than 50 percent of the respondents belong to the high-reading ability group, specifically the intermediate level.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of the respondents (n = 208)

	N	%
Sex		
Male	117	56.3
Female	91	43.8
Age		
11	2	1.0
12	72	34.6
13	119	57.2
14	14	6.7
CEFR		
A1 (Beginner)	1	0.5
A2 (Elementary)	59	28.4
B1 (Intermediate)	122	58.7
B2 (Upper Intermediate)	26	12.5

3.2 Descriptive Statistics

The results gathered from the descriptive statistics show a simple profiling of students' reading motivational characteristics based on their CEFR levels as well as the frequently used reading strategies according to CEFR levels. In addition, the results indicate the relationships formed between reading motivation and reading comprehension, and reading strategies and reading comprehension.

Descriptive statistics would show the top 5 and least 5 reading strategies that students use whenever they read. The following table presents the ranking of reading strategies frequently used as well as the least utilized strategy categorized according to CEFR levels.

Table 2 shows that the single student under the beginner level considers the use of context clues as an aid for a better understanding of a text as a frequently used reading strategy (mean=5.00). The least occurring reading strategy is discussing with others what is read to check understanding (mean=1). Moreover, the student having a CEFR reading level of A1 would more often than not utilize a mix of global and problem-solving reading strategies. Evidently, the respondent is found wanting in the area of support reading strategies as the majority of these skills appear in the least utilized reading strategies.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics of reading strategies (CEFR level: A1-beginner) n=1

Least 5 Reading Strategies							
Reading Strategy	Category	Mean	Rank	Reading Strategy	Category	Mean	Rank
I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading.	GLOB	5	1	I discuss what I read with others to check my understanding.	SUP	1	1
I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	GLOB	5	2	I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	SUP	1	2
I adjust my reading speed according to what I'm reading.	PROB	5	3	I use reference materials such as dictionaries to help me understand what I read.	SUP	1	3
I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.	SUP	4	4	I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding.	GLOB	1	4
When text becomes difficult, I re-read to increase my understanding.	PROB	4	5	I stop from time to time and think about what I'm reading.	PROB	1	5

Table 3 presents the ranking of reading strategies for the elementary-level readers. The respondents under this reading level considers "I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading" (mean= 4.07) as their top reading strategy while "I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization" (mean=3.20) as their least utilized reading strategy. Based on the ranking presented, A2 readers would utilize much of the problem-solving reading strategies. However, they need to explore more of the global reading strategies.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics of reading strategies (CEFR level: A2-elementary) n=59

Top 5 Reading Strategies					Least 5 Reading Strategies				
Reading Strategy	Category	Mean	SD	Rank	Reading Strategy	Category	Mean	SD	Rank
I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading.	PROB	4.07	.998	1	I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization.	GLOB	3.20	.867	1
I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	PROB	4.03	.909	2	I discuss what I read with others to check my understanding.	SUP	3.36	1.095	2
I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.	PROB	4.00	.983	3	I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading.	GLOB	3.44	.933	3
When text becomes difficult, I pay close attention to what I'm reading.	PROB	4.00	.891	4	I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.	SUP	3.47	1.194	4
When text becomes difficult, I re-read to increase my understanding.	PROB	3.98	1.058	5	I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding.	GLOB	3.49	1.165	5

Table 4 provides an insight on the reading strategies employed by intermediate readers. B1 readers consider "I try to get back on track when I lose concentration" (mean= 4.36) as their most utilized reading strategies while "I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read" (mean=2.83) as something they almost never do. Based on the ranking of reading strategies, the intermediate readers utilize much of problem-solving strategies. Interestingly, the least five reading strategies are all composed of support reading strategies.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics of reading strategies (CEFR level: B1-intermediate) n= 122

Top 5 Reading Strategies					Least 5 Reading Strategies				
Reading Strategy	Category	Mean	SD	Rank	Reading Strategy	Category	Mean	SD	Rank
I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	PROB	4.36	.844	1	I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.	SUP	2.83	1.183	1
I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.	GLOB	4.35	3.625	2	I discuss what I read with others to check my understanding.	SUP	3.16	1.128	2
I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.	PROB	4.19	.846	3	I use reference materials such as dictionaries to help me understand what I read.	SUP	3.17	1.190	3
When text becomes difficult, I re-read to increase my understanding.	PROB	4.11	1.062	4	I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	SUP	3.18	1.324	4
When text becomes difficult, I pay close attention to what I'm reading.	PROB	4.05	.995	5	When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.	SUP	3.22	1.345	5

Table 5 presents the top and bottom five reading strategies utilized by the upper intermediate readers. On the one hand, "I try to get back on track when I lose concentration" (mean=4.46) came out to be the strategy they use the most. On the other, "I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read" (mean=2.31) is the strategy they almost never use. Based on the data, problem-solving strategies dominate the high-ranking strategies while support reading strategies dominate the low-ranking strategies.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics of reading strategies (CEFR Level: B2- upper intermediate) n= 26

Top 5 Reading Strategies					Least 5 Reading Strategies				
Reading Strategy	Category	Mean	SD	Rank	Reading Strategy	Category	Mean	SD	Rank
I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	PROB	4.46	.948	1	I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.	SUP	2.31	1.408	1
When text becomes difficult, I pay close attention to what I'm reading.	PROB	4.46	.647	2	I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	SUP	2.50	1.556	2
When text becomes difficult, I re-read to increase my understanding.	PROB	4.46	.948	3	I summarize what I read to reflect on important information in the text.	SUP	3.04	1.148	3
I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.	PROB	4.42	.857	4	I discuss what I read with others to check my understanding.	SUP	3.04	1.399	4
I preview the text to see what it is about before reading it.	GLOB	4.31	.928	5	I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	GLOB	3.04	1.038	5

3.3   Motivation

Table 6 shows the descriptive measures of the respondents' reading motivations according to their reading abilities. As expected, students with high-reading abilities, particularly those with a CEFR rating of B2 (upper intermediate), were the most motivated, with a mean of 3.15 (SD=0.38), while students with low CEFR have low reading motivations (mean=2.55, SD=0.33). The standard deviations are below 0.50, which indicate that the variation in the ratings of students within each group in regard to reading motivation is more or less the same. For the groups with intermediate and upper intermediate reading abilities, their mean ratings on self-concept are higher compared with their ratings on value of reading. The results are the opposite for the beginner and elementary groups.

Table 6
Mean and standard deviations of respondents' reading motivations according to their
CEFR (n = 208)

CEFR	Reading Motivation		Self-Concept		Value of Reading	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
A1 (Beginner)	2.55	0.33	2.50	-	2.60	-
A2 (Elementary)	2.84	0.40	2.78	0.37	2.91	0.36
B1 (Intermediate)	2.93	0.29	2.97	0.41	2.89	0.44
B2 (Upper Intermediate)	3.15	0.38	3.21	0.36	3.08	0.27
ALL	2.93	0.38	2.95	0.41	2.92	0.41

3.4   Reading Strategies

Table 7 shows the variation in the reading strategies of the different reading ability groups. Based on the data, there is no significant difference in the students' reading strategies when grouped according to their reading abilities ($F = 1.450$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 7
Significant difference in reading strategies when grouped according to CEFR
(n = 208)

CEFR	Reading Strategies			
	Mean	SD	F	Sig
A1 (Beginner)	2.60	-	1.450	0.230
A2 (Elementary)	3.68	0.46		
B1 (Intermediate)	3.62	0.57		
B2 (Upper Intermediate)	3.67	0.51		
ALL	3.64	0.54		

3.5   Reading Ability, Reading Motivation, Reading Strategies, and Reading Comprehension

The Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were computed to determine any significant relationship that exists between reading motivation and reading comprehension, and reading strategies and reading comprehension. The Spearman rank order correlation was used to determine any significant association between reading ability and reading comprehension.

Table 8 shows that there is a significant, moderate positive relationship between reading ability and reading comprehension ($r = 0.354$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that a higher reading ability leads to better reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is also significantly associated with reading motivation ($r = 0.159$, $p < 0.05$). However, the correlation is weak. The effect size of the correlation is 2.53%, which means that only a small percentage of the variation in reading comprehension among students from various (Grade 7) sections can be predicted from the relationship between reading motivation ratings and reading comprehension scores. Between self-concept and value of reading, only the former has a significant relationship with reading comprehension ($r = 0.216$, $p < 0.01$).

Surprisingly, correlational results reveal a significant negative correlation between reading comprehension and reading strategies as measured using the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI). Although the relationship is weak ($r = -0.151$, $p < 0.01$), a negative correlation suggests that students acquire better reading comprehension when utilizing less reading strategies.

Table 8
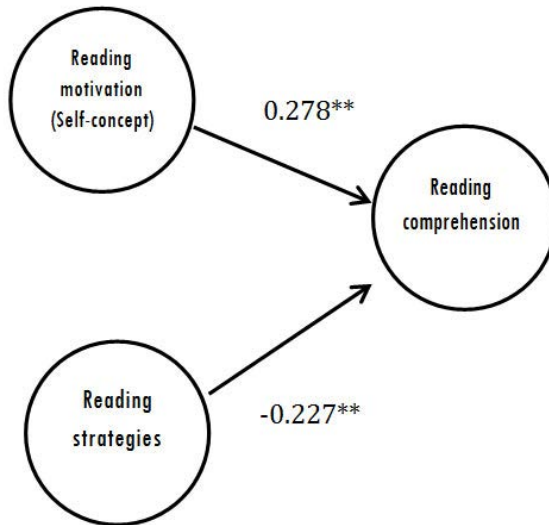*Correlation between reading comprehension and reading ability; reading motivation; and reading strategies*

	Reading Comprehension *R*
Reading Ability (CEFR)	0.354**
Reading Motivation	0.159*
Self-Concept	0.216**
Value of Reading	0.080
Reading Strategies (MARSI)	-0.151*

Spearman rho
* Significant at 0.05 level
** Significant at 0.01 level

Figure 2 is a graphical model of the effect of reading motivation on reading comprehension. The multiple linear regression was used as a model. As indicated in the figure, reading comprehension is fairly influenced by self-concept (0.278**) and reading strategies (-0.227**). The value of reading has no significant effect on reading comprehension.

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**Significant at a < 0.01.
Figure 2. *Effect of reading motivation and reading strategies on reading comprehension*

4.   Discussion

4.1   Reading Ability

The initial predictor for reading achievement would be a person's ability to read. Reading is a primary skill to acquire information (Temur et al., 2010). Reading is taught to make a person fully equipped with literacy skills. In schools, the macro skill of reading is given much weight as it contributes to the academic performance of a student. It should be noted that reading is perceived as a thinking process to acquire information (Yu-hui et al., 2010). This notion supports the results of this study. The significant relationship between reading ability and reading comprehension proves that a higher reading ability aids in better reading comprehension. The more thinking skills employed during the reading activity, the better reading comprehension is achieved. Such a notion is important especially for L2 readers, considering that L1 reading is different from L2 reading, mainly in the aspect of linguistic processing (Matsumoto, Hiromori, & Nakayama, 2013). These cognitive skills utilized by L2 readers lead them to achieve their reading purpose. The majority of the respondents in this study fall under the B1 level or intermediate level of reading. Their reading ability significantly affects their reading comprehension. Also, it should be noted that this group of readers has a fairly strong motivation to read based on the results of the 'motivation to

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read' survey. The intermediate group has a good self-concept with regard to their identities as readers but fall short in proving how they value reading as one group of readers since the low-reading ability group has a higher value of reading.

4.2   Reading Motivation

Research in education would show that learning does not only involve cognitive and metacognitive processes but also includes motivation and emotional processes (Park, 2011). Based on this view, the reading process − which is a learning process in itself − is composed of both cognition and motivation.

Comparing the two groups of readers, it is the higher reading ability group that has a stronger motivation to read. As expected, among the four levels of readers, it is the upper intermediate level's motivation that has a strong significant impact to reading comprehension. Taking it from the perspective of self-concept and value of reading, the high-reading ability group would have a higher self-concept as readers while the low-reading ability group would have higher ratings for the value of reading. It can be said that students with higher reading abilities see themselves as confident readers; that is, they trust their identity and capability as readers and may see themselves as better readers compared with those who belong to their peer or group. These motivated readers have distinct reading characteristics such as reading for different purposes, utilizing knowledge from previous experience, and participating in meaningful interactions when going through the reading process (Blay, Mercado, & Villacorta, 2009). Interestingly, readers from the low-reading ability group put more emphasis on their value for reading. Seemingly, their lower self-concept as readers motivates them more to participate in reading tasks. Further research could be made that would investigate how the self-concept of low-reading ability students affects their value for reading.

Looking at the bigger picture, reading motivation has a significant relationship with reading comprehension. However, the correlation between the two is weak. The small effect size of the correlation shows that only a small percentage of reading motivation affects the reading comprehension of students. This result is in congruence with that of the study done by Blay, Mercado, and Villacorta in 2009. The study also obtained a weak correlation between reading motivation and reading comprehension. Perhaps, an explanation to this result is the fact that interest in reading materials also plays a part in students' reading motivation. The interest drives a person to be more or less motivated to do something. Correspondingly, the interest of a student in a reading text may contribute to his or her motivation to read the text. After all, interest drives people to read (Retelsdorf, Koller, & Moller, 2010).

4.3   Reading Strategies

Successful readers undergo the construction of meaning as they read with the aid of mental activities (Kirmizi, 2010). Such mental activities are said to be metacognitive in nature. These metacognitive reading strategies facilitate and monitor comprehension as a reader attempts to understand a text (Urlaub, 2012). Analyzing the reading strategies employed by

the two groups of readers in this study, it can be said that the low-reading ability group would employ much of global reading strategies such as:

- I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading.
- I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading.
- I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.
- When text becomes difficult, I pay close attention to what I'm reading.
- When text becomes difficult, I re-read to increase my understanding.

The high-reading ability group would mostly use problem-solving strategies such as:

- I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.
- I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.
- I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.
- When the text becomes too difficult, I pay close attention to what I'm reading.
- I preview the text to see what it is about before reading it.

Together, global and problem-solving reading strategies are perceived as the most utilized strategies across reading groups. Similarly, Yuksel and Yuksel (2012) found out that students would be more aware of using problem-solving strategies while Maasum and Maarof (2012) reported that L2 students are more inclined to use global reading strategies. Also, this study and those of the aforementioned literature would state that support reading strategies are the least utilized by students.

Although it was possible to factor in the different reading strategies according to the frequency of use, this study shows that there is no significant difference in the reading strategies of students when grouped according to reading ability. Thus, there is no evident variation with regard to the strategies employed in the process of reading. As shown in the previous list of reading strategies, there are some recurring strategies for both groups of readers. Perhaps, what can contribute to this finding regarding the lack of variation of strategy use is to examine the reading strategy instruction the students receive. More research should be done to address this concern. Previous studies would say that strategy instruction is a key element in comprehending a text (Kucukoglu, 2012).

4.4 Correlation of Reading Motivation and Reading Strategies to Reading Comprehension

The complex process of reading does not only include the actual ability to decode but the capacity to generate meaning from what is being read. Thus, reading involves factors such as motivation and strategies that contribute to effective comprehension.

The results of this study show that only the aspect of self-concept would moderately

affect the reading comprehension performance of a student. Self-concept pertains to the student's self-perception of his or her reading competency (Retelsdorf, Koller, & Moller, 2010). It seems that the confidence of the reader to take on a reading task contributes to reading achievement as illustrated in the case of the high-reading ability group in which students exhibited a positive attitude toward reading based on their self-concept rating. Consequently, having a high-reading ability leads to better chances for effective comprehension. Motivated readers engage more in reading activities, and these activities are avenues for improvement in reading comprehension (Neugebauer, 2012).

The results of this study would suggest that there is a negative correlation between reading strategies and reading comprehension. This does not mean, however, that in the context of this study, reading strategies will not be considered as an important factor in reading comprehension. What could greatly contribute to this finding is the explicit instruction of reading strategies to L2 readers. The question, "Are the students, first and foremost, aware that they are using various strategies when they read?" comes into mind. Awareness of these reading strategies is of utmost importance. A reader who is aware of the thinking process in reading is required to use metacognitive strategies, resulting in the development of strategic reading skills and awareness of the thinking process (Senay Sen, 2009). By being aware of the use of various reading strategies, a reader can cope with the demands of any reading endeavor.

Since the respondents of this study are composed of two groups of learners, the reading behavior of such groups would also differ. A strategic reader employs different reading strategies at every phase of the reading process while a poor reader tends to undergo the reading task without being mindful of the process of reading, does not explore the meaning of unfamiliar words, and does not incorporate previous knowledge to construct meaning in the text (Nordin et al., 2013). As a result, these reading behaviors greatly contribute to the success of the reading activity.

Ultimately, the explicit teaching of reading strategies should be a major concern in schools. This aspect of reading has been an unaddressed issue (Urlaub, 2012). Reading instructors and language teachers alike should make a conscious effort to teach these reading strategies to create awareness in the minds of young readers.

5.   Conclusion

As schools aim to develop in their students a sense of competence, literacy skills are given much emphasis to produce students who can function well in society. Reading is a skill that cuts across all subject matters and is the skill that will allow a student to do what is required of him to perform or create. That is why, in every classroom, each student must be molded as an effective reader. However, there will not be a single classroom having the same type of students, for variety will always be present.

This study considered the profiling of reading motivational characteristics and

awareness of reading strategies of high- and low-reading ability learners in relation to their reading comprehension performance. It should be noted that motivation only showed a weak impact to reading comprehension. This finding could be further investigated by knowing how students view a reading task in their academic subjects. To know how they think once a reading task is given can provide significant insights on how educators can build a stronger interest in reading.

The lack of awareness in reading strategies affected the overall reading achievement of the respondents in this study. The negative correlation of reading strategies to reading comprehension emphasizes the need for the explicit teaching of these strategies. Utilizing such strategies makes students become conscious readers. They do not simply read the printed text but also make meaning out of it.

Students' self-concept as a reader had a moderate impact on reading comprehension. This proves to be a good insight as the majority of students view themselves as competent in reading. Although they are motivated, they still lack strategies to aid them in their text comprehension. Most strategies utilized by the high-ability group fall under global and problem-solving strategies. As a whole, only a few strategies are employed by the students.

The development of a more aggressive reading instruction should greatly improve the kind of readers educators want their students to be. The focus on reading strategies should be prioritized in the teaching of reading. Also, it is important to tap the interest of learners and match them with the texts or activities they read or perform, respectively. If successful, a culture of effective readers will be formed. Thus, a student who is both motivated and well-equipped with good reading strategies will become an effective reader.

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