



THE CORRELATION OF READING MOTIVATION & READING ENGAGEMENT WITH READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS IN 8TH GRADERS

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Abstract:

One of the four main skills of language, reading is a concept encountered by individuals both in the process of education and social life. Individuals reading and having positive motivation towards reading constitute successful societies. The purpose of this study is to determine the correlation of reading motivation & reading engagement with reading comprehension skills in 8th grade students. The sample of the study consisted of 183 students studying at 8th grade of secondary school during the school year of 2016-2017. The data were collected by using “reading motivation and engagement scale” developed by Guthrie and Klauda (2014) and adapted into Turkish by Yıldız and Aktaş (2015) as well as “test of reading comprehension” developed by the researcher. According to the data obtained, a significant difference was found in terms of the variables of gender and age. Additionally, while positive significant correlations were found among the subscales of reading motivation and engagement scale, reading motivation& reading engagement had a negative correlation with reading comprehension. According to the regression analysis, none of the variables predicted each other.

Keywords: reading, motivation, engagement, comprehension

1. Introduction

Reading is a process of understanding and interpretation. There are various factors affecting this process from beginning to end. One of these factors is motivation. In fact,

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individual's motivation towards reading may affect the process of reading, comprehension, and interpretation positively or negatively. The purpose of reading, as well as the environmental and individual differences such as previously acquired knowledge, also affects reading motivation. This is because reading is an act of processing, storing, and using the materials obtained from text or environment by an individual. *"Reading is the activity of seeing, perceiving, comprehending, and interpreting of words, sentences or a text with all of its elements."* (Gündüz and Şimşek, 2011; 13). Reading comprehension, on the other hand, is the product achieved as a result of this complex process. That's why it is important for the product to be sound, healthy and later renewable and usable. For this reason, the process of reading and comprehension should be made free from any type of problem and individuals should be ensured to draw conclusions with their own knowledge and skills.

In addition, individuals face reading and comprehension their education life. In order to succeed and complete the process of education, reading is the easiest way of getting information, which is why individuals need to acquire correct reading skills and reach accurate meanings. *"Reading comprehension is the act of interpretation by integrating the information given in the text and the information structures in the mind. It is required to learn for academic success and to read for learning. Through reading, students can enrich their language skills, vocabulary, and general information levels. This makes positive contribution to their academic information acquisition and academic success by reading"* (Yıldız, 2013; 1465). In order for reading to be beneficial, individuals should, first of all, be willing to read, spare time for reading and head towards it. This directs us to the concept of reading motivation. Then, the acquisition of fluent reading and reading comprehension skills is important. *"It may be asserted that allocating time for reading; fluent reading and comprehending what is read will contribute considerably to the academic success of the students"* (Yıldız, 2013; 1465).

"Reading motivation is a basic structure that affects the time allocated by individuals for reading, their reading tendencies, and the struggle they shall spend during the process of reading and creates the interest and curiosity towards reading. Numerous factors such as whether individuals intend to read because of their own will or environmental effects, how they see themselves as a reader, what their beliefs are for their reading perceived competence, and the cognitive processes they use during the process of reading are subject of reading motivation" (Yıldız and Aktaş, 2015; 1350). Motivation is the state of individuals to intend to do something about a condition. According to Pintrich and Schunk (1996), it is the process of assistance, encouragement and continuous use namely maintenance of a behavior to implement a purpose. According to İleri (2011), it is important not only for motivation to direct an individual to a condition, but its continuity is as much significant as well.

According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000:405), reading motivation is *“the set of personal aims, values and beliefs affecting reading processes, results, and subjects”*

The development of a nation is concerned with its level of education and how it has progressed. However, the society reaches to certain stages through an educated generation that reads. Thus, it is essential both to have individuals acquire reading and comprehension skills and to provide advantages for them later. The problems likely to arise in this process should be taken into account and overcome.

It should be remembered, however, that reading and comprehension teaching reaches accomplishment if individual differences are taken into account. Reading and comprehension skills vary based on differences of each individual and the structure of the society they live in. These differences have attracted attention to the concepts of attitude and motivation towards reading. *“Reading expands and deepens individuals’ horizons through learning new words, gaining new understandings, imagining, and developing creativity. However, not every person gets the same pleasure from reading and develops the same skills”* (Akyol, 2006; 29). Hence, it is required to investigate the concepts of reading motivation and reading comprehension by taking into account the individual differences, and if any, to eliminate deficiencies.

The concepts of reading motivation and reading comprehension, which constitute the basis of this study, should be started to be analyzed from the bottom stages of educational levels. Especially, it is worth investigating the conditions of the adolescents to study at secondary school, high school, and in time, at university concerning these skills. Therefore, the reading motivation & engagement and reading comprehension conditions in 8th grade students were analyzed in this study.

2. Material and Methods

2.1 Research model

The study was conducted in survey model for determining the reading motivation & reading engagement, and reading comprehension levels of 8th grade students. *“Survey models are research approaches that aim to describe a past or existing situation as it was/is”* (Karasar, 2010:77). *“The purpose of survey models is to find out the opinions or characteristics of numerous participants”* (Büyüköztürk, 2008:248).

2.2 Population and sample

The sample of the study consisted of 183 students studying at 8th grade in secondary school during the school year of 2016-2017. Table 1 shows the information related to the demographic characteristics of the students.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the students in the sample group

Demographic characteristics		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Girl	86	47.0
	Boy	97	53.0
	Total	183	100.0
Age	1(9)	15	8.2
	2(10)	81	44.3
	3(11)	85	46.4
	4(12)	2	1.1
	Total	183	100.0

2.3 Data collection tools

A. Reading motivation and engagement scale: Reading Motivation and engagement Scale (RMES) was developed in a study group consisting of 7th graders by (Guthrie and Klauda, 2014). Later, this scale was adopted into Turkish by (Yıldız and Aktaş, 2015). There are 11 factors and 41 items in the original version of the scale, which can be used for determining the reading motivation and reading engagement levels of adolescents. Even though there are 41 items in the original scale, the scale had its final form with 7 factors and 39 items following the omitting of 2 items during the CFA analysis process as a result of the Turkish adaptation study. The scale is made up of three main subscales as conforming, rejectionist, and engagement. The conforming motivation consists of three factors as intrinsic motivation, value, and perceived competence. The rejectionist motivation subscale, on the other hand, consists of two factors as devalue and perceived difficulty. The engagement subscale, on the other hand, puts emphasis on the aspects of self-commitment to reading turning into behavior. Reading engagement in the scale consists of two factors as one positive (dedication) and one negative (avoidance) factor. The scale has 4-point Likert structure and is encoded as “I strongly disagree: 1”, “I disagree; 2”, “I agree: 3”, “I strongly agree: 4”.

B. Reading comprehension test: Two texts were chosen first in the test prepared by Ürün Karahan (2015). These texts were chosen after reviewing the books published by the Board of Education, Ministry of National Education and accepted as the course book of Turkish lesson for secondary school students. While reviewing, it was taken into account whether or not the texts were readable, the sentence and paragraph lengths, the fluency, comprehensibility, and whether or not they were at the level to strengthen the former knowledge of students. Firstly, the questions to be used for the purpose of determining the reading comprehension of the students were prepared by taking the views of their Turkish teachers, based on reading comprehension acquirements within the Turkish Curriculum. Multiple-choice questions were used as the question type. Especially, reading comprehension acquirements fitting into both

story-telling and informative text types were determined. By taking into account these acquirements, a total of 45 questions were prepared in the two types of texts. After receiving the opinions of 6 experts in the field of reading comprehension test and of educational sciences, its conformity was determined and a pilot application was carried out. The pilot application was carried out on 218 students representing the sample. If the "Item discrimination index value" of the scale is $\geq .40$, the item is very good, and if it is between $\geq .30$ and $\geq .39$, it can be retained in the scale without doing any correction on the item. However, small corrections can be made. If it is between $\geq .20$ and $\geq .29$, it is suggested for the items to be improved by corrections, and if it is below $< .20$, the item needs to be omitted from the scale or reviewed as a whole" (Büyüköztürk *et al.*, 2014, pg. 123). "The difficulty level of an item should be between 0.30 and 0.80; in other words, the item needs to be answered correctly by the test takers in the rate of 30-80%" (Tan, 2006, pg. 354). This is the indicator of the discrimination quality of the items. As a result of the analyses, 10 of the items were found to be unsuitable for the student group to whom the application was to be made, and it was decided to omit them from the test. The discriminative indices and difficulty levels of the items were taken into account while these 10 items were omitted from the test. Those remaining out of the suitable range were not included in the application.

The criteria used in determining the reliability coefficient of the data collection tool was the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. If the value range of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient is $0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$, the scale is not reliable. If it is $0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$, the scale reliability is low; if it is $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$, the scale is quite reliable, and if it is $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$, the scale is a highly reliable scale (Kalaycı *et al.* 2010, pg. 405). Based on these limits, the Cronbach's Alpha α internal consistency coefficient of the story telling text in the "Reading Comprehension test" was found as 0.88; whereas, the Cronbach's Alpha α internal consistency coefficient of the informative text was found as 0.73. When examining the above value ranges, it was observed that the Cronbach's Alpha α internal consistency coefficient values obtained from the "Reading Comprehension Test" was between $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$ and $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$. Accordingly, it was found that the reliability of the scale was at high level.

3. Results

In the study, the correlation between reading motivation & reading engagement and reading comprehension in 8th grade students was investigated in terms of various variables. Accordingly, the mean values were examined firstly in order to find out

reading motivation & reading engagement and reading comprehension levels of the students. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2: Means

Variables	N	\bar{X}	Ss
Intrinsic motivation (im)	183	9.64	3.83
Perceived competence (s)	183	10.49	3.68
Value (v)	183	9.31	4.04
Devalue (nv)	183	19.25	4.04
Perceived Difficulty (df)	183	8.19	3.30
Dedication (d)	183	16.56	3.51
Avoidance (a)	183	14.67	3.18
Reading Comprehension	183	88.12	6.05

When examining Table 2, it is seen that while the highest point to be obtained by students from the “intrinsic motivation” subscale of the reading motivation and engagement scale is 24, the lowest point is 6. When examining the mean scores, it can be asserted that the mean scores of the students were moderate. While the highest score to be obtained from the “perceived competence” subscale of the scale is 24, the lowest point is 6. In that case, it can be asserted that the mean scores of the students were moderate. While the highest score to be obtained from the “value” subscale is 24, the lowest score is 6. When examining the mean scores, it can be asserted that the mean scores of the students were moderate. While the highest score to be obtained from the “devalue” subscale of the scale is 24, the lowest point is 6. In this case, when examining the mean scores, it can be asserted that the mean scores of the students were high. While the highest score to be obtained from the “perceived difficulty” subscale of the scale is 20, the lowest point is 5. When examining the mean scores, it can be asserted that the mean scores of the students were moderate. The highest score to be obtained from the “dedication” subscale of the scale is 20, the lowest score is 5. When examining the mean scores, it can be asserted that the mean scores of the students were high. The highest score to be obtained from the “avoidance” subscale of the scale is 20, the lowest point is 5. When examining the mean scores, it can be asserted that the mean scores of the students were high. The lowest score to be received from the “Reading

comprehension” test is 35; whereas, the highest score is 175. When examining the mean scores, it can be asserted that the mean scores of the students were moderate.

t test was carried out in the study to determine whether or not the reading motivation & reading engagement and reading comprehension levels of the students varied based on the variable of sex. Table 3 shows the results obtained.

Table 3: t test results based on the variable of sex

	Sex		N	\bar{x}	S	Sd	t	p																																																																																														
Intrinsic Motivation	Girl		85	9.09	3.61	179.8	-1.81	.071																																																																																														
	Boy		97	10.12	3.99				Perceived competence Value	Girl	Girl	85	10.04	3.76	174.7	-1.53	.127	Boy	Boy	97	10.88	3.61	Devalue	Girl	Girl	85	8.68	3.82	179.6	-2.01	.045	Boy	Boy	97	9.88	4.17	Dedication	Girl	Girl	85	19.90	4.10	174.8	2.06	.040	Boy	Boy	97	18.67	3.94	Avoidance	Girl	Girl	85	7.84	3.41	173.3	-1.34	.181	Boy	Boy	97	8.50	3.20	Perceived difficulty	Girl	Girl	85	16.61	3.58	175.2	.18	.855	Boy	Boy	97	16.51	3.47	Reading Comprehension	Girl	Girl	85	14.72	3.33	171.6	.27	.782	Boy	Boy	97	16.59	3.05		Girl	Girl	85	88.61	6.27	172.0	.90	.367	Boy
Perceived competence Value	Girl	Girl	85	10.04	3.76	174.7	-1.53	.127																																																																																														
	Boy	Boy	97	10.88	3.61				Devalue	Girl	Girl	85	8.68	3.82	179.6	-2.01	.045	Boy	Boy	97	9.88	4.17	Dedication	Girl	Girl	85	19.90	4.10	174.8	2.06	.040	Boy	Boy	97	18.67	3.94	Avoidance	Girl	Girl	85	7.84	3.41	173.3	-1.34	.181	Boy	Boy	97	8.50	3.20	Perceived difficulty	Girl	Girl	85	16.61	3.58	175.2	.18	.855	Boy	Boy	97	16.51	3.47	Reading Comprehension	Girl	Girl	85	14.72	3.33	171.6	.27	.782	Boy	Boy	97	16.59	3.05		Girl	Girl	85	88.61	6.27	172.0	.90	.367	Boy	Boy	97	87.80	5.77										
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p<.05

When examining Table 3, it was found that there was a significant difference only in the “value” and “devalue” subscales of the reading motivation and engagement scale, and this difference was in favor of female students in the value subscale, but in favor of male students in the devalue subscale. No significant difference was found based on the variable of sex in the other subscales of the scale and on behalf of the reading comprehension test.

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated in the study in order to analyze the correlation between the subscales of the reading motivation and engagement scale (im, c, v, dv, d, a, d) and reading comprehension. Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4: Correlations

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Im	.750**	.829**	-.468**	.808**	-.488**	-.262**	-.106
2. c		.737**	-.321**		-.355**	-.251**	-.086
3. v			.693**		-.500**	-.303**	-.038
4. dv			.498**	.787**	.755**	.612**	-.048
5. d				.430**	-.505**	-.344**	-.071
6. a						.639**	.028
7. d							-.019
8. reading comprehension							

**p<.01, *p<.05

When examining the correlation coefficients, it was observed that among subscales of the reading motivation and engagement scale, the highest positive correlations were obtained between “intrinsic motivation” and “value” ($r = .829^{**}$), between “intrinsic motivation” and “dedication” ($r = .808^{**}$), between “value” and “dedication” ($r = .787^{**}$), between “devalue” and “avoidance” ($r = .755^{**}$), between “intrinsic motivation” and “perceived competence” ($r = .750^{**}$), and between “perceived competence” and “value” ($r = .737^{**}$). On the other hand, a moderate positive correlation was found between “perceived competence” and “dedication” ($r = .693^{**}$), between “avoidance” and “perceived difficulty” ($r = .639^{**}$), and between “devalue” and “perceived difficulty” ($r = .612^{**}$). A weak positive correlation was found between “devalue” and “value” ($r = .498^{**}$) and between “devalue” and “dedication” ($r = .430^{**}$). On the other hand, it was found that there was a moderate negative correlation between “dedication” and “avoidance” ($r = -.505^{**}$) and between “value” and “avoidance” ($r = -.500^{**}$); and there was a weak negative correlation between “intrinsic motivation” and “avoidance” ($r = -.488^{**}$), between “value” and “devalue” ($r = -.468^{**}$), between “perceived competence” and “avoidance” ($r = -.355^{**}$), between “dedication” and “perceived difficulty” ($r = -.344^{**}$), between “perceived competence” and “devalue” ($r = -.321^{**}$), between “value” and “perceived difficulty” ($r = -.303^{**}$), and between “intrinsic motivation” and “perceived difficulty” ($r = -.262^{**}$). Between the “perceived competence” and “perceived difficulty” subscales of the scale, on the other hand, a weak negative correlation was found ($r = -.251^{**}$). In addition, no correlation was found between the reading motivation & reading engagement and reading comprehension levels of the students.

Multiple linear regression analysis was carried out to find out whether or not the variables predicted each other. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5: Variables predicting lifelong learning based on the multiple linear regression analysis

Variables	B	F	R	R ²	p
Age	.081				
im	-.255				
c	-.045				
v	.162	.907	.200	.040	.51
dv	-.183				
d	.029				
a	.129				
d	-.008				

*p>.05

When examining the data obtained as a result of the multiple linear regression analysis according to Table 5, p(.51) value indicated that the regression model was not significant. In this case, it was found that reading comprehension was not predicted by age and reading motivation and reading engagement.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

In the study, the correlation between the reading motivation & reading engagement and reading comprehension levels of 8th grade students was analyzed. For this purpose, the mean scores were examined at first. In the light of the results obtained, it was found that the students had moderate mean scores in the subscales “intrinsic motivation”, “perceived competence”, “value”, and “perceived difficulty” of the reading motivation and engagement scale; whereas, they had high mean scores in the subscales “devalue”, “dedication”, and “avoidance”. In addition, it was revealed that the students had moderate mean scores of “reading comprehension”. There are studies indicating that reading motivation is moderate in literature (Katrancı, 2015; Tercanlıoğlu, 2001). Kurnaz and Yıldız (2015) found in their study that secondary school students had a quite high level of reading motivation. In the study of Park (2011), on the other hand, it was concluded that motivation played a significant role in reading performance and supporting the reading skill.

Based on the results obtained in terms of the variable of sex, a significant difference was only found in the subscales of “value” and “devalue” of the reading motivation and engagement scale, and this difference was in favor of female students in v subscale, but in favor of male students in dv subscale. No significant difference was found in terms of the variable of sex on behalf of the other subscales of the scale and the reading comprehension test. Studies indicating results in favor of female students were encountered in the literature (Aslantürk and Saracaloğlu, 2010; Yıldız, 2010; İleri, 2011; Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997).

According to the results of the correlation analysis, the highest positive correlations were determined between “intrinsic motivation” and “value”, between “intrinsic motivation” and “dedication”, between “value” and “dedication”, between “devalue” and “avoidance”, between “intrinsic motivation” and “perceived competence”, and between “perceived competence” and “devalue” among the subscales of the reading motivation and engagement scale. Based on this result, it can be asserted that students with high intrinsic motivation were committed and valued to reading, and also they found themselves competent in the field of reading. In addition, it can be asserted that those individuals avoiding reading engagement were those devalue reading. On the other hand, a moderate positive correlation was found between the subscales of “perceived competence” and “dedication”, between “avoidance” and “perceived difficulty”, and between “devalue” and “perceived difficulty” of the scale. According to this result, it can be asserted that individuals having difficulty in reading, even slightly, avoided reading and did not value reading; and individuals thinking that they felt competent regarding reading were committed to reading.

A weak positive correlation was found between the subscales of “devalue” and “value” and between “devalue” and “dedication” in the scale. This result indicated that the more valuing and dedication to reading increased, devalue for reading decreased. On the other hand, moderate negative correlation was found between the subscales of “dedication” and “avoidance”, and between “value” and “avoidance” of the scale. This result indicated that as the motivation of valuing and dedication increased, the avoidance of reading decreased. A weak negative correlation was found between “intrinsic motivation” and “avoidance”, between “value” and “devalue”, between “perceived competence” and “avoidance”, between “dedication” and “perceived difficulty”, between “perceived competence” and “devalue”, between “value” and “perceived difficulty”, and between “intrinsic motivation” and “perceived difficulty” of the scale. Based on this result it can be asserted that individuals with high reading engagement and reading motivation are very slightly affected adversely by the feelings of reading difficulty, devalue and avoidance. Between the subscales of “perceived competence” and “perceived difficulty” of the scale, a very weak negative correlation was found. Based on this result, it can be asserted that individuals having competence for reading are almost never affected by reading difficulties.

In addition, no correlation was encountered between the reading motivation & reading engagement and reading comprehension levels of the students. In the study of Sallabaş (2008), it was revealed that there was a low correlation between students’ attitudes towards reading and reading comprehension skills, and there was a moderate

correlation between the students' academic success and reading comprehension levels. Yıldız and Akyol (2011) found in their study that intrinsic motivation affected reading comprehension positively, but affected external motivation negatively except for the competition factor. As a result of the study by Bozkurt and Memiş (2013) on reading they determined that in general, independent reader levels had the highest mean in metacognitive reading comprehension awareness and reading motivation. Moreover, it was observed that there was a moderate correlation between reading levels and metacognitive reading comprehension awareness, and a low correlation between the subscales of reading motivation. As a conclusion, it was remarkable that students considering reading as difficult had a negative correlation with all subscales of the scale and their competence, reading struggles, social ways of reading and intrinsic motivations were low. It was observed that the students considering themselves competent for reading had a high intrinsic motivation. Lastly, it was found that students having an intrinsic motivation made an effort in reading and wanted appreciation.

When examining the data obtained as a result of the multiple linear regression analysis, it was found that the regression model was not significant per $p(,51)$ value. In this case, it was determined that reading comprehension was not predicted by age and reading motivation & reading engagement. As a result of the study by Kurnaz and Yıldız (2015), it was revealed that academic success increased reading motivation. A similar study was conducted by Sıcak and Başören (2015) and they revealed that academic success was an effective variable on academic motivation.

In the light of the results obtained, it is necessary to take into account the acquisition of reading skill, and motivation and individual differences during the acquisition process. Applied works and the arrangement of learning environments accordingly may be useful during the skill acquisition process of the individuals especially in the educational institutions. However, the most important of all is that teachers should be aware of severity of this matter and be open to innovations. By considering the individual differences, the students' motivations can be kept at more positive levels and the students can be ensured to acquire positive opinions and skills related to reading.

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