

AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF STUDENTS' READING ATTITUDE ON THEIR ACHIEVEMENT IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Reading attitude has the potential to promote the achievement of students in English. Realizing the importance of reading attitude a survey regarding the impact of reading attitude on the achievement of students have been conducted. The data were collected from a sample of five hundred thirty five students and twenty six teachers, which was randomly selected from access population. A questionnaire was developed for the collection of data from teachers and students. Annual result of learners was used to evaluate and compare their achievement. Regression, mean and t-test were used to test the hypotheses and compare groups. The result revealed that students' reading attitude and their achievement were strongly correlated. The prediction regarding the achievement of students could be made from their attitude. The significant F- value revealed that model was fit for the prediction of dependent variable from independent variable. An improvement in students' reading attitude would significantly improve their achievement. However, no significant difference in the perceptions between teachers and students regarding the impact of students' reading attitude on their achievement was found. All the same, the students who often participated in reading activities, frequently attended libraries and read more than course books performed better than students who did not read more than course books and avoided going to library or participating in reading activities. In addition, urban area students performed better than rural area students. The male learners out did female learners. However, no significant difference between first year and second year students was found. The suggestions are given at the end of the paper.

Keywords: Attitude, reading, achievement & students

Introduction

The performance of learners in English totally depends upon the reading attitude of students. Reading attitude refers thinking process, feeling, thoughts, lik-

ing, interest, disliking and mental and emotional attachment of students towards reading. Felder and Brent (2005) are of the opinion that attitude refers the mental and emotional

inclination of students towards something /somebody and it can be modified through motivation. Abidin (2012) adds that thinking way, behavior and feeling of students towards particular subject or text reveal the attitude of students. However, Brookhart and Watkins (2005) believe that the attitude of students towards reading is a main indicator of the reading performance and reading skill development of students. To them the reading skill development and performance depend upon the attitude of students.

The attitude of students regarding reading may be positive or negative. Kush and Watkins (1996) identify that chances of academic success in reading are more for students with positive attitude. The students having positive attitude towards reading need only proper guidance, while the students with negative attitude need more than merely guidance. They need proper motivation, more attention of teachers and other facilities.

The students who like and enjoy reading can perform than those that dislike and get boring while reading. Mazzoni, Gambrell and Korkeamaki (1999)

believe that students who enjoy reading spend more time on reading and consequently their reading performance also improves positively.

However, in Pakistan the attitude of students towards reading is not positive. To most of the students, the reading activity has not got primary importance (Awais, 2013). It has not been given proper space in the national examination system. Students and teachers mostly try to complete the course from examination point of view so that learners may secure better grades. They often pay less attention on reading skill development of learners in Pakistani. Consequently, students try their level best to avoid to participating in reading activity. Farooq and Shah (2008) point out that attitude often "influences the participation rates of students" (p. 75) Butt and Shums (2013) added that "a positive attitude is a key to success and progress" (p. 97). Due to lack of motivation on the part of teachers and educators the reading habit has not been cultivated in most of the schools. Hashwani (2008) believes that attitude of students can be

modified through motivational factors and experiences.

Briefly, the reading attitude of students plays a vital role in reading skill development and overall performance. For the effective reading skill development and better performance the positive attitude of students towards reading is compulsory. It is essential for all the teachers to assess the attitude of every student from time to time and make proper instrumentation and motivation for getting attitude positive towards reading in Pakistan to get the desired results. Realizing the importance of reading attitude, a survey has been conducted with an aim to make critical analysis of the impact of reading attitude on the achievement of students in Pakistan.

Objectives of study

- To evaluate the impact of students' reading attitude on their achievement in English.
- To measure the difference in the perceptions between teachers and students regarding the impact of students' attitude on their achievement in English.

- To recommend the ways and means for the improvement of the students' reading attitude for their better achievement in English.

Research questions

- RQ1. To what extent students' reading attitude is effective to improve their achievement in English?
- RQ2. What is the difference in the perceptions between students and teachers regarding the reading attitude of learners?
- RQ3. How can learners' reading attitude be modified in order to make achievement better?

Main Hypotheses

- Ho1. There is no significant impact of students' reading attitude on their achievement.
- Ho2. There is no significant difference in the perceptions between students and teachers regarding students' reading attitude.

Sub Hypothesis

- Ho1. There is no significant difference in the achievement between stud-

ents who participate in reading activities and those who avoid reading activities.

- Ho2. There is no significant difference in the achievement between students who use library and those who do not use library.
- Ho3. There is no significant difference in the achievement between students who read only course books and those who read more than course books.
- Ho4. There is no significant difference in the achievement between students whose age is 18 years or below and those whose age is above 18 years.
- Ho5. There is no significant difference in the achievement between students who are enrolled in class XI and those who are enrolled in class XII.
- Ho6. There is no significant difference in the achievement between students who have urban area domicile and those who have rural area domicile.
- Ho7. There is no significant difference in the achieve-

ment between male students and female students.

Review of literature

Attitude plays a vital role in the performance of learners and understanding the attitude of learners is essential for teachers to make the teaching of reading more effective. Reading attitude refers the general tendency and inclination of learners towards reading. The development of reading skills and performance of learners depend more on learners' attitude towards reading. Attitude can be changed through motivation. Akram (as cited in Akram & Ghani, 2013) describes that "the most effective way to get insight into the learning process is to study the learners' attitude and motivation towards learning English language" (p 536). Akram and Ghani (2012) added that "attitudinal and motivational factors are of greater significance in learning foreign languages" (p. 7). Reid (as cited in Shah, 2008) urges that "the development of desirable pupil attitudes is more important than other aims of curriculum" (p. 14). It is the duty of a teacher to motivate the learners from time to time

to bring positive changes in the attitude of learners and create the interest of learners towards reading.

The learners with positive attitude towards reading often participate more in reading activities and perform better than their colleagues. Similarly the learners with negative reading attitude often participate less in reading activities and their performance is comparatively lower than others. Yamashita (2013) believes that there is direct relationship between students' attitude and their performance.

McKenna, Kear and Ellsworth (1995) state that "understanding the role of attitude in developing readers is important" (p. 934). They further describe that "attitude may affect the ability attained by a student through its influence on such factors as engagement and practice 'and' even for the fluent reader, poor attitude may occasion a choice not to read when other options exist" (p 934).

Good readers

Good readers mostly try to follow the steps mentioned as:

1. They set the aims, goals and objective of reading in advance.
2. They select the books, text or material according to their area of interest and read it with full attention, understanding and normal speed.
3. They prefer to attain background knowledge of that material also to get its grip.
4. They check new words of the material, use dictionary to for their meaning and construct their vocabulary.
5. They set the reading time and place as per their conveyance.
6. They try to have grip over spelling, expressions and sentence structures (<http://esl.fis.edu>).

Guide lines for readers

It is often observed that learners always read the text recommended by a teacher. This is not justice with reading. Reading needs extra efforts more than what is prescribed by a teacher (Edmondson, (2004). A reader should follow the following instructions to be a good reader:

1. Readers should begin their reading from easy to diff-

- icult, simple to complex and short to lengthy texts.
2. Care should be taken that every page should not have more than fifty new words.
 3. Reading should follow the area of interest and future benefit.
 4. Reading should be taken on daily basis and a habit of reading should be developed.
 5. The duration of reading should be according to level of concentration and understanding.
 6. Reading should not be done during tiredness (<http://esl.fis.edu>).

Reading problems of learners

The fundamental and the most important reading problem is that English is one of the most difficult languages of the world. It has forty three sounds / phonemes in which seventeen are vowels and twenty six are consonants. These forty three sounds are represented by only twenty six letters. To represent the remaining seventeen sounds the different letter combination has been designed that is very difficult for the learners to understand. More over some letters like y, g, x, w and c have more than one sound. Let us

take the example of "c" which has sound of k in "cancer" while it has the sound of "s" in "center". Similarly, the sound pronunciation of the various letters is very complex like "u" in "put" and "cut" is not same. This complex system of English demands learners to memorize certain rules and regulation. It is very difficult for the students having weak cognitive skills to memorize these rules of English. As a result, many learners often fail to recognize and learn pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary of English (<http://www.learningrx.com>). In the same way, Oberaur and Kliegl (2006) argue that due to memory limitation many students often fail to learn the language properly. The learners mostly have limited capacities and they cannot learn then their capacity.

The students' inability to memorize complex rules makes them unable to recognize, comprehend and read the words fluently. This inability leads them to irritation and frustration. Besides, reading can be learnt gradually. There is a construction of skills. Every new skill is constructed on the previous one. The students with

weak reading background cannot decode, comprehend and recall words. They often fail to progress in the basic steps of reading, "that allow us to move from sounds to words to sentences and paragraphs" (<http://www.learningrx.com>).

It is observed that students feel great difficulty in the recognizing and spelling the words. There are approximately three thousand six hundred and ninety five words with spelling twist like "there" and "their". Similarly making a consonant double within a word again creates a problem for the readers. Students often fail to decide where to double the consonant and where not like "commit and omit" (Toppel, 2012).

Methodology

In this survey study, the data have been collected from five hundred thirty five students and twenty six teachers' sample through questionnaire instrument. Sample selection was made through random sampling technique. All the teachers and students of Pakistan constituted the population whereas the target population was delimited to Hyderabad. Ann-

ual examination results of students taken from Board of intermediate and secondary education Hyderabad for the years 2012 was used to appraise the achievement of students. The percentages, regression and t-test were used to analyse the data using SPSS-22.

Findings:

Items		SD (%)	D (%)	UD (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	sample size
1. The students / teachers are satisfied with reading attitude of students at higher secondary school level.	Students	22.4	36.3	1.1	25.8	14.4	535
	Teachers	65.4	11.5	3.8	3.8	15.4	26
2. The reading attitude of learners is essential for the enhancement of the performance of learners in English.	Students	7.5	7.1	0.7	51.4	33.3	535
	Teachers	7.7	7.7	00	26.9	57.7	26
3. The students try to avoid reading in the class.	Students	19.3	25.4	1.5	39.6	14.2	535
	Teachers	19.2	11.5	3.8	19.2	46.2	26
4. The students pass their spare time in reading books.	Students	18.5	43.9	2.8	15.7	19.1	535
	Teachers	46.2	26.9	3.8	3.8	19.2	26
5. The students like reading in English.	Students	28	40	0.9	12.3	18.7	535
	Teachers	38.5	23.1	7.7	11.5	19.2	26
6. The students enjoy reading course books.	Students	39.4	26.7	3	10.1	20.7	535
	Teachers	57.7	19.2	3.8	3.8	15.4	26
7. The students read more than course books with interest.	Students	38.1	38.3	2.8	11.4	9.3	535
	Teachers	42.3	11.5	11.5	7.7	26.9	26
8. The students like to go to library for reading.	Students	37.2	29.9	1.1	9	23	535
	Teachers	46.2	26.9	3.8	3.8	19.2	26
1. SD: Strongly disagree, 2. D: Disagree, 3. UD: Undecided, 4. A: Agree, 5. SA: Strongly Agree							

Analysis

The majority of teachers and students believed that:

1. The teachers and students were not satisfied with reading attitude of learners.
2. The attitude of learners did not enhance their performance in English.
3. The students tried to avoid reading in the class.
4. The students did not pass their spare time in reading books.
5. The students did not like reading in English.

6. The students did not enjoy reading course books.
7. The students did not read more than course books with interest.
8. The students did not like to go to library for reading.

Hypothesis testing from the perspective of students

Hypothesis one

Ho1: There is no significant impact of students' reading attitude on their achievement.

Table: 1a. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Achievement of students	3.5121	1.02558	535
Reading Attitude of students	3.3467	1.19959	535

Table: 1b. Correlations

		Performance of learners	Reading attitude
Pearson Correlation	Achievement of students	1.000	.910
	Reading attitude of students	.910	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Achievement of students	.	.000
	Reading attitude		

Table: 1c. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.910 ^a	.829	.828	.42508	.829	2575.463	1	533	.000

a Predictors: (Constant), Reading attitude

Table: 1d. ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	465.363	1	465.363	2575.463	.000 ^b
	Residual	96.308	533	.181		
	Total	561.671	534			

a Predictors: (Constant), Reading attitude b Dependent Variable: Achievement of students

Table: 1e. Co-efficients

Model		Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.908	.055		16.652	.000
	Reading Attitude	.778	.015	.910	50.749	.000

a Dependent Variable: Achievement of students

Analysis

It is clear from table: 1b that students' reading attitude and their achievement are very strongly correlated. Furthermore, R-value (0.917) and R²-value (82.9%) indicate that a very strong prediction regarding dependent variable i.e. students' achievement can be made from independent variable i.e. students' reading attitude (Table: 1c). Similarly, significant F-value (2575.463) confirms that model is fit (Table: 1d). Additionally, t-value (50.749) is also significant

(Table: 1e), which affirms that change will occur in dependent variable (students' achievement) with changes occurring in independent variable (students' reading attitude). Hence, null hypothesis has been rejected and alternative hypothesis has been accepted, concluding very strong correlation between students' reading attitude and their achievement. Achievement of students will improve if their reading attitude is improved.

Hypothesis testing from the perspective of teachers

Hypothesis one

Ho1: Ho1: There is no significant impact of students' reading attitude on their achievement.

Table: 2a. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Achievement of students	3.31	.471	26
Reading Attitude	3.0577	1.16899	26

Table: 2b. Correlations

		Performance of learners	Reading attitude
Pearson Correlation	Achievement of students	1.000	.802
	Reading attitude	.802	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Achievement of students	.	.000
	Reading attitude	.000	.

Table: 2c. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.802 ^a	.644	.629	.287	.644	43.410	1	24	.000

a Predictors: (Constant), Reading attitude

Table: 2d. ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.567	1	3.567	43.410	.000 ^b
	Residual	1.972	24	.082		
	Total	5.538	25			

a Predictors: (Constant), Reading Attitude b Dependent Variable: Achievement of students

Table: 2e. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.320	.160		14.486	.000
	Reading Attitude	.323	.049	.802	6.589	.000

a Dependent Variable: Achievement of students

Analysis

It is clear from table: 2b that students' reading attitude and their achievement are strongly correlated ($p=000$, $r= .802$). Furthermore, R-value (0.802) and R²-value (64.4%) indicate that strong prediction regarding dependent variable i.e. students' achievement can be made from independent variable i.e. students' reading attitude (Table: 2c). Similarly, significant F-value (43.410) confirms that model is fit (Table: 2d). Additionally, t-value (6.589) is also significant (Table: 2d), which affirms that change will occur in dependent variable (students' achievement) with changes occurring in independent variable (students' reading attitude). Hence, null hypothesis has been rejected and alternative hypothesis has been accepted, concluding the strong correlation between students' reading attitude and their achievement. Achievement of students will improve if their reading attitude is improved.

Testing of hypothesis two

Ho2. There is no significant difference in the perceptions between students and teachers regarding reading attitude of learners.

Table: 2A. Group Statistics

	Sample	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reading attitude	Students	535	3.12	1.349	.058
	Teachers	26	3.06	1.465	.287

Table: 2B. Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means				
		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Students' reading attitude	Equal variances assumed	.214	559	.831	.058	.272
	Equal variances not assumed	.198	27.099	.844	.058	.293

Analysis

The table 2b makes it clear that observed t-test value ($t=0.214$) is not significant. It is less than tabulated value of t (1.964). Therefore, null hypothesis has been accepted, concluding that there is no significant difference in the perceptions between students and teachers regarding reading attitude of learners.

Comparison between groups regarding the performance of students

	Students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	sig
Achievement of students	participate in reading	247	72.12	10.328	.657	18.402	.000
	Avoid reading	288	45.78	15.030	.886		
Achievement of students	Use library	175	74.49	9.388	.710	18.402	.000
	Do not use library	360	49.90	16.417	.865		
Achievement of students	Read only course books	444	53.44	16.720	.794	14.718	.000
	Read more than course books	91	79.92	8.486	.890		
Achievement of students	18 or below	443	59.57	18.434	.876	4.539	.000
	Above 18	92	50.11	16.994	1.772		
Achievement of students	First year	269	58.11	18.801	1.146	1.497	.210
	Second year	266	57.77	18.281	1.121		
Achievement of students	Urban	323	60.16	18.530	1.031	3.451	.001
	Rural	212	54.57	18.049	1.240		
Achievement of students	Male	237	60.98	17.850	1.159	3.412	.001

Analysis

The table of group comparison makes it clear that:

1. There was significant difference between students who used to participate in reading activities and students who used to avoid reading activities in terms of their achievement. The mean (72.12) of students who used to participate in reading activities was higher than the mean (45.78) of students who used to avoid reading activities, indicates that the students who used to participate in reading activities were better than students who used to avoid reading

activities in terms of their performance in English.

2. There was significant difference between students who used to go to library for reading and students who used to avoid going to library for reading in terms of their achievement. The mean (74.49) of students who used to go to library for reading was greater than the mean (49.90) of students who used to avoid going to library for reading, indicates that the students who used to go to library for reading were better than students who used to avoid going to library for reading in terms of their achievement in English.

3. There was significant difference between students reading only course books and the students reading more than course books in terms of their achievement. The mean (79.92) of the students who took reading more than course books was higher than the mean (53.44) of students who took reading of only course books, indicates that the students reading more than course books were better than the students reading only course books in terms of their achievement.
4. The huge difference was found between students with an age below or up to eighteen and those having age above eighteen years regarding their achievement. The mean (59.57) of students with an age below or up to eighteen was higher than the mean (50.11) those having age above eighteen years, indicates that the students with an age 18 or below were better than students with age above 18 years in terms of their achievement in English.
5. The students enrolled in XI class and XII class showed no significant difference considering their achievement in English. However, the mean (58.11) of class XI was slightly higher than the mean (57.77) of class XII.
6. Great difference was observed between rural and urban area students ($p = .001 \leq 0.05$, $t = 3.451$) in terms of their achievement. The mean (60.16) of students having urban domicile was higher than the mean (54.57) of students with rural domicile, makes it clear that the achievement of students living in urban area was better than students living in rural area.
7. The achievement of male and female students was not same. Male students' mean (60.98) was higher than female students' mean (55.53) of female students, reveals that achievement of male students was better than female students in English.

Results

The responses of students and teachers regarding the impact of reading attitude of

learners on their performance were collected through a questionnaire. Item analysis results revealed that both students and teachers responded negatively on 6 items, while they responded positively on 2 items only. However, both teachers and students had nearly same perceptions regarding the impact of students' reading attitude on their achievement. Furthermore, strong correlation was found between students' reading attitude and their achievement. The model was found fit from significant F-value, giving rise the impression that students' reading attitude variable is strong predictor of achievement of students. In the same way t-test value for the two variables, i.e. Students' reading attitude and their performance was also found significant, bringing about the notion that students' achievement is directly connected with their attitude. There will be progress in achievement incase progress occurs in students' reading attitude.

Conclusion

There is a significant relationship between reading attitude and achievement of learners

in English. The achievement of learners depends upon the attitude of learners. The learners with positive attitude toward reading had performance better than those who had negative attitude towards reading. The learners who took keen interest in reading and used to go to library frequently for reading more than course books performed better than those who used to avoid reading.

Suggestions

1. The lack of interest of students towards reading reveals that there is no proper motivation, guidance and counseling of learners. The learners may be guided and motivated on daily basis to get them interested in reading activities.
2. Any students found avoiding reading should be considered as failed in examination. He may not be allowed to appear in the examination.
3. The reading activities may be made attractive and books may be incorporated in the form of short stories to make the reading enjoyable for the learners.

4. The meaning of difficult words may also be written in the last pages of the book so that the students may easily understand the paragraph they read.
5. All the schools may have libraries fully equipped with books, latest computers and internet facilities.
6. The teachers may give more and more assignment to students and the material of assignment may be made available in school libraries so that students may use libraries.

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