Levels of English Reading Anxiety, Contributing Causes, Reading Comprehension, and Coping Mechanisms Among the Senior High Learners of Baluan National High School

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the pervasive issue of reading anxiety among senior high school learners at Baluan National High School. Through a comprehensive analysis of gathered data and focal group discussions, the research identifies the learners' level of reading anxiety, causal factors, correlations with comprehension, and coping mechanisms employed by learners.

Findings reveal a high level of reading anxiety predominantly rooted in learners' reliance on their first language, influenced by factors such as vocabulary challenges, unfamiliar topics, cultural disparities, and discomfort with teaching methods. Moreover, the study establishes a negative correlation between reading anxiety and comprehension, indicating that higher anxiety levels correspond to lower reading comprehension.

To cope with this anxiety, learners employ proactive self-learning, strategic reading techniques, multimedia utilization, and digital aids and seek feedback and support. Based on these findings, recommendations are proposed to address reading anxiety effectively.

Furthermore, recommendations extend to the school and the Department of Education, urging collaborative efforts, practical assessments, remediation strategies, and increased budget allocations to uplift learners' reading skills. The study concludes by suggesting the replication of this research among junior high school learners to gain deeper insights into their comprehension struggles, utilizing qualitative research approaches to comprehend learners' perspectives comprehensively.

Keywords: Reading Anxiety, Reading Comprehension

THE PROBLEM AND THE SETTING

Introduction

Reading is the acquisition and comprehension of language-based information through the medium of print (Grabe, 2009). According to Johnson, (2008), the act or process of getting meaning from text is what we call reading. Reading abilities according to (Rani & Jayachandran, 2015) must be enhanced so that the reader can comprehend both the meaning and text of the passage. Good comprehension means a better understanding of the things in the world and how each event works and establishes. It is the constructive and interactive process of constructing meaning that occurs when a reader's prior knowledge and the text's content combine to build a mental representation of the text's meaning. (Goodman, 1996)

Reading anxiety is the stress felt by second-language learners while they attempt to read in their new language or the second language (L2). This could be due to culturally incongruous material or the use of an unfamiliar script or writing system (Zhou,2017). One of the local studies in the Philippines settings cited reading issues as prevalent among today's school population as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to recent research conducted by Celadina, (2020), it cannot be denied that reading difficulties were pervasive before the

pandemic, especially among learners taking up the strands in TVL. It was discovered that more than sixty percent of TVL pupils struggle with reading even though textbooks are easily accessible in the K-12 implementation.

In Baluan National High School, recent Phil-Iri results showed that many senior high school learners cannot comprehend the text they read. This results in low performance in English and math subjects. This result has been very alarming even though reading programs have been done already. The learners in grade 11 TVL performed the worst on the most recent reading exam that was administered at Baluan National High School. The assessment measured reading comprehension. Even though a large amount of work has been put into the pupils via one-on-one orientation and peer evaluation, a substantial percentage of learners still have reading issues.

According to the study of Zemni, (2020), Investigating the Source of Reading Anxiety among Undergraduate Saudi Female EFL Learners, it was discussed that reading anxiety is present in learners who have reading problems and issues but in contrary, the study of Petrus & Shah, (2020) shared that reading anxiety has no significant association at all. Research on the topic of reading anxiety in English has been conducted as well such as the concern about reading aloud among native English speakers becoming more and more significant. It's connected to both their reading comprehension and their anxiety levels when reading. The fear of reading can be broken down into three distinct groups: top-down reading, classroom reading, and bottom-up reading (Alico & Guimba, 2015). Moreover, there is a significant negative effect on learners' ability to comprehend what they read and on their reading anxiety (Celadina, 2020). The researcher has proven that reading anxiety exists among children which could be a factor in the affective domain that translates to academic settings, and educators face significant difficulty in determining effective strategies for addressing this reading deficit. So, it is suggested that more research about reading anxiety could be done to understand the needs of the learners.

This study tried to find out if reading anxiety is prevalent among senior high school learners and whether it has a significant association with their reading comprehension. This also solved the issue of what contributing causes significantly affect learners' reading anxiety and what the learners' coping mechanisms are which could be the basis of a reading program that could be developed.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to know the level of reading anxiety, and its contributing causes, the reading comprehension, and the coping mechanisms among senior high school learners of Baluan National High School.

Specifically, the study wanted to answer the following questions;

1. What is the reading anxiety level of the senior high school learners in terms of;
   a. Nervousness on text,
   b. Lack of Self-confidence,
   c. Pessimistic belief in reading,
   d. Reliance on the first language, and
   e. Unwillingness to distinguish linguistic skills?
2. What is the level of the contributing causes of reading anxiety in terms of;
   a. Vocabulary,
   b. Topic,
   c. Background Culture,
   d. Reading Effects,
   e. Fear of making errors, and
   f. Teaching Methods?
3. What is the reading comprehension level of senior high school learners?
4. Is there a relationship between reading anxiety and its contributing causes?
5. Is there a relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension among senior high learners?
6. What coping mechanisms do the learners employ with their reading anxiety?

Significance of the Study

This research aimed to give answers on the levels of English reading anxiety of the learners in reading English, its contributing causes, reading comprehension, and how they cope with such issues. This also sought to give both theoretical and practical solutions to the reading difficulty of learners experiencing reading anxiety. This study was conducted to benefit the following:

To the learners/Learners. This study may help the students to reflect on what possible coping mechanisms they may adopt in developing reading skills. They will be aware also of what reading skills they need to focus on developing.

To the Teachers. This could become a reference guide to the teachers in effectively addressing and overcoming reading issues while improving the learners' reading skills by implementing appropriate teaching reading strategies.

To the English Department and School Reading Coordinator. This will serve as a guide in making possible effective programs based on the learner's anxiety level and the cause of reading difficulties. There would be also an understanding of how learners cope with their situation which could be used in better designing reading programs appropriate to their needs.

To Baluan National High School. The result of the study could be a basis for reading programs that can effectively address the student's needs.

To the future researcher. This will serve as a guide to future researchers who plan on conducting similar research.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study was limited only to determining the level of reading anxiety of the learners, its contributing causes, and how usually learners cope with their anxiety. The researcher also aimed to find out if reading anxiety has an association with the comprehension level of the learners.

The study used the explanatory sequential method with the use of survey questionnaire forms and qualitative interview guides. An adapted research questionnaire and interview guide were also used.

The reading anxiety level was also limited in finding the levels of nervousness to imperfect text, lack of self-confidence, pessimistic belief about reading, reliance on first language, and unwillingness to distinguish linguistic skills while contributing causes of the said anxiety were limited in finding levels of vocabulary, topic, background, and culture, reading effects, fear of making errors, and teaching methods. Interviews through FGD were conducted to find out what coping mechanisms usually learners use to overcome reading anxiety.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of related background, theories, studies, research gap, and conceptual framework.

Reading

Reading is a multifaceted cognitive process that plays a vital role in language acquisition and academic success. According to Grabe (2009), reading involves the extraction and understanding of language-based information from written texts. This definition emphasizes the interactive nature of reading, where readers actively engage with the text to construct meaning. Similarly, Johnson (2008) defines reading as the process of deriving meaning from written material, reinforcing the idea that comprehension is central to reading.

However, despite these shared views, issues arise in the actual development of reading skills, particularly among learners who struggle with anxiety, limited vocabulary, or ineffective reading strategies. Rani and Jayachandran (2015) highlight the importance of enhancing reading skills to comprehend both the general and specific meanings of a passage. They point out that reading is not a singular skill but a composite of sub-skills such as skimming, scanning, summarizing, and identifying discourse markers. This complexity can be a barrier for learners who lack confidence or experience anxiety when reading.

Astuti (2021) adds another dimension by illustrating how talented readers adapt their reading strategies based on context. For instance, they may scan for keywords in manuals or selectively read headlines in newspapers. This adaptability contrasts sharply with the rigid, often anxious approach of less proficient readers, who may feel overwhelmed by the need to understand every word.

Stoller and Grabe (2011) further elaborate on the functional aspect of reading, noting that individuals read for various purposes—whether to learn, to be informed, or for pleasure. The strategies employed and the pace of reading often depend on the reader's motivation and familiarity with the content. This perspective underscores the individualized nature of reading, where personal goals and preferences shape the reading experience.

Reading Comprehension and Reading Anxiety

Reading comprehension is a vital academic skill that involves both linguistic decoding and cognitive integration. Cain and Oakhill (2011) define it as "the construction of a mental representation of the meaning of a text," which requires decoding words, parsing syntax, and connecting textual meaning with prior knowledge (Kintsch, 1988). This multi-stage process underscores the complexity of reading comprehension and the cognitive demands it places on learners.

The Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) offers a foundational model, positing that reading comprehension is the product of word recognition and language comprehension. Skilled readers, therefore, must possess both fluent decoding abilities and a rich vocabulary base to effectively understand texts.

However, this process is often disrupted by reading anxiety, a psychological barrier that affects learners across various contexts. Wu and Marek (2021) describe reading anxiety as "a sense of apprehension, nervousness, and/or unease associated with reading," which can manifest in academic, professional, or personal settings. While mild anxiety may enhance focus, excessive anxiety can impair comprehension and lead to negative academic outcomes.

Studies such as Alghamdi et al. (2021) reveal that reading anxiety is prevalent among college students and is significantly correlated with lower reading comprehension. Contributing factors include academic pressure, limited reading experience, and negative self-perceptions about reading ability. These findings highlight the emotional dimension of reading and its impact on performance.

Intervention-based research offers promising solutions. Ammar et al. (2021) found that mindfulness-based practices helped reduce reading anxiety and improve comprehension by enhancing emotional regulation and focus. Similarly, Cui et al. (2021) demonstrated that cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) effectively addressed negative thought patterns and boosted reading confidence among elementary students.

In the context of second language acquisition, reading anxiety becomes even more pronounced. Zou (2017) notes that learners often experience heightened anxiety when reading in a new language, especially when unfamiliar with cultural references or writing systems. Koay (2021) adds that culturally insensitive materials and foreign orthographies can worsen this anxiety, leading to physiological symptoms such as increased heart rate, sweating, and feelings of dread.

Krashen (1982) and MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) emphasize that anxiety is a significant affective factor in second language learning. It can hinder learners' ability to process input and participate in reading activities, thereby impeding academic progress. MacIntyre and Gardner further argue that reading anxiety is more prevalent in English language learners than in other subjects, making it a critical area for pedagogical attention.

Review of Related Studies

Reading anxiety is the tension felt by learners or language learners when they attempt to read in their new language while simultaneously acquiring it. This could be the result of material that is insensitive to other cultures or the usage of a script or writing system that is foreign to the reader (Zhou, 2017). In a study by Koay (2021), he mentioned that pupils who aren't fluent in English might have trouble understanding what's being read and spoken. Reading can be stressful for learners for several reasons, one of which is the belief that they should be able to comprehend all that they read in the target language. This is one example of how learners might unintentionally set themselves up for reading-related anxiety. Anxiety brought on by reading might provoke both mental and bodily responses. The release of adrenaline and anxiety symptoms such as racing heart, perspiration, trembling, fast breathing, and abdominal discomfort are examples of some of the probable bodily reactions. Cognitive reactions may include an overpowering sensation of dread, poor self-esteem, emotions of powerlessness, and anticipation (Koay, 2021).

Additionally, the study of Celadina, (2020) has discussed that reading anxiety exists among children which could be a factor in the affective domain that translates to academic settings. He also added that over 60% of learners in TVL have difficulty with reading, even though textbooks are readily available under the K-12 program. The research conducted by Alrefaee and Zemni, (2020) revealed that factors beyond psychological origins, such as unfamiliarity with vocabulary and pronunciation, contribute to reading anxiety. Saito, Horwitz, and Garza's, (1999) study found that anxiety levels in foreign language reading vary depending on the language being studied, with samples taken from introductory courses in Japanese, Russian, and French. MacIntyre, (1991) and Scovel (2000), had previously reported mixed and confusing findings on language anxiety. Young (1998) has further discussed, for example, initially attributed low oral interview scores to anxiety but ultimately concluded that ability was the main factor influencing the scores.

Further, Zoghi (2012) proposed a theory that identifies three categories of factors that contribute to reading anxiety: top-down, bottom-up, and classroom reading. This theory is supported by the findings of Alico and Guimba (2015), who conducted a similar study examining these factors. These factors encompass various aspects such as cultural and background knowledge, overall reading skills, vocabulary, grammar, and teaching methods, all of which contribute to a learner's difficulty in understanding and fear of reading. Also, their research revealed a significant correlation between reading anxiety and learners' reading comprehension performance. As a result, they concluded that effective teaching strategies and interventions are necessary to address reading anxiety.

Zemni (2020) conducted research to investigate the origins of reading anxiety in undergraduate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The primary focus of the study was to compare French-language learners with those in the English department and examine how the students' academic year level influenced their experience of reading anxiety. A total of 507 participants were included in the study, and the results indicated that there were no significant differences in the levels of reading anxiety among the learners. However, the findings revealed that text-related factors, such as encountering unfamiliar vocabulary and difficulties with pronunciation, had a more pronounced impact on reading anxiety compared to personal factors. Based on these results, the study suggested that educators should prioritize strategies that enhance learners' vocabulary and improve their pronunciation skills in order to alleviate reading anxiety in the classroom.

Nervousness and Imperfect Text

Reading anxiety is a complex emotional response that significantly affects learners' ability to comprehend texts, especially in second language contexts. One of the most prominent manifestations of this anxiety is nervousness, which arises when learners feel overwhelmed or underprepared to engage with written material. This nervousness is often rooted in the belief that they must understand every word or concept in the target language, leading to unrealistic expectations and heightened stress (Koay, 2021).

Physiologically, nervousness triggered by reading anxiety can activate the autonomic nervous system, resulting in symptoms such as a racing heart, trembling, perspiration, rapid breathing, and abdominal discomfort.

Cognitively, learners may experience dread, low self-esteem, and a sense of helplessness, all of which impair their ability to focus and process information effectively.

A key contributor to this anxiety is the presence of imperfect texts—materials that contain unfamiliar vocabulary, grammatical errors, or culturally insensitive content. Shuang and Fei (2021) found that learners often experience heightened anxiety when encountering texts they perceive as flawed or unfamiliar. This reaction is particularly strong among individuals who struggle with grammar, as they may feel compelled to correct every error, which distracts from comprehension and increases frustration.

Boonie, Mo, and Dong (2021) further explored the cognitive dimensions of reading anxiety, revealing that verbal working memory positively correlates with reading comprehension, while both trait and state anxiety negatively impact it. Their study showed that reading anxiety partially mediates the relationship between working memory and comprehension, emphasizing the dual role of cognitive capacity and emotional regulation in successful reading.

Jalongo and Hirsh (2010) describe reading anxiety as a negative emotion triggered by perceived threats to self-esteem, often imagined or distant. These threats are amplified when learners face texts that challenge their linguistic competence or cultural understanding. McBreen and Savage (2021) add that reading anxiety can diminish motivation and achievement, making it essential to address both the emotional and structural aspects of reading materials.

Lack of Self-Confidence

Self-confidence plays a pivotal role in learners' ability to engage with reading tasks, especially in second language contexts. It reflects a learner's belief in their own skills and capacity to succeed. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), reading anxiety can significantly undermine self-efficacy beliefs, leading to reduced motivation and poorer performance in reading activities. When learners lack confidence, they are more likely to perceive reading tasks as threatening, which intensifies anxiety and hinders comprehension.

Self-confidence is rooted in a positive mental outlook—a balanced understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses, the ability to manage criticism, and the capacity to set realistic goals. Learners with high self-confidence tend to approach reading with curiosity and resilience, while those with low confidence often experience emotional discomfort, avoidance behaviors, and a sense of helplessness.

Empirical studies support this connection. Saito et al. (1999), Sellers (2000), Zhao (2013), and MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) all reported a negative relationship between reading anxiety and self-confidence among second language learners. Gan (2021) further demonstrated that English reading anxiety among Chinese college students is closely linked to low self-confidence. Learners with diminished confidence often feel bored, frustrated, and disengaged during reading tasks, which exacerbates anxiety and reduces comprehension.

Zhou (2017) highlighted the role of instructional context in shaping learners' confidence. In traditional, teacher-centered English reading classes that emphasize testing over exploration, students often fail to develop intrinsic motivation or a desire to learn. This rigid environment contributes to a lack of confidence, particularly among non-English majors, and fosters a growing aversion to reading. The study advocates for a shift toward student-centered approaches that promote autonomy, engagement, and confidence-building.

Simon et al. (2010) and Tuckman (1991) emphasized the positive correlation between self-confidence and task completion, especially at the college level where learners are expected to work independently. When students lack the confidence to comprehend academic texts such as journal articles, they may struggle to complete coursework and fall behind in future reading assignments. To address this, instructors should focus on building learners' confidence, which can enhance motivation and academic performance even in the absence of direct reinforcement.

Pessimistic belief about reading

Reading is a foundational skill that supports academic success and personal development. It enables learners not only to decode language but also to interpret implied meanings and engage critically with texts. However, many learners—especially those studying English as a second language—struggle with pessimistic beliefs about their reading abilities, which can significantly heighten reading anxiety.

As noted by Rahmat, Arepin, and Sulaiman (2020), one of the primary causes of academic reading anxiety is the fear of not being able to understand the text. This fear is particularly common among second language learners who perceive English as a difficult language and often feel overwhelmed by unfamiliar symbols and vocabulary. Similarly, Al-Sohbani (2018) observed that such apprehension and distress are common reactions when learners encounter new and complex texts, reinforcing the cycle of anxiety.

Moreover, research has consistently shown a negative correlation between reading attitudes, motivation, and reading anxiety. For instance, Gonzalez and Vasquez (2023) found that learners with negative beliefs about reading tend to experience higher levels of anxiety and lower motivation. In addition, Torudom and Taylor (2020) reported significant differences in reading anxiety based on students' academic majors and language proficiency levels, suggesting that pessimistic beliefs may be shaped by both internal and contextual factors.

To address these challenges, it is essential to counteract negative self-imagery and foster more positive beliefs about reading. One promising intervention is imagery rescripting (IR), a cognitive-behavioral technique that modifies distressing mental images and replaces them with more adaptive ones. As demonstrated by Morrison, Hackmann, Bennett-Levy, and Holmes (2022), IR has proven effective in treating social anxiety disorder and may be similarly beneficial for learners struggling with reading anxiety rooted in negative beliefs.

In traditional classroom settings, pessimistic beliefs are often reinforced by rigid, test-focused instruction. According to Zhou (2017), teacher-centered English reading classes that prioritize assessment over engagement fail to cultivate curiosity and intrinsic motivation. This lack of stimulation can lead to boredom and disengagement, particularly among non-English majors who already lack confidence in their reading abilities.

Reliance on First Language

In second and third language acquisition, learners often rely heavily on their first language (L1) as a cognitive and linguistic support system. While this reliance can facilitate early stages of learning, it may also contribute to reading anxiety, particularly when learners struggle to transfer skills across languages or encounter unfamiliar linguistic structures.

As Pap (2016) observed, individuals learning a third language frequently depend on their L1 when constructing sentences or interpreting texts in the target language. This reliance can serve as a scaffold, but it may also limit learners' ability to engage directly with the second language (L2), especially in reading tasks that require nuanced understanding.

Moreover, Xueyu (2019) emphasized that using a literal translation approach, often rooted in L1 thinking, can result in unnatural and confusing translations. This is particularly problematic when learners fail to consider the cultural and historical context of idiomatic expressions. In line with this, Hibbett (1964) argued that a deeper understanding of the cultural and linguistic elements of the source text is more valuable than strict adherence to literal translation. These insights suggest that overreliance on L1 may hinder learners' ability to interpret meaning accurately, thereby increasing anxiety when faced with complex or idiomatic texts.

Further complicating this issue, Brunette, Punjabi, Pouezevara, and Cummiskey (2023), along with Oteir and Otaibi (2019), noted that language achievement and aptitude are likely confounding variables in the relationship between anxiety and L2 learning. In other words, learners with strong L1 skills may not automatically succeed in L2 reading tasks if they lack the necessary metalinguistic awareness or cognitive flexibility.

Brunette et al. (2023) proposed that the impact of first-language (L1) achievement on second-language (L2) reading anxiety may be influenced by several mediating factors. Specifically, they identified first-language working memory, print exposure, and metalinguistic knowledge as key cognitive components that shape how learners transfer skills from L1 to L2. Additionally, second-language aptitude, along with proficiency in L2 reading, writing, and listening comprehension, also plays a significant role in this relationship. These findings suggest that the connection between L1 proficiency and L2 reading anxiety is not direct but rather shaped by a complex interplay of linguistic and cognitive variables.

Unwillingness to distinguish Linguistic Skills

Learners who are unwilling or unable to distinguish between various linguistic skills often develop inefficient reading habits that hinder their comprehension and fluency. According to Zhou (2017), many English learners tend to read word-by-word, rely heavily on dictionaries to look up unfamiliar terms, and repeatedly reread texts. These habits, while seemingly helpful, actually slow down reading speed and obstruct the understanding of central ideas. In support of this, Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) emphasized that such inadequate reading strategies can become significant barriers to progress in English reading. To overcome this issue, learners must be guided to acquire appropriate reading techniques and be provided with relevant supplementary materials. As Sweller (1999) pointed out, developing efficient reading habits and mastering strategic reading skills are essential for improving reading proficiency and reducing anxiety associated with reading tasks.

Contributing Causes of Reading Anxiety

Unknown Vocabulary

Unknown vocabulary is one of the most significant barriers to reading comprehension, particularly for second-language learners. As defined by Merriam-Webster, vocabulary refers to a set of words, phrases, or expressions that are typically arranged in alphabetical order and carry specific meanings. Ardasheva, Roo, and Wang (2018) emphasized that a strong vocabulary base is essential for academic success across disciplines. Similarly, McKeown and Beck (2016) described vocabulary as the pool of words a person can use across all four communication modes—reading, writing, speaking, and listening. According to Smith and Jones (2020), limited vocabulary and topic knowledge are key factors that heighten reading anxiety. Learners with restricted vocabulary often experience increased nervousness, reduced self-confidence, and a greater reliance on their first language, all of which negatively affect their reading performance. Supporting this, Aisyah (2017) found that unknown vocabulary was the leading cause of reading anxiety, followed by unfamiliar topics and cultural references. In a more recent study, Annisaurrohmah (2022) reported that 63% of participants experienced vocabulary-related difficulties that triggered anxiety, reducing their curiosity and engagement with English texts. Furthermore, Ahmad et al. (2013) noted that reading becomes even more challenging when learners face ambiguity or uncertainty in word meanings, which can further discourage them from reading. These findings underscore the importance of vocabulary development as a central strategy in reducing reading anxiety and improving comprehension.

Unfamiliar Topic

Encountering unfamiliar or uninteresting topics in reading materials can significantly contribute to reading anxiety, particularly among second-language learners. Aisyah (2017) emphasized that a learner's curiosity about the subject matter is a critical factor in their ability to read for pleasure and develop reading proficiency. When learners find the material engaging, they are more likely to interact with the text—asking questions, making connections, and analyzing content—which enhances comprehension. Conversely, when the topic lacks relevance or interest, learners struggle to connect with the material, leading to disengagement and anxiety. Supporting this, Renninger and Hidi (2016) argued that curiosity and interest are essential motivators in learning; individuals who are intellectually stimulated by a topic are more persistent and proactive in seeking knowledge. On the other hand, Ahmad et al. (2013) noted that uninteresting or unfamiliar topics can trigger anxiety in foreign language reading, especially when combined with complex vocabulary and grammar. This anxiety not only impedes comprehension but also diminishes learners' motivation to read. Therefore,

educators must select reading materials that are both relevant and engaging to learners, as doing so can foster motivation, reduce anxiety, and promote more effective language learning.

Unfamiliar Background and Culture

Unfamiliar cultural contexts and background knowledge can significantly influence reading anxiety, especially among second-language learners. Ahmad et al. (2013) argued that reading is not merely an engagement with an author's ideas but also an interaction with the collective memory embedded in written texts. When learners encounter cultural references or norms that are unfamiliar, comprehension becomes more difficult, often leading to anxiety and disengagement. While Pillay (2014) acknowledged that reading texts depicting unfamiliar cultures can be intellectually stimulating, Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) cautioned that such exposure may cause confusion and anxiety, particularly when learners are unfamiliar with the cultural nuances or foreign scripts presented. This cultural disconnect can result in a form of culture shock, making it harder for learners to interpret meaning and context accurately. Supporting this, Smith and Kim (2021) found that learners with greater familiarity with the background culture of the texts they read tend to exhibit stronger linguistic skills and lower levels of reading anxiety. They recommended that educators incorporate more cultural elements into reading instruction to help bridge these gaps and foster deeper engagement. Ultimately, having background knowledge of the culture being discussed enhances comprehension and reduces anxiety, making reading a more accessible and enjoyable experience.

Fear of Making Errors

Fear of making errors is a significant emotional barrier that contributes to reading anxiety, particularly among second-language learners. Closely linked to a lack of self-confidence, this fear can undermine learners' willingness to engage with texts. As Aisyah (2017) noted, language anxiety negatively affects self-esteem, even though self-confidence is a protective factor in language learning. Supporting this, Glazier (2014) found that college students with higher reading self-confidence exhibited lower levels of reading apprehension, while those with lower confidence experienced heightened anxiety during reading tasks. More recently, Annisaurrohmah (2022) identified fear of making mistakes as the leading cause of reading anxiety in her case study of second-language English learners, accounting for 35% of the total anxiety factors. Additionally, Chen and Wang (2019) examined the effects of fear of errors, pessimistic beliefs, and worry about reading outcomes, finding that these factors were positively correlated with various aspects of reading anxiety, including nervousness on text, low self-confidence, and reliance on the first language. They recommended that educators adopt more supportive and encouraging teaching methods to help learners overcome their fear of making mistakes and reduce anxiety. These findings highlight the importance of creating a safe and constructive learning environment where learners feel confident to take risks and learn from errors without fear of judgment.

Worry about Reading Effects

Worry about the effects of reading, particularly in a foreign language, is a notable source of anxiety among learners. This concern often stems from the association of reading aloud with negative emotional experiences, such as embarrassment or fear of judgment. Aisyah (2017) highlighted that learners frequently feel nervous when asked to read foreign language texts aloud, and these emotions are often difficult to conceal. The pressure to perform well, especially in a language perceived as challenging, can interfere with comprehension and retention. When learners are unable to regulate their nervousness, their reading performance may suffer not only during the task but also in subsequent assessments. This anxiety is compounded by the fear of making mistakes and being evaluated, which can lead to avoidance behaviors and reduced motivation. As a result, the emotional burden associated with reading aloud in a foreign language can significantly hinder learners' ability to engage with texts effectively and confidently.

Teaching Method

Teaching methods play a crucial role in shaping learners' emotional responses to reading tasks, particularly in second-language classrooms. When instructional approaches involve public correction or create opportunities

for humiliation, learners may experience heightened anxiety and a decline in academic performance. This concern is supported by Ismail, Mahmood, and Abdelmaboud (2018), as well as Esmaeili, Hozni, Mozasade, and Zavareh (2017), who found that learners' anxiety levels are directly influenced by their teachers' actions and instructional styles. To foster a more positive learning environment, educators should aim to create safe and supportive classrooms where students feel encouraged rather than judged. According to O'Brien and Cook (2016), providing learners with positive reinforcement and constructive feedback—such as gentle correction of pronunciation and translation—can significantly reduce fear associated with reading aloud and improve both fluency and comprehension. Although translating and comprehending texts in a second language can be challenging, Liu and Tarnopolsky (2019) demonstrated that stress-reducing interventions can alleviate reading anxiety and promote relaxation. Furthermore, Wolters and Hussain (2015) emphasized that unappealing or unfamiliar reading materials can lead to boredom and disengagement, which in turn increase anxiety and negatively affect comprehension. Therefore, teaching methods that prioritize encouragement, relevance, and emotional support are essential for reducing reading anxiety and enhancing learners' reading outcomes.

Related Theories

Several theoretical frameworks provide insight into the cognitive, emotional, and sociocultural dimensions of reading anxiety and its impact on reading comprehension, particularly among second-language learners.

Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988) posits that reading anxiety may arise when learners are exposed to cognitively demanding texts that exceed their working memory capacity. Sweller emphasized that optimal learning occurs when instructional conditions align with the cognitive structure of learners. In the context of reading, especially in a second language, complex vocabulary, unfamiliar syntax, and dense content can lead to cognitive overload, resulting in anxiety and reduced comprehension. Instructional strategies such as simplifying texts, integrating visuals, and segmenting information are recommended to reduce cognitive load and support schema acquisition.

Information Processing Theory (Rosnov & Danielle, 2005) explains how individuals mentally process and interact with information through stages such as perception, assimilation, and retrieval. This theory is relevant to reading anxiety, as learners who hold negative beliefs about their reading abilities may struggle to process texts effectively. The theory also highlights the role of experience and training in developing reading proficiency, suggesting that targeted interventions can help learners overcome anxiety and improve their information processing skills.

Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977) underscores the importance of learners' beliefs in their own capabilities. According to Bandura, self-efficacy influences motivation, behavior, and achievement. In the context of reading, learners with low self-confidence are more likely to experience anxiety, which negatively affects their performance. Enhancing self-efficacy through mastery experiences, peer modeling, and supportive feedback can reduce reading anxiety and foster greater engagement with texts.

Socio-Cultural Theory (Rogoff, 1990) emphasizes the role of cultural and social contexts in shaping literacy practices. This theory is particularly relevant to reading anxiety among second-language learners, who may encounter texts embedded with unfamiliar cultural references. Such exposure can lead to confusion and anxiety, especially when learners lack background knowledge of the culture portrayed. Incorporating culturally responsive materials and promoting inclusive classroom practices can help mitigate these effects and support comprehension.

Emotional Regulation Theory (Liew, Erbeli, Nyanamba, & Li, 2020) highlights the role of emotional self-regulation in academic success. Reading anxiety is often linked to learners' ability to manage stress and emotional responses during reading tasks. The theory suggests that learners who struggle with emotional regulation are more prone to anxiety, particularly in high-stakes reading situations. Research also shows that embodied learning activities and exposure to multiple literacy contexts—such as reading at home and school—can enhance emotional regulation and improve reading comprehension.

Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of reading anxiety. They support the rationale for your study by identifying cognitive overload, negative self-perceptions, cultural unfamiliarity, and emotional dysregulation as key contributors to reading anxiety, and they offer guidance for designing interventions that promote reading confidence and competence.

Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded on a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationship between Reading Anxiety and Reading Comprehension, with several contributing factors that influence this dynamic.
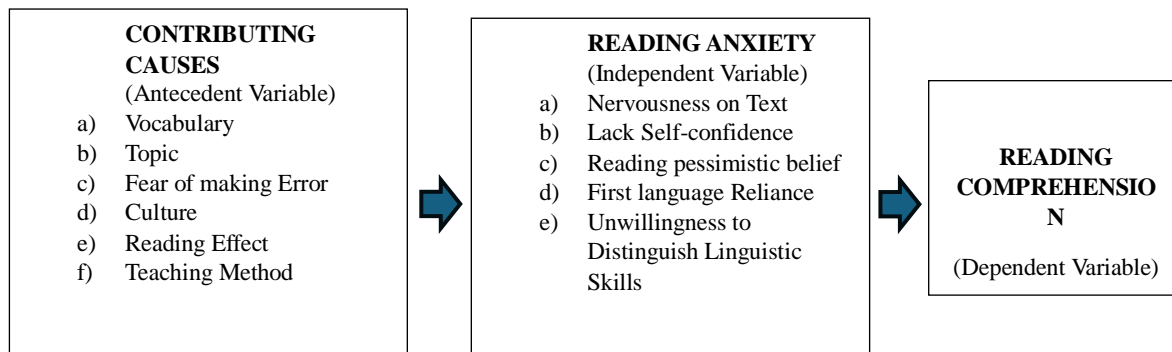
CONTRIBUTING CAUSES
(Antecedent Variable)
a) Vocabulary
b) Topic
c) Fear of making Error
d) Culture
e) Reading Effect
f) Teaching Method

READING ANXIETY
(Independent Variable)
a) Nervousness on Text
b) Lack Self-confidence
c) Reading pessimistic belief
d) First language Reliance
e) Unwillingness to Distinguish Linguistic Skills

READING COMPREHENSION
(Dependent Variable)

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable: Reading Anxiety

Reading Anxiety is defined as the emotional and psychological discomfort experienced by learners when engaging with reading tasks. It encompasses five key dimensions: Nervousness on Text, Lack of Self-confidence, Reading Pessimistic Belief, First Language Reliance, Unwillingness to Distinguish Linguistic Skills. These dimensions represent the internal factors that may hinder a learner's ability to comprehend reading materials effectively.

Contributing Causes (Antecedent Variables)

The framework identifies six contributing causes that lead to or intensify reading anxiety: Vocabulary, Topic, Fear of Making Errors, Culture, Reading Effect, Teaching Method. These variables are considered antecedents, as they precede and influence the development of reading anxiety. They do not directly affect reading comprehension but exert their impact through the independent variable.

Alternatively, these causes may also be interpreted as moderating variables if they are seen to affect the strength or direction of the relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension.

Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension

Reading Comprehension is the learner's ability to understand, interpret, and derive meaning from written texts. It is the outcome variable in this framework, influenced by the level of reading anxiety and its contributing causes.

Definition of Terms

This section describes the terminologies deemed pertinent to this study.

First Language- Conceptually, it refers to the first language that learners first learned to speak and use in their daily life. This language is typically acquired in the earliest stages of childhood, starting from birth or shortly thereafter. A person's first language is an important part of their identity and culture. It often plays a significant role in shaping their worldviews, values, and beliefs, as well as their interactions with others. For many people, their first language is an integral part of their sense of self and is deeply connected to their personal and cultural heritage (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Operationally, this refers to the respondents' first language. It is the

language they begin to learn and use naturally from the moment they are born like Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Tagalog. These languages are acquired through a process of exposure and interaction with others, such as parents, siblings, and other caregivers, who use the language in their daily interactions with the child.

Linguistic Skills- Conceptually, it refers to the overall ability to read and write, as well as the level of knowledge, understanding, and proficiency in using these skills to express effectively (Bialystok, 2018). Operationally, this refers to the respondents' ability to use language in a meaningful and coherent way. This can involve not only reading and writing, but also speaking and listening, and the capacity to understand and interpret information and ideas.

Reading Anxiety- Conceptually it refers to a common experience for learners and language learners who attempt to read in a new language while simultaneously acquiring it (Zou 2017). This anxiety according to Koay (2021) can be caused by a variety of factors, including material that is culturally insensitive or the use of a foreign writing system. Operationally, it is the pressure that arises from trying to read in English, which can be due to various factors such as difficulty in understanding vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, unfamiliar cultural references, and unfamiliar text symbols.

Reading Effects- Conceptually, the effects of reading can include various benefits such as improved focus, memory, empathy, communication skills, and overall understanding of the world (Aisyah, 2017). Operationally, it refers to specific effects on a learner's ability to focus on details such as accent, intonation, and diction. This can involve developing a greater awareness of language and its nuances, as well as improving one's ability to communicate effectively and empathize with others.

Reading Comprehension- Conceptually it is the process of inferring the meaning of a text through different meaning-making techniques. Most studies agree that reading comprehension is more than merely identifying individual words or even comprehending each word as it passes before our eyes. The simple view of reading, which may be considered the first attempt to define "balanced literacy," indicates that reading comprehension emerges from the development of abilities in decoding and linguistic understanding (Oakhill, 2011). Operationally is the understanding and interpreting of written text by the respondents. It requires decoding and understanding the text on the page. Academic and daily success depends on reading comprehension.

Second Language- Conceptually, a second language is acquired in addition to a person's native language. It is often learned for various reasons, such as intercultural communication, professional or academic advancement, or personal development. The advantages of learning a second language can include enhanced cognitive abilities, expanded job opportunities, and a greater understanding and appreciation of different cultures. Operationally, it refers to the language typically learned through formal instruction, such as in a classroom setting. For instance, in the Philippines, English is commonly taught as a second language in schools. This can involve the study of grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills, as well as opportunities to practice using the language in conversation and writing. Overall, learning a second language can be a valuable and rewarding experience that can provide numerous benefits and opportunities.

Self-Confidence- Conceptually self-confidence means having a positive attitude towards one's skills and abilities, with a strong sense of self-acceptance and control over one's life. A self-confident individual is aware of their strengths and weaknesses, has a positive self-image, and sets realistic expectations and goals. They can communicate assertively and handle criticism with ease (Saito et al. (1999). Operationally, it can be described as the trust one has in their abilities, attributes, and judgment, which stems from a sense of self-worth. It involves having faith in oneself to navigate challenges and accomplish goals, even in the face of adversity.

Vocabulary- Conceptually, it refers to a set of words, terms, or expressions that are defined and organized alphabetically. Its importance lies in aiding learning and comprehension, leading to success in various fields. It is also defined as the vocabulary that a speaker possesses and can use when expressing themselves in all modes of communication (Ardasheva et al. (2018). Operationally, it is a set of words that helps develop the ability to comprehend written text.

Hypotheses

> 1. There is no association between reading anxiety and its contributing causes.
> There is an association…..
>
> 2. There is no association between reading anxiety and reading comprehension.

Research Gap

While numerous studies have explored the phenomenon of reading anxiety, a significant portion of this research has focused primarily on college-level learners, particularly those majoring in English, Education, or Literature. This narrow focus limits the generalizability of findings to broader learner populations. In contrast, senior high school students—especially those in vocational tracks such as the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) strand—remain underrepresented in the literature. Given the recent educational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this group has experienced unique challenges that may have intensified reading anxiety, making them a timely and relevant population for further investigation.

Moreover, although several studies have acknowledged the role of teaching methods in shaping learners' emotional responses, few have systematically examined how instructional styles and teacher behavior contribute to reading anxiety. This oversight is particularly critical, as classroom dynamics and pedagogical approaches can either alleviate or exacerbate learners' anxiety, especially when reading in a second language.

Additionally, while theoretical frameworks such as Self-Efficacy Theory and Socio-Cultural Theory have been widely cited, their application to specific learner groups—such as non-English majors and vocational students—remains limited. There is a need to explore how self-confidence and cultural familiarity influence reading anxiety and comprehension within these contexts. Furthermore, existing studies tend to isolate individual factors contributing to reading anxiety (e.g., vocabulary difficulty, fear of errors, unfamiliar cultural content) without examining how these variables interact in a more holistic manner.

Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by investigating the multifaceted nature of reading anxiety among senior high school learners, with particular attention to the influence of teaching methods, self-efficacy, cultural background, and linguistic challenges. By adopting a multi-dimensional approach, the research seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of reading anxiety and its impact on reading comprehension, thereby informing more inclusive and effective instructional practices.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the text outlines the study's methodology, including details on the research design, study participants, sampling methods, research locale, data collection instruments, and procedures, as well as the statistical techniques used to analyze the data.

Research Design

The researcher used a mixed method of research, a combination of descriptive-correlational methods, and focus group discussion. This method, a study strategy employed in the social sciences and other domains, utilized a two-step approach to data analysis. By applying qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, the technique aimed to acquire a deeper understanding of a research problem.

The research used a descriptive-correlational approach to gather quantifiable data systematically and efficiently. Statistical, mathematical, and computational techniques were applied to the data, which were gathered from both existing and potential study participants. Additionally, a qualitative focus group discussion (FGD) method was used to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic. The discussion process focused on understanding the participants' self-perceptions and beliefs about their abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Overall, the combination of these methods was intended to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research topic.

Figure 2. Research Design
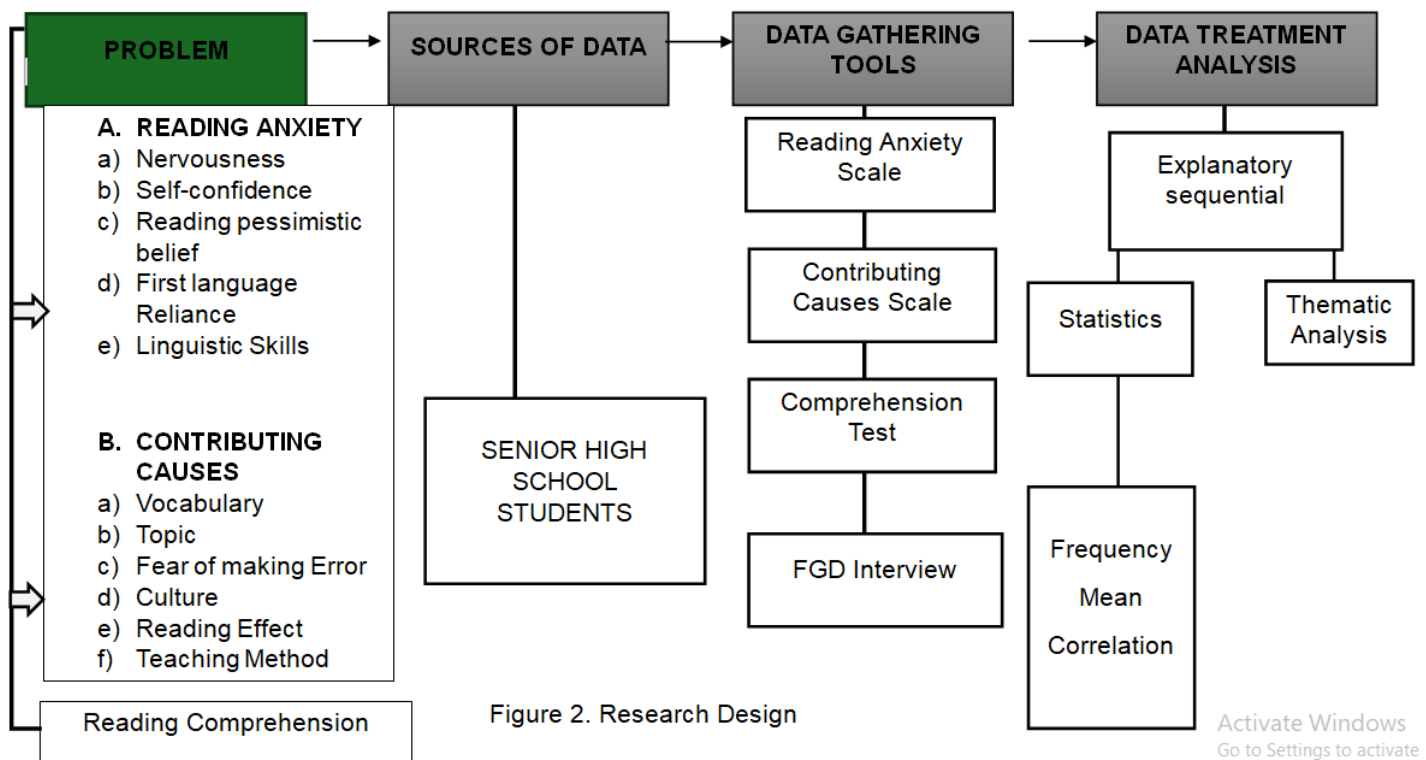
Research Locale

Site Location.

The proposed research took place at Baluan National High School, which is in Barangay Baluan, General Santos City. The school is adjacent to the local elementary school and situated in the community of Purok Mapagmahal. This location was selected for the study as it offered a representative sample of Senior High School learners in a typical public-school setting in General Santos City, allowing for a broad understanding of the research topic. Additionally, the school's accessibility and willingness to participate made it a suitable site for conducting the study.
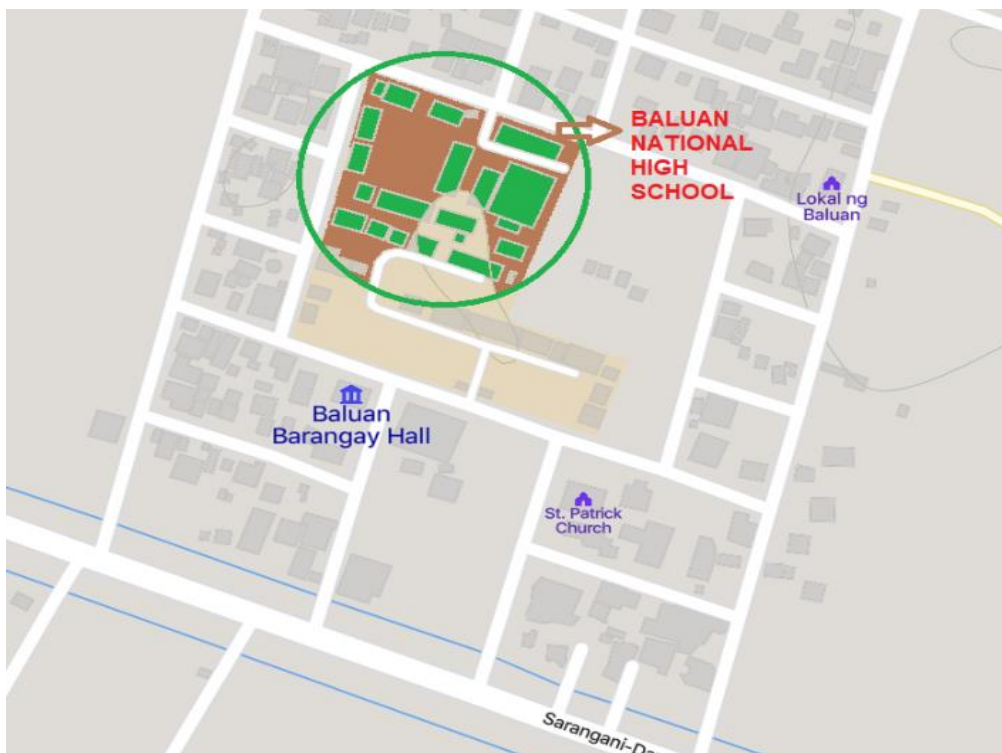

Figure 2

Research Respondents

The study involved gathering data from senior high school learners belonging to different grade levels and strands in the senior high school department of Baluan National High School. The sample population included learners from all three strands offered by the school, namely Humanities, Technical Vocational, and Accountancy and Business Management. This approach ensured that the study's findings were representative of a diverse group of learners with varying academic backgrounds and interests, providing valuable insights into the research topic. The study aimed to collect data from as many learners as possible, ensuring a large and diverse sample size to achieve reliable and comprehensive results.

Sampling Design

The whole population method for the study was more reliable. By doing so, every member of the population was given an equal chance to participate in the survey and share their perception of the study matter. This approach helped to minimize the risk of selection bias and ensured that the study results accurately reflected the population.

The whole population for the study eliminated the need for sampling, which could have introduced bias if the sample was not representative of the entire population. This method ensured that every member of the population was included in the study, and therefore, the results were more generalizable.

By using this approach, the study gathered data from a diverse range of individuals and perspectives, which provided valuable insights into the study matter. Additionally, it helped to ensure that the results were not skewed by any particular group or subgroup within the population.

Overall, selecting the entire population for the study was a reliable method that helped to minimize the risk of bias and ensured that the study results accurately reflected the population.

Data Collection Tools

For data collection, the researcher used a questionnaire survey in which senior high school learners responded to the questions. The questionnaire consisted of 25 statements for reading anxiety and 28 statements for reading anxiety contributing causes. The reading anxiety statements covered areas such as nervousness about the imperfect text, lack of self-confidence, pessimism about reading, reliance on the first language, and unwillingness to distinguish linguistic skills. Meanwhile, reading anxiety causes statements covered areas such as vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, unfamiliar culture, fear of making errors, worry about reading effects, and teaching methods.

The questionnaire consisted of 53 quantitative statements and used a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 4. The scale had the following values: 1 indicated "Totally Disagree," 2 for "Disagree," 3 for "Agree," and 4 for "Totally Agree." By utilizing this method, the researcher was able to gather quantifiable data that could be analyzed using statistical methods.

In addition, to gather qualitative data, a focus group discussion was conducted after the survey. This provided a more in-depth understanding of the student's experiences and perspectives on what coping mechanisms learners employ. By utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods, the research was able to provide a comprehensive view of the study.

To evaluate the comprehension abilities of senior high school learners, the study incorporated three reading passages. These passages were selected based on their suitability for the reading level and content of senior high school learners, and they were drawn from the Basic Reading Inventory of Jerry Johns (2005) and were validated by three qualified reading master teachers and reading coordinators.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria of the study used the whole population method to ensure that the data collected were representative of the population and provided an accurate representation of the phenomenon being studied.

The selection of participants for the focal group discussion was also considered to get an in-depth discussion and perspective from the learners.

Table 1 Distribution of the Respondents

Grade Level	Strand/Section	Frequency	Target Population	FGD Participant
11	HUMSS A	32	28	2
11	HUMSS B	28	28	2
11	ABM	14	14	2
11	TVL	29	29	2
12	HUMSS A	37	36	2
12	HUMSS B	37	32	2
12	TVL	23	23	2
TOTAL		198	190	14

Duration of the Study

The survey for the research was conducted from March to April 2023 and the focal group discussion in October. During this period, the respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test. After the data collection, the next phase of the research commenced, which was the data analysis and the remaining part of the study.

From October to November 2023, the researcher analyzed the collected data. They were scrutinized and checked to ensure that there were no errors or discrepancies. The research advisers and statisticians and the rest of the panel also provided feedback and suggestions to improve the manuscript's quality.

Additionally, a data audit was conducted to verify the accuracy and reliability of the collected data. This process involved a thorough review of the data to ensure that there were no missing values, outliers, or other anomalies that could affect the study's results.

Finally, the researcher presented the study's results, which included the findings from the questionnaire and reading passages. The results were presented clearly and concisely to ensure that they were easily understandable to the target audience. The presentation also included recommendations based on the research findings to improve senior high school learners' reading comprehension and reduce their reading anxiety.

Table 2 Budget of Research Work

Plans and Description	Target Date
Proposal Defense	March
Conduct of the Study	April
Interpretation of data and Analysis	November
Statistics, Turnitin, Grammar	

Finalization of the Research Paper,	November
Final Defense	December
Re-Finalization of the Research Paper Turnitin, Grammar, and Publication	December

Research Instrument

The researcher utilized descriptive quantitative survey questionnaires for the study, which had been adapted from various sources. The reading anxiety questionnaire, which had been developed by Al-Sohbani (2018), was used as a basis and was modified to suit the needs of the school. It consisted of 25 questions under five main variables or topics. In addition, the questionnaire on contributing causes, which had been developed by Ahmad et al. (2013), was also used as a basis. It had a total of 28 questions divided into five main variables or topics and was modified based on the school's information needs. The modified questionnaire was validated before it was used.

To evaluate the coping mechanisms used by the learners to deal with reading anxiety, FGD questionnaires were made and validated by reading master teachers and coordinators. To measure the reading comprehension of the learners, the reading passages that were used were selected from the Basic Reading Inventory of Jerry Johns.

Table 3 Interpretation of Validation of Survey Questionnaire

Interpretation	Scale
Excellent	4.5-5
Very Good	3.5-4.4
Good	2.5-3.4
Fair	1.5-2.4
Poor	1.0-1.4

Table 4 Mean Ranges of Reading Anxiety

Mean Range	Interpretation	Reading Anxiety Level
1.0-1.4	Totally Disagree	Low Anxiety
1.5-2.4	Disagree	Moderate Anxiety
2.5-3.4	Agree	High Anxiety
3.5-4.0	Totally Agree	Very High Anxiety

Table 5 Mean Ranges of Contributing Causes of Reading Anxiety

Mean Range	Interpretation	Reading Anxiety Level
1.0-1.4	Totally Disagree	Low Contributing Cause
1.5-2.4	Disagree	Moderate Contributing Cause
2.5-3.4	Agree	High Contributing Cause
3.5-4.0	Totally Agree	Very High Contributing Cause

Table 6 Reading Comprehension Interpretation

Missed Questions	Level
0-1	Independent
2-4	Instructional
5 and more	Frustration

(Johns English Basic Reading Comprehension Rating Scale)

Ethical Consideration

The researcher was committed to upholding ethical principles throughout the research process, as the study involved academically challenged learners from Baluan National High School, General Santos City Division. To ensure that ethical standards were met, several guidelines were put in place for the duration of the research.

Firstly, the dignity and well-being of the learners were always safeguarded. This meant that the researcher took appropriate measures to ensure that the learners were not exposed to any harm or exploitation during the research process. Any sensitive information or data that may have been collected was treated with utmost confidentiality to ensure that the student's privacy was respected.

Secondly, the research data were kept confidential throughout the study. This meant that the information collected from the learners was stored securely and only accessed by authorized individuals involved in the research process. The researcher ensured that the data were not shared with anyone who was not involved in the study or who did not have an appropriate clearance to access the information.

Thirdly, the researcher obtained permission from the school principal and the Department of Education (DepEd) Division to use the information collected in the research report. This ensured that the research was conducted in compliance with relevant laws and regulations and that the data collected were used appropriately and responsibly.

By adhering to these ethical guidelines, the researcher aimed to conduct the research in a manner that was respectful of the student's rights and interests, while also ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the data collected.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher went through a sequence of procedures to gather information using survey questionnaires and conducting interviews.

First Step. The researcher prepared a letter with the guidance and support of the thesis adviser, which was addressed to the School Division Superintendent. The primary purpose of this letter was to formally request permission to conduct a research project within the Division of General Santos City. The letter provided an overview of the study's objectives, methodology, and expected outcomes, as well as highlighted the potential benefits that the research may bring to the division and the wider educational community. To ensure that the letter was professional and well-structured, the researcher adhered to the standard business letter format and guidelines and made sure that it was written clearly and concisely. Once the letter was approved and permission was granted, the researcher was able to commence the study with the necessary permits and clearances.

Second Step. Apart from sending a formal letter to the School Division Superintendent, the researcher made a courtesy call to the principal of the school. This call aimed to explain the study's objectives and purpose in detail, while also presenting the official letter of approval from the Division Office, which had been signed by the School's Division Superintendent. The primary purpose of that visit was to create a positive and constructive working relationship with the School's Principal and to briefly introduce the research project, highlighting its potential benefits to the school and the community at large. The researcher also planned to seek

feedback and insights from the School's Principal during that visit, which could help to further refine the research project.

Third Step. Once the Division Office and School Principals had given their endorsement for the research project, the researcher moved forward with conducting the study. One of the primary methods that the researcher used was a survey questionnaire, which was given to respondents who were relevant to the study. The researcher used the questionnaire to gather important data and insights on the research topic, allowing them to analyze and interpret the results to draw meaningful conclusions.

In addition to the survey questionnaire, the researcher conducted interviews with relevant individuals about the research topic. These interviews allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the subject matter and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue being studied. The insights and feedback gathered from the interviews were also used to enhance the accuracy and credibility of the research findings.

Throughout the data collection process, the researcher adhered to ethical research practices and maintained confidentiality and anonymity for all participants. The researcher also ensured that the research methodology and data collection techniques were appropriate for the research topic and aligned with the objectives of the study. By conducting a thorough and rigorous research project, the researcher was able to produce high-quality and reliable results, which could be used to inform and improve the relevant policies and practices in the field.

Statistical Instrument

The study used a quantitative data analysis method, whereby the collected data was tallied and analyzed using a statistical approach. The statistical method chosen for data analysis were as follows:

Frequency Count. Frequency count involves counting the frequency or number of occurrences of specific values or categories in a given dataset. This statistical tool is a fundamental method used for summarizing and gaining insights into data. In the current study, frequency count will be utilized to address the profile of the respondents in terms of their age, gender, civil status, strand, and economic status.

Mean. The mean, a statistical measure of central tendency, serves as an indicator representing the typical or average value within a given dataset. Its calculation involves summing all the values in the dataset and dividing the total by the number of values. Often referred to as the arithmetic mean or simply the average, the mean will be employed in the present study to gauge the extent of reading anxiety, identify its causes, and assess the reading comprehension proficiency of high school educators. Through the computation of the dataset's mean, the researcher can derive an average score that enables evaluation of the overall magnitude of reading anxiety, the underlying factors contributing to it, and the participants' reading comprehension aptitude.

Spearman Rank. This was used as the data turned out to be non-parametric. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient often denoted as ρ (rho), is a measure of the strength and direction of the monotonic relationship between two variables. It is used to assess the degree to which the ranks (orderings) of two variables are related.

The formula for calculating the spearman rank is:

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 \Sigma\, d_i^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

Where:

- ρ (rho) is the Spearman rank correlation coefficient.
- d represents the difference between the ranks of corresponding values in the two variables
- Σ denotes the summation symbol, indicating that you should sum up the values for all data pairs.

- n is the number of data pairs or observations.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The research study employed qualitative data, and one of the methods used was a focus group discussion (FGD). This was a type of qualitative research that involved bringing together a small group of individuals, typically between six to ten people, to explore a specific topic or issue.

During an FGD, the researcher facilitated and encouraged the participants to share their thoughts and ideas. Questions were provided to stimulate thorough comments and to allow participants to build on each other's ideas.

The data collected through the FGD were recorded and transcribed, and common themes and conclusions were identified. These data were gathered from selected individuals from different senior high school strands.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data gathered in this study. The various results are presented in the succeeding tables with corresponding discussions and explanations. It also answers specific problems stated in the previous chapter.

Reading Anxiety Level

Table 6 Reading Anxiety Level in terms of nervousness on text

Indicators	Mean	Remarks
I become tense whenever I encounter unknown words while reading in English.	2.6	High
Reading an English passage, especially when it's on an unfamiliar topic, makes me feel uneasy.	2.7	High
I feel confused and anxious when I cannot understand every word I read.	2.7	High
When my teacher asks me to read something, I become anxious.	2.3	High
I become frustrated when I can barely recall what I've read.	2.6	High
Total	2.6	High

Table 6 illustrates the levels of reading anxiety, focusing on the nervousness associated with text, which indicated a high level with a mean of 2.6. The data revealed that respondents predominantly experienced confusion and anxiety when unable to grasp every word, as indicated by a mean of 2.7. This was closely followed by discomfort when encountering unfamiliar passages and topics (2.7). Additionally, a sense of tension arose when they faced unknown words in English texts, as reflected by a mean of 2.6. These results are consistent with previous research that suggested that reading anxiety is a negative emotion that impaired learning and is triggered by imagined or distant threats to self-esteem (Jalongo and Hirsh, 2010). Reading anxiety could also influence students' motivation to read and affect their reading achievement (McBreen and Savage, 2021).

Therefore, it is important to provide students with motivational reading interventions that could enhance their reading skills and confidence (van Steensel et al., 2017).

Table 7 Reading Anxiety Level in terms of Lack of Self-Confidence

Indicators	Mean	Remarks
I get upset when I am uncertain of my comprehension of what I am reading in English.	2.6	High
I feel overwhelmed when reading not in my native language.	2.5	High
I lack confidence when reading complex difficult texts.	2.6	High
I usually act as if I am reading in silence when I am not.	2.5	High
I end up being silent because of fear of making getting mistake.	2.7	High
Total	2.6	High

Table 7 presents the respondents'' levels of reading anxiety in terms of lack of self-confidence. Overall, it shows a high level with a mean of 2.6. Specifically, the findings revealed a trend of diminished confidence among learners, particularly when errors were made, as evidenced by a mean of 2.7. There was also noticeable distress related to uncertainties in reading comprehension (2.6). Also, the challenge of deciphering complex texts further eroded their confidence (2.5). Reading in a non-native language significantly increased the feeling of being overwhelmed (2.5). Interestingly, there was a minimal inclination towards silent reading, despite the lack of active engagement in this practice (2.5). These results are consistent with previous studies that had reported a negative relationship between reading anxiety and self-confidence in second language learners (Saito et al., 1999; Sellers, 2000; Zhao et al., 2013) while according to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), reading anxiety could affect learners' self-efficacy beliefs and lower their motivation and performance in reading tasks.

Therefore, it was important to address the sources of reading anxiety and provide learners with strategies to cope with them.

Table 8 Reading Anxiety Level in terms of pessimistic beliefs about reading

Indicators	Mean	Remarks
I always worry about all the new symbols and text I must learn to read.	2.6	High
I do not try to comprehend unknown terms because it causes me tension and anxiety.	2.4	Low
The most difficult aspect of English is learning to read.	2.4	Low
I see that reading English is not essential in my track.	2.0	Low
Reading is not practiced in our home.	2.0	Low
Total	2.3	Low

Table 8 illustrates the levels of reading anxiety influenced by negative beliefs about reading among the respondents. Specifically, a significant number of participants have expressed high levels of concern about encountering new symbols and texts (2.6). Conversely, there is a lower level of concern about the perceived difficulty in learning to read English (2.4). Additionally, the reluctance to tackle unfamiliar terms due to the associated stress and anxiety had also been less pronounced (2.3). Furthermore, the perception that reading in English was not crucial for their chosen academic or career path, coupled with the lack of reading practice at home (2.0). In summary, the respondents experienced only a low level of anxiety in terms of their pessimistic beliefs about reading (2.3).

This finding is consistent with previous studies that there is a correlation between reading attitudes, motivation, and reading anxiety among EFL learners (Torudom & Taylor, 2020; González Ramírez & Pescara Vásquez,

2023). Moreover, these studies also found significant differences in reading anxiety according to students' major and language proficiency levels.

Therefore, it is important to address the negative beliefs that may have hindered students' reading performance and enjoyment, as well as to foster positive beliefs that may enhance their reading skills and confidence.

Table 9 Reading Anxiety Level in Terms of Reliance on the First Language

Indicators	Mean	Remarks
I usually end up translating word by word in reading English	2.7	High
I feel anxious because of the unfamiliarity with different cultures and language.	2.6	High
I need to have to know so much about foreign cultures and literature to read English.	2.8	High
I avoid reading a text in a second language because I am afraid I couldn't understand it.	2.4	High
I have difficulty switching between a second language to my first language.	2.5	High
Total	2.6	High

Table 9 presents the levels of reading anxiety related to the dependence on a first language among learners, indicating a high level and a mean of 2.6. Specifically, a significant reliance on their native language, primarily attributed to a lack of familiarity with foreign cultures and literature necessary for reading in English (2.8). Additionally, these learners tended to translate English text word-for-word (2.7), further emphasizing their reliance. This was compounded by their anxiety stemming from unfamiliarity with diverse cultures and languages (2.6). The table also highlighted the challenges faced in transitioning from their first language to their second language (2.5). Moreover, there was a tendency to avoid reading in the second language, driven by the fear of misinterpretation or lack of comprehension (2.4).

These findings are consistent with previous studies that had shown that students' language achievement and language aptitude were likely confounding variables for the proposed role of anxiety in L2 learning (Sparks & Ganschow, 2007; Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019). Furthermore, the effect of first-language achievement on later second-language reading anxiety may have been mediated by several factors, such as first-language working memory, print exposure, and metalinguistic knowledge; second-language aptitude; and second-language reading, writing, and listening comprehension (Brunette et al., 2023).

Therefore, it is recommended that teachers and learners deal with first/second language skills, rather than anxiety per se, to reduce the sense of second language reading anxiety.

Table 10 Reading Anxiety Level in terms of Unwillingness to Distinguish Linguistic Skills

Indicators	Mean	Remarks
I don't mind reading to myself but it's uncomfortable when I have to read English aloud.	2.6	High
I don't really try reading in English as I'm afraid to get mistakes.	2.2	High
I worry about my vocabulary skills in the language I am reading in.	2.7	High
I worry about my grammar skills in the language I am reading	2.9	High
I worry about pronunciation skills in the language I read	2.8	High
Total	2.6	High

Table 10 shows how much reading anxiety the learners had due to their linguistic competencies. Linguistic competencies were the skills that helped them understand and use language, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The findings indicated however that the learners had experienced a lot of anxiety because of their linguistic skills (2.6). The most significant anxiety came from their language and grammar skills (2.9). This means that they were not confident in their ability to use correct and appropriate language when they read. The second most anxiety had arisen from their pronunciation skills (2.8). This means that they had been afraid of pronouncing words incorrectly when they read. The third most anxiety had been linked to their vocabulary skills (2.7). This means that they did not know the meaning of many words they had encountered when they read. The findings also showed that the learners had not liked reading aloud with a mean of 2.6) and had tried to avoid reading (2.2) because they were scared of making mistakes. These findings aligned with other studies conducted by (Zhou, 2017), which indicated that learners tend to develop poor reading habits while practicing English, such as reading each word separately, using a dictionary frequently to look up unfamiliar words, and repeatedly reading text. These habits had not only decreased their reading speed but also hindered their understanding of the primary ideas in the reading material (Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999). Moreover, these inadequate reading skills had acted as a barrier to students' progress in English reading.

To address this issue, learners needed to acquire appropriate reading skills and relevant supplementary reading materials. Developing good reading habits and mastering efficient reading techniques have been essential to improving their English reading proficiency (Sweller,1999).

Contributing Causes Level of Reading Anxiety

In the following tables are the levels of contributing causes of reading anxiety.

Table 11 Levels of Contributing Causes in Terms of Vocabulary

Indicators	Mean	Remarks
I cannot figure out the meaning of unknown words.	2.7	High
I encounter a lot of words with unclear meaning.	2.9	High
I cannot figure out the meaning of unknown words which I have seen before.	2.7	High
Finding the words in multiple meanings is challenging.	2.9	High
I have problems pronouncing multiple words with many syllables.	2.8	High
Total	2.8	High

Table 11 presents the various factors that contributed highly to the reading anxiety related to vocabulary. As shown, the respondents primarily struggled with words that have ambiguous meanings (2.9), along with the difficulty in understanding words with multiple meanings (2.9). Additionally, pronouncing words with numerous syllables posed a challenge (2.8), as had deciphering the meanings of unfamiliar words (2.7) and words that might have been encountered previously but were not well-remembered (2.7). Overall, vocabulary has contributed highly to the respondents' reading anxiety as shown by the mean of (2.8). The finding correlated with previous research conducted by Aisyah (2017), which revealed that factors contributing to learners' reading anxiety were associated with unknown vocabulary, which had been the leading cause of anxiety, followed by unfamiliar topics and culture. Another research conducted by Annisaurrohmah (2022) demonstrated that 63% of the participants in the study had encountered vocabulary difficulties that had led to reading anxiety. This finding confirmed that encountering unfamiliar words or phrases in English texts had reduced learners' curiosity in reading and had created situations that triggered anxiety. As a result, they felt anxious when reading English texts. Ahmad et al. (2013) cited that reading had been challenging not only due to the need to learn new words but also because of the uncertainty or ambiguity surrounding these words.

Table 12 Levels of Contributing Causes in Terms of Unfamiliar Topics

Indicators	Mean	Remarks
It gets uneasy when I don't understand what I am reading.	2.9	High
I don't prefer unfamiliar topic, particularly English language.	2.7	High
I prefer to read short passages with easy words and common topic.	2.9	High
I feel anxious when reading in English language which I have no idea about the topic.	2.8	High
I cannot spot the main idea of a certain topic or paragraph.	2.6	High
Total	2.8	High

Table 12 presents the primary the contributing to the reading anxiety experienced by respondents in terms of unfamiliar topics, as indicated by a high mean of (2.8). As shown participants often felt uneasy when they faced difficulties in comprehending their reading material (2.9). There was a preference for shorter passages featuring simple language and familiar themes, as evidenced by a mean score of 2.7, and a sense of anxiety was reported when respondents were unable to grasp the subject matter of what they were reading (2.8). The findings also highlighted a general aversion towards engaging with unfamiliar subjects, especially in English, due to challenges in identifying and understanding the main concepts, as indicated by a mean score of 2.7. The finding is also aligned with the result of the previous study conducted by Aisyah, (2017) that if a learner did not find reading material engaging because of an unfamiliar topic, it became difficult for them to connect with the text and enhance their reading skills. Renninger and Hidi (2016) also contended that curiosity and interest played crucial roles in motivating individuals to pursue education and learning. When individuals have a keen interest in a specific topic, they are more likely to engage in learning activities, persist in the face of challenges, and actively seek out additional information. Ahmad et al. (2013) posited that encountering an uninteresting topic in reading material could result in anxiety when reading in a foreign language. This type of anxiety could create an obstacle to effective language learning and comprehension, as learners might become overwhelmed by unfamiliar vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.

Table 13 Levels of Contributing Causes in Terms of Unfamiliar Background and Culture

Indicators	Mean	Remarks
I hardly understand the idea if there is more than one meaning for each word.	2.7	High
I often understand words but still cannot quite understand what the writer says.	2.6	High
I usually end up translating word for word even in idioms.	2.7	High
I get frustrated when ideas in the text are culturally unclear.	2.8	High
I feel like I cannot understand English even though I know every word meaning.	2.7	High
Total	2.7	High

Table 13 presents the contributing causes of the respondents' reading anxiety in terms of background and culture with an overall mean score of 2.7, interpreted as high. Specifically, respondents got frustrated when ideas in the text were culturally unclear with a mean of 2.8 and that they hardly understood the idea if there was more than one meaning for each word with a mean of 2.7. Furthermore, they felt like they didn't understand English when they might have known the words' meanings with a mean of 2.7. They also ended up translating word for word even in idioms with a mean of 2.7 and they often understood words but still couldn't quite understand what the writer was saying which had a mean score of 2.6. These findings aligned with

previous research studies. Ahmad et al. (2013) argued that reading involved not only engaging with an author's ideas but also interacting with the collective memory preserved in written materials. Reading texts that depict unfamiliar cultures could be a challenging yet interesting experience, according to Pillay (2014). However, Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) suggested that learners might have had difficulty understanding texts written in English or other foreign languages if they were not familiar with the cultures portrayed in them.

Exposure to a new cultural context could cause anxiety when reading in a foreign language, leading to culture shock and difficulty in understanding the foreign script. Hence, having some background knowledge of the culture being discussed could help learners better comprehend and enjoy reading materials.

Table 14 Levels of Contributing Causes in Terms of Fear of Making Error

Indicators	Mean	Remarks
I feel anxious about reading aloud due to the fear of making errors.	2.8	High
I feel intimidated when I pronounce simple words incorrectly.	2.6	High
I prefer to prepare too much and search for the phonetic transcript prior to the class if I was expected to read in the class.	2.7	High
I feel irritated if I encounter a word, I do not know how it is pronounced.	2.7	High
I prefer silent reading rather than reading aloud.	3.0	High
Total	2.8	High

Table 14 shows that the contributing causes of reading anxiety in terms of fear of making errors are at a high level with a mean score of 2.8. The preferred to read silently rather than reading aloud with a mean of 3.0, and they felt anxious about reading aloud due to fear of making errors with a mean of 2.8. They also felt irritated if they encountered a word. They did not know how to pronounce with a mean score of 2.7. Furthermore, they had preferred to prepare too much in search of the phonetic transcript before the reading class activity with a mean of 2.7. They also felt intimidated when they pronounced words incorrectly. These findings aligned with previous research studies. A lack of self-confidence has been closely linked to fear, which suggests that the fear of making errors contributes to reading anxiety. According to Aisyah (2017), language anxiety could have a detrimental effect on learners' self-esteem, even though self-confidence has been a beneficial factor. It was also found out in the research of Annisaurrohmah's (2022) of second-language English learners, which identified the fear of making mistakes as the primary factor contributing to reading anxiety.

Table 15 Levels of Contributing Causes in Terms of Worry about Reading Effects

Indicators	Mean	Remarks
When reading aloud, I focus on reading correctly rather than focusing on understanding the text.	2.6	High
I can read but usually I don't understand the word or text I am reading.	2.6	High
I usually focus on how I sound and my accent rather than understanding what I am reading.	2.7	High
I get easily disturbed and do not remember what I have read.	2.8	High
Total	2.7	High

Table 15 presents the factors that caused reading anxiety in terms of worry about reading effects, with a high mean score of 2.7. As shown the respondents were easily distracted and had poor recall of what they read with a mean of 2.8. They tended to focus more on their pronunciation than on their comprehension when they read with a mean of 2.7. When they read aloud, they prioritized accuracy over understanding with a mean of 2.6,

which explained why they could read fluently but did not comprehend what they read with a mean of 2.6. The findings aligned with the previous results by Aisyah, (2017) that in reading, learners experienced reading anxiety in reading aloud, and it always reminded them of unpleasant and scary experiences, which were the reasons why they focused more on how they sounded and their accent without truly understanding what they were reading.

Table 16 Levels of Contributing Causes in Terms of Teaching Method

Indicators	Mean	Remarks
I feel intimidated when my teacher asks me to read aloud.	2.6	High
I feel intimidated when I am asked to translate a piece from English to Filipino.	2.6	High
I feel intimidated when my teacher directly corrects my pronunciation and translation	2.6	High
I feel anxious when my teacher dominantly uses English in class	2.7	High
Total	2.6	High

Table 16 presents the contributing causes of reading anxiety in terms of teaching methods. It shows a high level as evidenced by the mean of 2.6. Respondents had shown through the data that they felt anxious when their teacher dominantly used English in class with a mean of 2.7, followed by feeling intimidated when they were asked to translate a piece from English to Filipino with a mean of 2.6. They were also intimidated when the teacher asked them to read aloud with a mean of 2.6 and when the teacher directly corrected pronunciation and translation with a mean of 2.6. These results aligned with the previous research that teaching methods and reading materials affect learners' reading anxiety and performance. It said that humiliating learners in class could lower their academic achievement and increase their negative emotions. It also said that positive feedback, stress relief, and appealing reading materials could help learners overcome reading anxiety and improve their reading skills (Abdelmaboud 2018; Esmaeili 2017; O'brein 2016; and Liu 2019).

Reading Comprehension Level

Table 17 Reading Comprehension Level

Indicators	Mean Scores	Percentage	Johns Interpretation
Test 1	6.63	66.32	instructional
Test 2	5.56	55.58	instructional
Test 3	6.84	68.26	instructional
	Total= 19.03	**AVG= 63.36**	instructional

Johns English Basic Reading Test for Comprehension Rating Scale (2005)

Questions Missed	Level
0-1	Independent
2-4	Instructional
5 and more	Frustration

Table 17 represents the results of the comprehension test conducted for this study. The comprehension test was composed of 3 short stories with 10 questions for each test. Respondents in Test 1 had an instructional level with a (M=66.32), Test 2 had an instructional level with a (M=55.58), and Test 3 also had an instructional level with a (M=38.26). The overall remarks had an instructional level of (M=63.36). The results suggest that

though learners suffer from reading anxiety, they still manage and cope to comprehend the reading passages that were given to them.

Correlation Between Contributing Causes and Reading Anxiety

Table 18 Correlation Matrix Between Contributing Causes and Reading Anxiety

Variable	Nervousness on Text	Self-Confidence	Pessimistic Belief about Reading	Reliance on First Language	Linguistic Skills
Vocabulary	0.490	0.505	0.446	0.546	0.605
	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong
Unfamiliar Topic	0.468	0.438	0.439	0.579	0.606
	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong
Background Culture	0.458	0.467	0.475	0.571	0.613
	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Strong
Fear of Making Errors	0.425	0.412	0.357	0.492	0.607
	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Weak	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong
Worry about Reading Effects	0.360	0.338	0.484	0.400	0.519
	Weak	Weak	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong
Teaching Methods	0.333	0.337	0.611	0.457	0.467
	Weak	Weak	Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong
Remarks: 0-0.2	Very Weak Correlation				
0.21-0.4	Weak Correlation		0.61-0.8	Strong Correlation	
0.41-0.5	Moderately Strong		0.81-1.0	Very Strong Correlation	

Table 18 shows the relationships between contributing causes and reading anxiety variables: Nervousness on Text, Self-Confidence, Pessimistic Belief about Reading, Reliance on First Language, and Linguistic Skills. Spearman rank was used, with positive values indicating a positive relationship and negative values indicating a negative relationship.

Vocabulary and Topic both have moderately strong positive correlations with the specified aspects, meaning that an increase in vocabulary and topic knowledge tends to be associated with increased Nervousness in Text, Self-Confidence, Pessimistic Belief about Reading, Reliance on First Language, and Linguistic Skills. Background Culture was positively related to most of these aspects, with a strong correlation with Linguistic Skills. Fear of Making Errors was moderately positively correlated with Nervousness on Text, Self-Confidence, and Reliance on First Language. Pessimistic Beliefs about Reading and Worry about Reading Effects were also moderately related to some aspects. Teaching Methods were strongly associated with Worry about Reading Effects and some other factors.

According to Smith and Jones (2020), vocabulary and topic knowledge are crucial factors that influence reading anxiety among second language learners. They argued that learners who had limited vocabulary and topic knowledge tended to experience more nervousness, lower self-confidence, more pessimistic beliefs, higher reliance on their first language, and lower linguistic skills when reading texts in the target language. They suggested that teachers should provide more opportunities for learners to expand their vocabulary and topic knowledge through exposure, practice, and feedback. Similarly, Lee and Kim (2021) found that background culture played a significant role in reading anxiety, especially in terms of linguistic skills. They claimed that learners who have more familiarity with the background culture of the texts they read tend to have higher linguistic skills and less anxiety than those who lack such familiarity. They recommended that teachers should incorporate more cultural elements into their reading instruction and materials.

Furthermore, Chen and Wang (2019) examined the effects of fear of making errors, pessimistic beliefs about reading, and worry about reading effects on reading anxiety. They discovered that these factors were positively correlated with some aspects of reading anxiety, such as nervousness on text, self-confidence, and reliance on the first language. They proposed that teachers should adopt more supportive and encouraging teaching methods to reduce learners' fear of making errors, pessimistic beliefs, and worry about reading effects.

Table 19 Correlation Matrix Between Reading Anxiety and Reading Comprehension

Variables	Comprehension Test	Remarks
Nervousness on Text	-0.269	Weak
Lack of Self Confidence	-0.326	Weak
Pessimistic Belief about Reading	-0.560	Moderately Strong
Reliance on First Language	-0.471	Moderately Strong
Unwillingness to Distinguish Linguistic Skills	-0.381	Weak

The correlation table illustrates the relationships between reading anxiety factors and reading comprehension scores. Nervousness on Text had a weak negative correlation with reading comprehension, represented by a coefficient of -0.269. This implies that as nervousness on text increased, there would be a slight decrease in reading comprehension, though the relationship was not very strong. Similarly, Self-confidence exhibited a weak negative correlation of -0.326 with reading comprehension, suggesting that as self-confidence decreases, reading comprehension also decreases, but this association is relatively weak.

In contrast, Pessimistic Belief about Reading had a moderately strong negative correlation of -0.560 with reading comprehension. This indicates that as pessimistic beliefs about reading increase, reading comprehension significantly decreases. The relationship there is quite robust. Reliance on First Language also showed a moderately strong negative correlation of -0.471 with reading comprehension, suggesting that an increase in reliance on the first language was associated with a decrease in reading comprehension.

Lastly, Linguistic Skills had a weak negative correlation of -0.381 with reading comprehension. This meant that a decrease in linguistic skills was weakly associated with a slight decrease in reading comprehension. In summary, the table revealed that pessimistic beliefs and a strong dependence on the first language were strongly correlated with lower reading comprehension, while nervousness, self-confidence, and linguistic skills exhibited weaker negative relationships with reading comprehension.

Aligning with the previous studies, Bonnie (2021) and MacIntyre (1991) found that reading traits, self-confidence, and anxieties were negatively correlated with reading comprehension. Gonzalez (2023) and Torudom (2020) also cited that attitude and motivation had a negative correlation with reading comprehension. They also emphasized that it is important to address the negative beliefs that might hinder students' reading performance and enjoyment, as well as to foster positive beliefs that might enhance their reading skills and

confidence. Additionally, Pap (2016) and Hibbett (1964) indicated in their research that those who are learning another language, especially a third language, often depend heavily on their first language, which could result in the literal translation of the meaning. Lastly, Zhou (2017) emphasized that reading habits are important in developing reading skills, and inadequacies in this skill could act as a barrier and contribute to anxiety.

Therefore, these studies suggested that reading anxiety could have had different effects on reading comprehension depending on various factors such as the level of anxiety, the type of text, the background knowledge, the linguistic skills, and the self-concept of the readers.

Indicators of Reading Anxiety of the Learners based on FGD

Dependency on Translation: Learners agreed that they suffer reading anxiety due to reliance on first language. Some learners resorted to asking teachers to translate English text into Tagalog, their first language, indicating a reliance on the native language due to perceived difficulties in understanding English. This reliance might stem from discomfort or lack of confidence in English reading skills. It is aligned with the research study of (Pap, 2016) that there is a heavy first language reliance to help them learn in the second language due to unfamiliar topics and cultures, especially in the English language. Such anxieties are reflected in the following statements of the participants:

> *"Yes sir, this is one of the main issue in our class because of our lack of skills in English language. We cannot understand when it's not translated in or native language. Then we feel intimidated specially to our slow classmates. Yes sir kay problema jud na pirmi sa class, di man gud mi kamao magenglish og dili namo masabtan og dili matranslate. Unya maulaw na lang sab ang uban labi na tong hinaon jud."(P1)*

> *"Even with basic words, understanding can sometimes be difficult when reading. There are moments when learners may ask their teachers to translate into Tagalog because the English language can be too hard to grasp. Basic lang jud unta maglisod gihapon understand, naa pay times na magingon sa teacher na pwede tagalog og maglisod sila understand sa English maski basic lng." (P7)*

> *"There are really reasons why we are like this. We do not comprehend usually and always during recitation, we always ask the teacher if we can talk in Bisaya. Daghan man jud reason ngano ani may reading anxiety mi sir like dili mi kasabot jud sa ginabasa, unya kung mag recitation gani magingon pami if pwede Bisaya." (P2)*

Feeling Overwhelmed: There's a mention of feeling overwhelmed when faced with many words to read which can be related to the anxiousness and nervousness they feel when reading. This sensation of being overwhelmed by text can induce nervousness and hinder effective comprehension. This is aligned with the findings of Shuang & Fei, (2021) that reading anxiety is triggered in individuals when they encounter objects that they deem imperfect. This type of anxiety tends to intensify as the objects become increasingly unfamiliar.

> *"When faced with a large number of words to read, it can feel overwhelmingly challenging. Mastress mi sa mga unfamiliar word and dili makabasa og tarong". (P2)*

Lack of Self-confidence: The fear of being ridiculed, especially for slow readers or those struggling with reading, impacts their confidence. This fear extends to situations involving speaking due to the apprehension of mispronunciations or errors, affecting overall efficiency. This is aligned with the result of MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) wherein reading anxiety can affect learners' self-efficacy which is affected by motivation which directly affects their confidence level.

> *"Especially in the context of slow readers or learners, they would often be subjected to ridicule. This eventually affects their reading efficiency and effectiveness. As they fear encountering the same situation when speaking, such as mispronunciations. Every time magbasa in front ang slow reader or slow learner ginakatawan sila hantod maabot sa point na di na sila makabasa tarong kay wala na silay*

gana kay hadlok na sila and musamot ilang situation na muistoya lng sila pero di sila kamao sa pronunciation". (P3)

Pessimistic Belief in Reading: There's a pessimistic belief regarding the difficulty of reading, even with basic words. This perception contributes to a negative outlook on one's reading abilities, making comprehension seem challenging. This is aligned with the result of Al-Sobhani, (2018) that learners tend to view the English language as hard and challenging to learn, and often experience apprehension and distress when confronted with symbols which causes not to understand the text they read.

> *"Understanding can sometimes be difficult when reading. There are moments when learners may ask their teachers to translate into Tagalog because the English language can be too hard to grasp. Basic lng jud sya maglisod gihapon understand, naa pay times na magingon sa teacher na pwede tagalog og maglisod sila understand sa English maski basic lng." (P7)*

Reading Anxiety Contributing Causes Based on FGD

Educational System and Teaching Methods: Participants hinted at how the structure of the educational system during elementary years may have contributed to their reading anxiety. This suggested a need to examine whether the teaching methods or the curriculum itself might have been contributing to anxiety. Participants shed light on how the dynamics between teachers and students can contribute to reading anxiety. Even well-intentioned actions by teachers could sometimes be perceived as intimidating or embarrassing by students.

These results aligned with the previous research that teaching methods and reading materials affect learners' reading anxiety and performance. It said that humiliating learners in class could lower their academic achievement and increase their negative emotions. It was also found out that positive feedback, stress relief, and appealing reading materials could help learners overcome reading anxiety and improve their reading skills (Abdelmaboud 2018; Esmaeili 2017; O'brein 201; and Liu 2019).

> *"Elementary basis , nay giset up na educational system or standard sa reading sa mga teacher, siguro we are afraid of making mistakes , mis pronounciation, and intimidation. During elementary school, there was an educational system in place that served as a standard setup and we are afraid of making mistakes like mispronunciation that may result to intimidation". (P1)*

> *"Feeling sa mga student mapaulawan sila sa mga teacher kay sa misinterpretation nila maski ginatudluan nila ang tumong. Some students may feel embarrassed or intimidated by their teachers, even when the teacher's intention is to educate". (P8)*

Difficulty with Unfamiliar and Overwhelming Words: Participants identified unfamiliar words as a significant source of reading anxiety. This difficulty in understanding new vocabulary could hinder comprehension and contribute to a sense of being overwhelmed or frustrated. Participants expressed difficulty in reading texts with 'too many words'. This overwhelming feeling could be a barrier to engaging with reading materials. This findings also aligned with the previous results of Aisyah (2017) that if a learner did not find reading material engaging because of an unfamiliar topic, words, or vocabulary, it became difficult for them to connect with the text and enhance their reading skills.

> *"Stress of unfamiliar word and dili makabasa og tarong. One possible   cause of reading anxiety is encountering unfamiliar words, which, as learners, can hinder our ability to read and comprehend effectively".(P2)*

> *"Pag daghan kayo og words lisod sabton. When faced with a large number of words to read, it can feel overwhelmingly challenging". (P6)*

Peer Pressure and Fear of Mistakes: Participants brought up the issue of peer ridicule, especially towards slow readers or learners. This fear of being laughed at for mistakes, such as mispronunciation, created a stressful environment for reading. Results of Aisyah, (2017) suggested that the fear of making errors had

contributed to reading anxiety which could have had a detrimental effect on learners' self-esteem, even though self-confidence had been a beneficial factor.

"Every time magbasa in front ang slow reader or slow learner ginkatawan kay hadlok na sila and musamot ilang situation na muistoya lng sila pero di sila kamao sa pronunciation. Whenever we read, especially in the context of slow readers or learners, they would often be subjected to ridicule. This eventually affects their reading efficiency and effectiveness, as they fear encountering the same situation when speaking, such as mispronunciations" (P3)

Personal Attitude towards Reading: Participants talked about an initial lack of interest or motivation to read, describing it as 'exhausting'. This indicated that personal attitudes towards reading, possibly stemming from early experiences, could play a significant role in developing anxiety. This finding is consistent with previous studies that had reported a negative correlation between reading attitudes, motivation, and reading anxiety among English learners (Torudom & Taylor, 2020; González Ramírez & Pescara Vásquez, 2023).

"Kapoy kay bago ko nagstart hilig sa libro, tanawon palng nako ang isa ka page kapoy na kaay0o basahon. It can be quite exhausting. Even before I developed a love for reading, I often felt too lazy to pick up a book at the mere sight of it". (P4)

Language Barriers: Participants discussed the challenges faced by learners when they were not proficient in the language of the text, in this case, English. The need to translate to a more familiar language, such as Tagalog, signified a significant barrier to comprehension and enjoyment of reading. This finding is also related to the result reported by Sparks & Ganschow, (2007); Oteir & Al-Otaibi, (2019) that learners tried to understand what they read in their first language as they are not proficient in the English language.

"Basic lng jud sya maglisod gihapon understand, naa pay times na magingon sa teacher na pwede tagalog og maglisod sila understand sa English maski basic lang. Even with basic words, understanding can sometimes be difficult when reading. There are moments when learners may ask their teachers to translate into Tagalog because the English language can be too hard to grasp". (P7)

Home Environment and Early Education: Participants pointed to the home environment and early childhood education as crucial in developing reading skills. Lack of support or proper education at home led to challenges in reading and subsequent anxiety in formal educational settings. This finding was consistent with the results of previous studies that had reported a negative correlation between reading attitudes, motivation, and reading anxiety among English learners (Torudom & Taylor, 2020; González Ramírez & Pescara Vásquez, 2023).

"Murag nagastart inside sa family kay if wala natudluan sa bata pa pagdako niya madap niya na wala siya reading comprehension di siya kabalo mubasa. Kung gikan sa balay wala sya matudluan pagabot sa school maulaw sya samot. For me, it all begins at home within the family. If a learner doesn't receive proper education, including reading and comprehension skills, from an early age, it can significantly impact their reading abilities. This, in turn, can lead to anxiety in the classroom". (P5)

Coping Mechanisms Employed by the Learners in their Reading Anxiety

Proactive Self-Learning

This response highlighted a strategy of active engagement in self-practice, particularly in challenging situations. The learner used tools like dictionaries for assistance and engaged in regular practice to overcome shyness and improve understanding. It also further emphasized that they adopted a straightforward approach, focusing on simplicity and self-compassion. This included using simple words for clarity in expression and understanding. They used approach as a coping mechanism to manage anxiety related to complexity in reading and comprehension as manifested in the following statements:

"Kung naa ko problem sa akoang English, ginaistorya nako akoang sarili labi na if may reporting sayo pa ga practice nako. Coping mechanism nako is gabasa lng jud ko and ang dictionary is useful labi na sa

words na unfamiliar words og kanang words na di nako magets labi na related sa akong basahon or topic. GInabuhat lng jud anko ginsanay nako akoang sarili maski ulawon ko gina try jud nako na di nako ipakita, practice lng jud nga practice". Whenever I encounter difficulties with English and reading, I actively engage in self-practice, particularly when preparing for a report. I diligently read, using a dictionary to help with unfamiliar words that are crucial for understanding the book or topic at hand. As a shy individual, I consistently train myself to overcome this trait through regular practice". (P1)

Strategic Learning

It is important to acknowledge common struggles, which, in response, reflects an awareness of common difficulties faced by many learners. It implied a sense of community or shared experience in coping with challenges in reading comprehension. To aid such difficulty, as suggested by other respondents, simple vocabulary was used as part of the learning process. This aligned with the idea of simplicity and indicated a broader adoption of this strategy among learners:

" Inani akoang ginabuhat, minsan sir na sa English hawod jud ang English. Ako wala ko galisod sa akoa sarili og wala ko gagamit og words na lisod kayo or sa akoang essay. Mas ok sakoa kay maintindihan nako og sa teacher.Pero ginatry jud jud nako na mugamit og mga complex word kay training gihapon sakoa. To cope with reading anxiety, I adopt a straightforward approach. While others may excel in English, I focus on self-compassion and simplicity. Using simple words to articulate my thoughts helps me avoid complexity. This method is effective as it ensures both my comprehension and that of my teachers". (P1)

A strategy of reading the entire sentence to understand difficult words, relied on context and common sense. This strategy reflected an emphasis on holistic understanding and the use of contextual clues as a way to overcome reading challenges.

"If nay isa ka word na lisod, mas basahon nln jud namo ang statement og tarong poara maksabot murag common sense. When encountering difficult words, we prefer to read the entire sentence thoroughly to grasp their meaning, relying on common sense and context for understanding". (P5)

Utilizing Multimedia for Learning

Multimedia incorporation in reading was very important in leveraging the reading process. The respondent emphasized using subtitles as a tool to enhance understanding of the language, especially in movies.

"Hilig jud ko mutanaw og mga movies mao gabutang kog subtitle. I love watching movies, but I used subtitles to understand". (P1)

This approach integrated entertainment with learning, making the process more engaging and less intimidating.

Digital Learning Aids

The learner used digital resources like Google for immediate access to meanings and pronunciations of unfamiliar words. This showed a reliance on technology to aid in comprehension and language acquisition.

"Diba sa libro naa unfamiliar word, gina search nako sa google para makamao ko sa meaning og paano ipronounce. When I come across unfamiliar words, I use Google to search for their meanings and correct pronunciations, enhancing my understanding and language skills". (P2)

As related by the respondents, the use of artificial intelligence was emphasized as an aid in understanding texts. However, there was an expressed concern about over-reliance on such technology, potentially leading to a sense of dependency and a feeling of not having genuinely learned the material:

"Gagamit mi og AI sir para makasabot mi sa among ginabasa. Pero murag naga depende nlng sa AI kay murag wala naman hinuon mabal.an. We employ artificial intelligence applications to aid our

understanding of texts. However, this reliance on AI sometimes leads to a sense of dependency and a feeling that we haven't truly learned the material". (P6)

Feedback and Support

Actively seeking feedback on various aspects like structure and grammar was useful in coping with reading anxiety. This reflects a proactive approach in dealing with reading anxiety, where the learner engaged in constructive activities and sought support from knowledgeable individuals.

"Ang ginabuhat nako sa essay, ginapasa nako sa uban tapos mngayo kog opinion sa iba if ok ba akoa grammar og statement, term pero dili lng jud nako ginapamukha na ingani ka bulok, mangita kog tao na willing to help na daghan jud kag malearn. My strategy includes writing essays and seeking feedback. I ask for opinions on structure and grammar, ensuring I understand without appearing uninformed. I seek help from those who are supportive and knowledgeable". (P3)

Looking at the emotional aspect of seeking help, particularly the embarrassment and intimidation felt due to the fear of being judged by teachers was considered as this indicated an emotional barrier in the learning process, where the fear of judgment could exacerbate reading anxiety. To quote a respondent:

"Kami gapangutana sab mi sa mga teachers pero sometimes maulaw mi kay hadlok mi majudge. Although we frequently ask our teachers for assistance, at times it can be embarrassing and intimidating due to the fear of judgment". (P4)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In summary, based on the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data of this study, the following are the findings:

The data showed that the learners had a **high** level of reading anxiety with an overall mean of The primary indicator of their anxiety was linguistic skills with a mean score of 2.6, which means that they often felt anxious and worried about grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. This made them uncomfortable, especially when reading aloud, as they feared making mistakes in what they read.

The second most common indicator was reliance on the first language, which had a mean of 2.6. This indicated that learners felt anxious when they read texts that required a lot of background and cultural knowledge, which they might not have. As a result, they tended to translate the texts word by word, without grasping the meaning or context. This made them avoid reading in a second language and rely on their first language instead.

Nervousness on the text was ranked third with a high level that corresponded to its mean of 2.6. Learners often felt confused and anxious when they could not comprehend what they read, especially when the topic was unfamiliar which made them uneasy. They experienced tension when they faced unknown words and frustration when they had difficulty recalling what they read.

Self-confidence was the fourth indicator with a high level and a mean of 2.5. The learners lacked self-confidence and preferred to read silently because they feared making errors or did not understand complex difficult text. They also felt overwhelmed by foreign English text, which made them read in silence instead of aloud.

Pessimistic beliefs about reading reached the lowest level with a mean of 2.3. This indicates that, despite their worries about the symbols and text they read, they strive to comprehend while experiencing tension and anxiety. They also recognized the importance of reading and practiced it at home.

The findings were also backed by the FGD results. It was found out that learners suffer from reading anxiety due to reliance on the first language or on their dependency on translation where learners resort to asking

teachers to translate English text into Tagalog, their first language, indicating a reliance on the native language due to perceived difficulties in understanding English.

Additionally, there are four indicators confirmed from the FGD such as lack of self-confidence, where a learner's fear of being ridiculed, especially for slow readers or those struggling with reading, impacts their confidence, feeling overwhelmed where there's a mention of feeling overwhelmed when faced with many words to read which can be related to the anxiousness and nervousness they feel when reading, and pessimistic belief in reading where learners admit difficulty in reading even basic words which contribute to the negative outlook on one's reading abilities, and comprehension.

The data indicated that the main contributing causes of reading anxiety were high with a mean of 2.7. The vocabulary was the most challenging cause with a mean of 2.8. The learners struggled with words that had ambiguous or multiple meanings. Moreover, they could not infer the meaning of unfamiliar words even if they had encountered them before, which also prevented them from pronouncing multi-syllabic words correctly.

This was also accompanied by a high level of fear of making errors, with a mean of 2.8. The learners were anxious, and they preferred silent reading over reading aloud. They felt uneasy when they encountered words that they did not know how to pronounce and they prepared excessively before the class or activity at home, which made them feel intimidated by unfamiliar words.

The topic also had a high level with a mean of 2.8. This indicated that unfamiliar topics contributed to the reading anxiety of the learners. Learners preferred short passages because they felt uneasy when they did not understand what they read. Reading the English language caused anxiety for the learners, which resulted in their dislike of reading the English language.

The background and culture also received a high rating with a mean of 2.7. Learners became frustrated and struggled to understand the meaning of each word when the ideas were culturally ambiguous. They felt like they did not know the meaning of the word even though they actually knew it because of the complexity of the meaning, especially when using idioms that many writers used.

Surprisingly, the teaching method followed with a high level and a mean of 2.6. The learners felt anxious when the teacher used English predominantly in the class. They also felt intimidated when they were asked to translate from English to Filipino or to read aloud. Moreover, they felt discouraged when their teachers corrected their pronunciation and translations.

The reading effects also had a high level with a mean of 2.7. The learners, according to the data worried about the reading effects, such as feeling anxious or disturbed when they fail to recall what they read, or paying more attention to their pronunciation and accent than to their comprehension of the text.

These results were also proven by the FGD result as revealed, causes of reading anxiety were derived such as educational system and teaching method where participants hinted at how the structure of the educational system during elementary years contributed to reading anxiety, difficulty with unfamiliar and overwhelming words, peer pressure and fear of making mistakes, and personal attitude towards reading, language barriers, and home environment and early education.

Comprehension tests were conducted to one-hundred ninety senior high school learners and the mean average score of the total whole population was 63.36 % which was rated as still at the instructional level. Though the result was a combination of different grade levels who took the test, the overall performance of the learners shows that they possess the necessary skills and knowledge to comprehend and engage with instructional materials. These readers demonstrate proficiency in key literacy areas such as decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Vocabulary and unfamiliar topic both had moderately strong positive correlations with the specified aspects, meaning that an increase in vocabulary and topic knowledge tends to be associated with increased nervousness in text, self-confidence, pessimistic belief about reading, reliance on first language, and linguistic skills.

Background culture was positively related to most of these aspects, with a strong correlation with linguistic skills. Fear of making errors was moderately positively correlated with nervousness about text, self-confidence, and reliance on the first language. Pessimistic beliefs about reading and worry about reading effects were also moderately related to some aspects. Teaching methods were strongly associated with worry about reading effects and some other factors.

Further, fear of making errors had a weak correlation with pessimistic belief about reading. Similarly, a weak correlation was also observed between worry about reading effects and nervousness about text and self-confidence. Teaching methods as observed as well as had a weak correlation with nervousness on text and self-confidence.

Nervousness on text, linguistic skills, and self-confidence had a weak negative correlation with reading comprehension, while pessimistic belief about reading and reliance on first language had a moderately strong negative correlation with reading comprehension.

Overall, upon the observation of the data reading anxiety had a weak negative correlation with comprehension. It is also suggested that a weak correlation did not imply causation. This meant that nervousness on text, self-confidence, and linguistic skills were less likely associated with reading comprehension, while pessimistic beliefs about reading and reliance on the first language were greatly associated with reading comprehension. In essence, the negative correlation indicated that the increase in reading anxiety led to a decrease in reading comprehension.

Furthermore, based on the findings drawn from the focal group discussion, there are 5 coping mechanisms the learners employ with their reading anxiety.

Proactive Self-Learning. The learner practiced self-practice, especially in hard situations. They used tools like dictionaries and practiced regularly to be less shy and more understanding. They also used a simple approach with simple words and self-compassion. This helped them cope with anxiety from complex reading and comprehension.

Strategic Learning. This coping mechanism acknowledged common struggles and reflected an awareness of difficulties in overcoming reading comprehension challenges. Using simple vocabulary can aid reading anxiety as well as reading the entire sentence to understand difficult words, relying on context and common sense.

Utilizing Multimedia for Learning. This was a coping mechanism for multimedia incorporation in reading which is very important in leveraging the reading process. This includes the use of subtitles as a tool to enhance understanding of the language, especially in movies.

Use Digital Learning Aids. The learner uses digital resources like Google for immediate access to meanings and pronunciations of unfamiliar words. This shows a reliance on technology to aid in comprehension and language acquisition.

Feedback and Support. Actively seeking feedback on various aspects like structure and grammar is useful in coping with reading anxiety. This reflects a proactive approach in dealing with reading anxiety, where the learner engages in constructive activities and seeks support from knowledgeable individuals.

CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

Conclusions

The study aimed to know the level of reading anxiety, its contributing causes, reading comprehension, and coping mechanisms among senior high school learners of Baluan National High School.

The senior high school learners of Baluan National High School belonged to the instructional level in reading comprehension. It found that the learners had a high level of reading anxiety, particularly in the First language reliance and unwillingness to distinguish linguistic skills as the highest indicator. The reading anxiety was influenced by various contributing factors, and the lack of vocabulary was the most contributing cause of reading anxiety. Moreover, it revealed that there was a negative correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension, meaning that higher reading anxiety led to lower reading comprehension. Despite the challenges, the learners adopted different coping mechanisms to overcome their reading anxiety, such as proactive self-learning, strategic learning, utilization of multimedia and digital learning aids, and feedback and support.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations made were;

The school should know and develop strategies that could help the learners with their reading anxiety that focus on the following points.

Addressing Reading Anxiety: The school must identify and devise strategies to alleviate reading anxiety among learners. This can be achieved by pinpointing the root causes of anxiety and equipping students with effective coping mechanisms. A comprehensive understanding of the specific aspects of reading anxiety experienced by each student will facilitate tailored interventions.

Motivational Reading Initiatives: The school should proactively develop and implement motivational reading programs aimed at captivating students' interest and enthusiasm for reading. Incorporating engaging reading tasks and multimedia resources into the curriculum can help create a more immersive learning experience. Additionally, teachers should adopt dynamic and welcoming teaching methods, fostering a supportive environment that encourages student participation and offers constructive feedback to mitigate reading anxiety.

Overcoming Negative Beliefs: Efforts should be made to identify and counteract negative beliefs that hinder reading proficiency. Cultivating positive beliefs about the importance of reading and its integration into daily life is essential. Emphasizing the significance of cultivating good reading habits and effective reading techniques to enhance English reading skills can also contribute significantly to reducing reading anxiety.

Language Skills Enhancement: A priority should be placed on enhancing language skills, particularly in both the first and second languages, with a specific focus on addressing second-language reading anxiety. Vocabulary development should be given considerable attention, as many learners struggle primarily due to vocabulary challenges. A rich vocabulary empowers students to comprehend and engage with their reading materials more effectively.

Cultural Context Awareness: Recognizing the influence of cultural context on reading anxiety, particularly in foreign language settings, is crucial. Promoting cultural knowledge can aid learners in better understanding and appreciating the materials they read. Integrating lessons on the history, practices, and cultures of various nations within the curriculum can help students gain awareness of diverse cultural perspectives, fostering a more enriched reading experience.

By implementing these recommendations, the school can create a supportive learning environment that not only reduces reading anxiety but also enhances students' overall reading skills and confidence.

Both the school and the Department of Education must intensify their efforts in addressing the issues related to learners' reading comprehension. Officials should conduct thorough assessments and provide effective remediation for learners experiencing reading anxiety. Also, the Department should foster collaboration among stakeholders, moving beyond mere compliance. Allocating a higher budget to support programs aimed at enhancing learners' reading skills is also advisable and not just for compliance.

The researcher recommends the replication of this study to be conducted that includes junior high school focusing on learners who struggle with reading comprehension, and their overall learning experience. To gain

deeper insights into the learners' perspectives and the underlying reasons for their reading comprehension difficulties, a qualitative phenomenological research approach may be more appropriate.

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