Development of an Internal Motivation Scale for Young Filipino Children

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Abstract

This study tried to contribute to the solution of addressing the reading skill problems in the country by developing a Reading Motivation Scale (RMS) specifically tailored for early literacy Filipino learners. Previous studies highlighted the important of reading motivation to the development and enhancement of reading skills. Thus, determining how internally motivated pupils are can help responsible adults to provide necessary intervention.

The RMS, constructed through an exploratory sequential design, draws on qualitative data from parents, teachers, and caregivers to identify indicators of internal motivation, including happiness, excitement, curiosity, and focus. The scale demonstrates excellent reliability, providing a valuable tool for evaluating and enhancing the reading motivation of young Filipino children. The study's findings contribute to the multifaceted understanding of reading motivation, emphasizing its cultural relevance and potential impact on future interventions and educational strategies in the Philippines.

1. Introduction

In the Philippines, there have been studies that explored the reading motivation of Filipino learners at different levels of education (Reoperez, 2019 ; Mante-Estacio, 2012 ; Ancheta & Napil, 2022 ; Belascuain, 2006 ; Alvarado & Adriatico, 2019). Most interesting were the findings of Mante-Estacio (2012) which theorized the multifaceted nature of bilingual learners' reading motivation. Additionally, studies have also clarified the concept of reading engagement as discussed in the papers of Department of Education Victoria State Government (2023); Lee et al. (2021; Jang et al., 2022 ; Cremin, 2023; and Lee et al., 2021; Schleicher (2019); and Kucirkova & Cremin, 2020).

Despite efforts that clarified the concept of reading motivation and engagement in the global and local settings, recent studies still found readings skills of Filipinos problematic (Idulog et al., 2023) . The failure to

use research in crafting and adjusting current programs for reading may be attributed to historical, social, educational, or policy-related elements.

Historically, reading had been a stand-alone subject however, in the recent decades, the Department of Education in the Philippines does not have a concrete curriculum for reading. Socially, families are no longer that serious about reading. With the current social issues facing Filipinos, families focus more on survival i.e., job, food, and money rather than education. Educationally, there is a lack of validated reading materials that address learners' interests. In addition to this, there is also a lack of qualified or specialized reading teachers. Politically, the Department of Education still avoids publishing houses and writer who have more expertise in producing educational materials.

Considering all these, the researcher developed a reading motivation scale for early literacy learners. This tool shall be accomplished by their caregivers or teachers (in the case of those already attending schools). This tool may be used in different settings i.e., situations that may affect the variability of reading motivation among children. This tool shall be validated by experts and shall be pilot tested to test the reliability.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Difference between Reading Motivation & Engagement

Research studies have shown the importance of reading motivation (Wiggins, 2021; Karahan, 2017). Reading motivation are the internal reasons of learners that triggers cognitive operations to read. These may be classified into curiosity, aesthetic involvement, challenge, recognition, and grades (Guthrie et al.m 1994). On the other hand, reading engagement is the status when learners are immersed in the process for they find pleasure in it or their needs or desires are satisfied (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.). From these, we could infer that motivation and engagement work together in the process of reading. Motivation is what drives learners to read and engagement is the manifestation of such drive.

2.2 Enhancing Reading Motivation

There were various means proposed to motivate and engage learners to read. For instance, Barber & Klauda (2020 suggested the use of SMILE as a strategy for promoting reading motivation and engagement. SMILE is an acronym for sharing, me, importance, liking, and engagement. Also, McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning (2023) suggested to make reading relevant, personal, interesting, required, and public. Kamil et al. (2008) further recommended the provision of content goals, a wide range of choices, interesting texts, and collaborative reading activities.

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) highlighted the multifaceted nature of reading motivation. Previous studies have dug deeply on this topic. However, to make sure that the context of the tool is appropriate to Philippine settings, the researcher derived descriptors from the parents and teachers of young children.

2.3 How Reading Motivation was Investigated in the Past

Guthrie et al. (1999) looked into the internal and external factors that affected the amount of reading which young readers had. Internal motivation which participants mentioned in the qualitative investigation include pure enjoyment, internal gratification, and immediate and future needs. On the other hand, external factors include earning points and impressing others.

Carney (2016) used triangulation (profiling/survey, individual interviews, reading journals, and reading log) in order to elicit the meaning of reading from highly motivated young readers. The findings highlighted that children find reading a worthwhile activity thus they allot time doing it and this positive perspective serves as an internal factor. Similar to Guthrie et al.'s (1999) findings, highly motivated readers find the activity a means to realize their goals but there were also external factors that make them engage in reading.

However, in a more recent study conducted by Wang et al. (2020), results showed that intrinsic factors positively predict reading achievement, while extrinsic factors had a negative direct impact.

Another notable observation in the work of Carney (2016) is family involvement. Family was highlighted as the primary catalyst of reading skills and reading motivation. Also, the role of significant others such as friends and teachers in motivating young readers was found important. However, it is important to consider that these came from children who have high level of motivation to read meaning, they have developed such quality already.

Additionally, Castle (2015) subjected three pupils to a case study to explore their personal motivations to read. The pupils were led to answer a survey on reading attitude, answered 10 interview questions on reading motivation, and engaged in a number of reading activities. The study found that primary pupils are motivated by literary type, adult guidance, self-confidence, and other external factors. When children are given the chance to choose the material and when they receive instructions from able adults, they are motivated. Similarly, when they feel confident with their ability to read, they are also motivated.

Çalışkan & Ulaş (2022) supported the importance of adult guidance in developing reading motivation of children. In fact, the involvement of adults, particularly parents not only improve motivation but comprehension and attitude towards reading as well. One strategy involving adult that was proven effective in the work of Ceyhan & Yıldız (2020) is the interactive reading aloud (IRA). Interactive read-aloud is a strategy for teaching reading where the adult reads aloud a story before a group of learners, then stops at certain points occasionally for question and answer. The learners are given a chance to respond to questions raised either as a group, as pairs, etc. In the IRA setup, the adult and the learners are actively involved in digesting and understanding the content, meaning, and language used in the story (Fountas & Pinell Literacy, 2019).

Merve et al. (2017), on the other hand, looked into ther reading motivation of a little older children i.e., 2nd – 4th graders. The study was a survey involving a sample of 769 pupils. Similar to one of the tools used by Carney (2016), this study employed the Motivation to Read Profile or MRP. Results showed that while pupils' value of reading is affected class and gender variables, it remains unaffected by socioeconomic status. However, the value of reading of lower graders and of the girls are found higher. Another important observation is that the self-concept as reader and reading motivation of the pupils vary based on class, gender and socioeconomic status. More importantly, lower grade pupils showed higher level of reading motivation. Considering these, it is important to include in the survey instrument being developed the profile of young children.

Using the reading motivation scale (for Young Filipino Children) developed, it can be expected that the researcher can dig more deeply the problems and opportunities the country has in terms of inculcating the culture of reading among children, or the younger generation of Filipinos. This could lead to more studies that look into the variability of reading motivation using different independent variables. Thereby, helping more researchers and reading teachers to develop more intervention strategies that would help increase children's reading motivation.

3. Methods

3.1 Process and Participants

The researcher employed mixed method particularly exploratory sequential design. First, the researcher conducted simple qualitative data collection then a quantitative one (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013).

The study commenced with the identification of the problem i.e., the absence of a reading motivation scale for young Filipino children. It went hand-in-hand with the survey of literature. After which, the researcher crafted questions for the qualitative phase of the study.

In this research endeavor, the researcher invited parents, teachers, and caregivers of children age 6 and below to participate. They were selected based on the researchers' knowledge of their capacity to answer

questions and their being responsible for teaching young children how to read. Nevertheless, an initial interview to confirm their availability and qualification for the study. The participants also signed an electronic copy of informed consent. There was a total of 42 participants i.e., 14 parents, 14 teachers, and 14 caregivers. A link to the Google form was sent individually to each participant. The researcher kept his line open and informed the participants that in case there are things they wish to clarify; they should not hesitate to send a query. The answers were used in crafting the scale which subjected to validation.

An improved copy was produced after validation and underwent pilot testing. At this point an electronic copy of the survey-questionnaire was again sent to parents, teachers, and caregivers who did not take part in the qualitative phase. However, they have been identified with the help of the first set of participants. Each group had 10 representatives. The participants also signed an electronic copy of informed consent before proceeding with the survey. After they have completed the survey, the results were subjected to appropriate statistical treatment. Finally, the final draft was prepared based on the results.

3.2 Instrument

The study involved two-phases: qualitative phase and quantitative phase. During the qualitative phase of the study, the researcher used the primary question, "How do you know when the child (age 6 and below) under your care is motivated to read?" To support this, another question was asked to the participants i.e., "How do you know when the child is demotivated?" These questions were sent and answered via Google Form.

After the collection of qualitative information, the researcher developed the statements for the tool. The researcher developed as many statements as possible from the qualitative information provided by the participants. There was a total of 24 statements crafted. These statements have been formatted as a survey-questionnaire and copies of which was sent to a pool of validators. The pool was composed of a licensed psychometrician, a language expert, and a statistician. The suggestions of the validators were considered in preparing a copy for pilot testing.

3.3 Statistical Analysis

In this study, the researcher used a license Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 28. Following the example of Chou & Farn (2015), the researcher also ran a confirmatory factor analysis in testing the construct validity of the scale. Additionally, the internal consistency was determined using Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is often use with multiple Likert questions that form a scale. It is commonly employed to determine reliability of a scale (Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS Statistics - Procedure, Output and Interpretation of the Output Using a Relevant Example | Laerd Statistics., 2018).

Based on Goforth (2015), the ensuing coefficient of reliability spans from 0 to 1 and provides an overall assessment of the reliability of a metric. If all of the scale items are completely independent of one another (i.e., they are not correlated or share no covariance), then = 0; if each of the items have substantial covariances, then will be nearly 1 as the quantity of scale items approaches infinity. While the standards as to what constitutes a "good" value are entirely random and relying on the theoretical understanding of the scale in question, many methodologists recommend a minimum coefficient between 0.65 and 0.8 (or higher in many cases); coefficients less than 0.5 are typically unacceptable, particularly for scales claiming to be one-dimensional.

4. Results

4.1 Themes and Statements derived from Qualitative Phase

4.1.1 Happiness as indicator that the child is motivated to read

"I observe that my child is happy whenever she is in the mood to read. She laughs each time I would tell her a favorite story even if it is just the same story she has been hearing."

"If he is in the mood to read, there is the joy that sometimes he will tell you to repeat what you are doing...."

"He is happy."

"There is laughter and smile all over the classroom. You know, I would know when they are enjoying the reading activity because they faces cannot lie."

"Sometimes I would call her to read and she would start crying. That's my experience as a kinder teacher."

"My child (referred to as 'alaga') is happy whenever I read to her the story of Cinderella. It is the same story I read to her but it is in Filipino."

"He reads even a few pages of the booklet with a smile on his face."

"He is active and happy."

"He's irritable, he'll say he's hungry or anything else he can say, just don't let him read."

Happiness as an indicator that a child is motivated to read is evident in the narrations of the participants. The majority of the participants associate the child's happiness with their motivation to read.

For instance, one participant observes that the child is happy and laughs when they read their favorite story, even if it is the same story repeatedly. This suggests that the child finds comfort and joy in the familiarity of the story, which motivates them to engage in reading activities. Similarly, another participant notes that the child, referred to as 'alaga', shows happiness when read the story of Cinderella written and told in Filipino. This indicates that the language and cultural context of the story may also play a role in the child's reading motivation (Perin, 2011).

In a classroom setting, one respondent observes laughter and smiles during reading activities, interpreting these expressions as signs of enjoyment. This highlights the importance of creating a positive and enjoyable learning environment to motivate children to read (Torres, 2010; Mucherah, 2014; Chou et al., 2016).

However, it is important to note that not all children exhibit happiness as an indicator of reading motivation. One participant shares her experience as a kinder teacher, where a child would start crying when called to read. Another respondent mentions that their child becomes irritable and makes excuses to avoid reading. These responses suggest that while students are happy about reading, the others are not. Thus, lack of expression of happiness about the idea of reading or during reading activities may imply lack of motivation. Child's mood, the reading material, and the learning environment may influence motivation to read (Osika et al., 2022). Overall, while happiness can often indicate a child's motivation to read, it is crucial to consider other factors and pupils' differences.

4.1.2 Excitement as indicator that the child is motivated to read

"My child is lively. He is even jumping every time he would hear the name of dog in the story."

"There is more appetite and no need to force, there is initiative."

"He himself got the reading materials."

"He was the one who spontaneously got the reading."

"He is active and in the mood to read."

"They would clap and shout in excitement each time I would say, "Story time! There was even a time when they will be one running to me and asking me to start with the reading clinic"

"It's fun and makes reading a game and my students have a lot of questions about what they're reading"

"The reading material is always brought and opened, the child is always pointing and asking questions."

"They (referring to the children) would immediately run when I tell it is time for our story."

"Active and Loud voice."

"When we read the story together, he would stop and act. He has mastered the story since it is the same story we have been reading for weeks now."

"Read quickly."

"He would look sleepy and want to do a lot like peeing, hungry and sleeping."

Excitement as an indicator that a child is motivated to read is strongly supported by the responses of the participants.

Many participants observe that the children display signs of excitement, such as being lively, jumping at the mention of a favorite character, and showing initiative in getting reading materials. These behaviors suggest that the children are motivated and such motivation is manifested in their engagement in the reading process (O'Garro, 2017).

In a classroom setting, one participant notes that the children would clap, shout in excitement, and even run to the teacher when it is story time. This indicates that the anticipation of reading can also motivate children to read. Another respondent shares that making reading a game and encouraging questions can also stimulate excitement and motivation among students (Wichadee & Pattanapichet, 2018; Gareau & Guo, 2009).

However, it is important to note that not all children exhibit excitement. One respondent mentions that their child would look sleepy and make excuses to avoid reading. This suggests that while excitement can be an indicator of reading motivation, the absence of it could signal the lack of motivation. Overall, while excitement can often indicate a child's motivation to read, it is crucial to consider other factors and individual differences.

4.1.3 Curiosity as indicator that the child is motivated to read

"When they are in the mood, they would read everything they see even if these are billboards or signages. Sometimes, when they do not understand or cannot read, they would never leave me until I read it to them."

"Since there are books in the mini library in our room, there are pupils who would pick some and just look at the pictures. Sometimes I would hear them talking to each other and making their own stories while only looking at the pictures."

"I have this one pupil who would never stop asking me about the story for the day. Her mother would bring her to school early. The time she spends playing and sometimes she would look at the big books displayed in the shelf. She would ask me about the story. When I have time, I tell her the story and she attentively listens."

"His mother has a Bible in the house. One time, while I was watching the television, I saw him browsing the book as if he is can read it."

"He will even invite you to read and he will ask a lot of questions when reading. There are many questions as to what and why in what he sees in the reading."

Curiosity as an indicator that a child is motivated to read is strongly supported by the responses of the participants. A number of participants observe that the children display signs of curiosity, such as reading everything they see, including billboards and signages, and not leaving their side until they read it to them. This suggests that the children are not only motivated to read but are also actively seeking knowledge and understanding (Oudeyer et al., 2016).

In a classroom setting, one respondent notes that pupils would pick books from the mini library and look at the pictures, sometimes making their own stories. This indicates that the children are using their imagination and creativity, which can be a sign of motivation to read and learn. Another respondent shares an experience with a pupil who would never stop asking about the story for the day. The child's persistent curiosity and attentiveness suggest a strong motivation (Suri & Gross, 2015) to read and understand the story.

However, it is important to note that curiosity can manifest in different ways. For instance, one respondent mentions that their child was seen browsing a Bible, as if he could read it. This suggests that the child's curiosity extends beyond their reading level, indicating a strong motivation to read and learn.

4.1.4 Focus as indicator that the child is motivated to read

"He reads with interest but he also gets bored quickly and wants to do something else."

"He comes fast when he is in the mood to read. However, when he is not interested, he will just stare at the material and will not read."

"He is focused on what he is doing."

"She would not cooperate and gets easily distracted by other sounds in the environment. She would change the topic if she sees an opportunity."

"I observed that when they are listening well, that means they are interested. I also see that they can easily remember words or lines from the story."

"They quickly remember what they read."

"A child who has no interest in reading avoids when you call him and ask him to read, if he listens physically, he doesn't understand it and doesn't focus on what you say or do..."

"His willingness to really learn, and it's easier for him to learn because he likes what he's doing. His focus is there."

"He will remember sounds or words read more quickly."

"Obedient, patient and interested in what is being done."

"Focus on reading. Even if her mother already arrived from work, she would not leave me until we are done with the story."

Focus as an indicator that a child is motivated to read is strongly supported by the responses of the participants. There are participants who observe that the children display signs of focus, such as reading with interest, coming fast when in the mood to read, and remembering words or lines from the story quickly. These behaviors suggest that the children's motivation is exhibited in their active engagement in reading activities.

However, it is also found that not all children exhibit focus as an indicator of reading motivation. Some children get bored quickly, get easily distracted by other sounds in the environment, or avoid reading altogether. These responses suggest that as focus can be an indicator of reading motivation, the lack of it could also mean otherwise.

Nevertheless, it worth noting that one participant shares an experience where a child would not leave until they are done with the story, even if her mother already arrived from work. This suggests that the child's focus extends beyond their immediate environment, indicating a strong motivation to read and learn.

4.2 Results derived from the quantitative phase

This section presents the results of the data collection and treatment for the quantitative phase of the investigation.

4.2.1 Summary

The 30 items of the Reading Motivation Scale (RMS) for Filipino Children below Six Years Old developed in this study have excellent overall internal consistency ($\alpha = .96$). Table 1 shows the reliability of each reading motivation indicator, also showing satisfactory internal consistency with α-values. These results indicate that RMS in this study is highly reliable.

4.2.2 Measurement Model

Table 1. Reliability test results

Indicator of Reading Motivation	Items	Number	Mean	SD	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Curiosity	Curiosity1	8	3.67	0.49	0.78	.89
	Curiosity2	15	3.25	0.87	0.64	
	Curiosity3	17	2.92	0.90	0.66	
	Curiosity4	19	3.33	0.78	0.82	
	Curiosity5	20	3.17	0.72	0.85	
	Curiosity6	22	3.25	0.75	0.75	
	Curiosity7	23	3.17	0.58	0.70	
	Curiosity8	26	3.00	0.60	0.89	
	Curiosity9	28	3.00	0.74	0.82	
	Curiosity10	30	3.17	0.58	0.58	
Focus	Focus1	7	3.00	0.43	0.77	.92
	Focus2	10	3.17	0.72	0.65	
	Focus3	11	3.17	0.72	0.63	
	Focus4	13	3.08	0.67	0.79	
	Focus5	14	3.08	0.90	0.79	
	Focus6	16	3.00	1.04	0.65	
	Focus7	18	2.83	0.94	0.56	
	Focus8	24	3.08	0.67	0.65	
	Focus9	27	3.08	0.79	0.75	
Happiness	Happiness1	1	3.17	0.72	0.68	.88
	Happiness2	2	3.42	0.52	0.55	
	Happiness3	3	3.42	0.67	0.72	
	Happiness4	4	3.25	0.62	0.75	
	Happiness5	5	3.17	0.58	0.82	
	Happiness6	6	3.08	0.67	0.83	
	Happiness7	21	3.00	0.60	0.53	
	Happiness8	25	2.92	0.67	0.65	
Excitement	Excitement1	9	2.92	0.79	0.68	.85
	Excitement2	12	3.08	0.67	0.83	
	Excitement3	29	3.00	0.60	0.90	

In this study, the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the items in the developed Reading Motivation Scale (RMS). Among the themes / factors identified are curiosity, focus, happiness, and excitement. Curiosity has 10 items and records a value of Cronbach's Alpha of .89 indicating good internal consistency. The calculated means for all items ranged from 2.92 to 3.67 with standard deviation ranging from 0.49 to 0.90. The factor loading ranging from 0.58 to 0.89 also indicated that they are strong.

Additionally, the reading motivation indicator, focus has 9 items and records a Cronbach's Alpha value of .92. This suggests that the items have excellent internal consistency with means ranging from 2.83 to 3.17 and standard deviations ranging from 0.43 to 1.04. The factor loading for this indicator is also strong with values ranging from 0.56 to 0.79.

Moreover, the reading motivation indicator – happiness has 8 items and records a Cronbach's Alpha of .88 implying good internal consistency. Finally, the reading motivation indicator – excitement only has 3 items as a result of factor loading. Nevertheless, it records a .85 Cronbach's Alpha also showing good internal consistency. Overall, the results imply that the items developed are reliable.

5. Discussion

5.1 Findings

Previous studies have established the difference between reading motivation and engagement. However, it has been observed in the present research that they are two related concepts since motivation is usually manifested in how engaged are the children. Among the factors of reading motivation discusses by Guthrie et al. (1994;1999), internal factors or intrinsic motivation (Carney, 2016) is the one measured in the tool developed. The different factors or indicators elicited from the qualitative phase prove the multifaceted nature of reading motivation as highlighted in the work of Wigfield and Guthrie (1997). Internal motivation which the present research identified are happiness, curiosity, excitement, and focus.

However, the external factors such earning points and impressing others as mentioned in previous studies are not observed by the participants or at more proper to say not mentioned. It is also worth noting that some statements confirm the findings of Castle (2015) that a child initiating the choosing of the reading material indicates motivation. Overall, the tool developed can be helpful in measuring the internal motivation of children in reading.

5.2 Implications

Scholars have developed excellent instruments for measuring the reading motivation of individuals from different age groups. However, the tool developed in this study specifically measures the internal reading motivation of young Filipino Children from their own context. The tool has been developed by a Filipino using the context observed by Filipino parents, teachers, and caregivers. The tool can be used in determining particular areas of improvement required in order to elevate the Filipino children's internal motivation to read.

5.3 Limitations

This research has a number of limitations. First, the Reading Motivation Scale (RMS) for Young Filipino Children only measures internal motivation, and as such, it may not be able to fully describe holistically the status of reading motivation of the subjects. Second, due to time, financial, and material constraints, this study only involved a limited number of parents, teachers, and caregivers. Thus, in future studies involving a larger number of participants, results may vary. Nevertheless, the researcher ensured that the participants are knowledgeable and really involved in helping or teaching children age 6 and below to read.

Acknowledgements

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