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The Reading Attitude Measurement for Enhancing Elementary School Students’ Achievement

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Abstract

Reading attitude is crucial related to students’ learning achievement, therefore, this reading attitude of elementary school students research aimed to (1) develop and verify the quality of the developed reading attitude instrument (2) analyze elementary school students’ reading attitude and (3) study the relations between reading attitude and achievement. Two hundred and fifty-eight grade 5-6 students completed the questionnaire. The research finding showed that (1) the reliability of the developed reading attitude instrument, which comprised of 28 items, 4 components of 7 enjoyment items, 7 escape items, 7 utility items, and 7 development items was acceptable, the content validity and structure validity were at good level (2) the reading attitude of grade 5 and 6 elementary school students, as a whole, was at moderate level. Whist the enjoyment and the escape components were lower than the other two components and (3) every component of students’ reading attitude was correlated to achievement, except the development component.

Keywords: reading attitude, elementary school, achievement, measurement;

1. Introduction

Reading is a key for an individual to have an efficient living, because it helps an individual develop thinking process and create judgmental thinking, both of which lead to conceptualization and problem solution. Beside the wisdom, reading also affects the living on how to apply the knowledge into creativity and further implication. (Russell, 1958) Thus, reading is significant to success. (Pretorius, 2008)

According to previous research, one of the most significant factor affects on reading is reading attitude. Reading attitude affects an individual’s reading behavior in their childhood, whether they will read or will not read books. That consists of cognitive and affective components. (Rosenberg, 1966). This suggests that when children have a right understanding and realize the significance of reading, they will show emotions and preference towards reading, whether like or dislike. Their emotions towards reading then lead to reading behaviors, which are the overall behavior shown or expressed by an individual in response to their bias towards certain things either in compliance or in denial (Stocksman, 1999).

Therefore, it is important to study to understand the role of reading attitude in developing the readers, because reading attitude positively relates the potential of student’s achievement through practice (McKenna, 1995). Moreover, several studies suggest that reading attitude is related to the achievement of a student. Thus, it is the heart of live-long reading development (Walberg, 1985). The highest success in education is also a result of reading attitude. (Lazarus & Callahan, 2000) That is the reason why the researcher is interested in studying the reading

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attitude and analyzing the relationship between reading attitude and the student’s educational achievement among primary school students.

This research aimed to develop and verify the quality of the developed reading attitude instrument, to analyze elementary school students’ reading attitude and to study the relations between reading attitude and achievement.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants were 258 grade 5-6 students from Sukontheerawit and Wattakwian schools in Thailand, including males (51%) and females (49%). One hundred and sixty students were used for developing and verifying the instrument and ninety eight students were used for studying the relations between achievement and reading attitude.

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1 Reading attitude instrument

Items were developed from instrument of Stocksman (1999). The original instrument consists of 24 items which measure enjoyment, escape, utility and development (10 items for each components). For the present study the developed instrument consisted of 40 items which measure the four components (10 items for each components). After trying out the instrument, there were 28 items (7 items for each components) that were suitable. Some example items were as follows: I enjoy reading books (enjoyment), reading makes me relax (escape), reading books improve my knowledge (development), reading books can help me success in study (utility). The participants indicated their agreement or disagreement with the statements on a 5-point scale (5=agree, 1= disagree).

2.2.2 Achievement

Achievement was assessed by asking the students to report their grade point average (GPA), grades of Thai and English subjects in last semester.

2.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis was done through descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, and correlation analysis.

3. Results

3.1. The quality of the developed reading attitude instrument

The Cronbach's alpha of all 40 items was .89. After trying out the reading attitude instrument, some items were excluded. Finally, the reading attitude instrument consisted of 28 items. The Cronbach’s alpha of 28 items was .89 and in each component (enjoyment, escape, utility, and development) as follow was .69, .66, .68, and .69. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicated good fit for four-factor solution (chi-square= 0.64, df= 1, p= 0.423, RMSEA= 0.00).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Correlations between reading attitude components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>escape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utility</td>
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<tr>
<td>development</td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01, ***p<.001
The highest factor loading of the four component was development component (.59) and other factor loadings were quite similar (.41 for enjoyment component, .40 for escape component and .44 for utility).

Figure 1. components of reading attitude

3.2. The elementary school students’ reading attitude

The research finding showed that the reading attitude of ninety-eight elementary school students, as a whole, was at moderate level. Focusing on the four components, it showed that elementary students had high levels of the utility and development reading attitude but had both moderate levels of the enjoyment and the escape reading attitude.

Table 2. Number of sample, mean, standard deviation, and level of reading attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading attitude</th>
<th>Number of sample</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>enjoyment</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>escape</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utility</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>98</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.36</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.37</strong></td>
<td><strong>moderate</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3. The relations between reading attitude and achievement

The correlation analysis in table 2 showed that in overall reading attitude was positively correlated with achievement. Focusing on each component, the enjoyment and the escape reading engagement were positively correlated GPA, Thai and English subjects. The utility reading attitude was only correlated GPA. However, the development reading attitude was not correlated with achievement.

Table 3. Correlations between reading attitude and achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>1.1</th>
<th>1.2</th>
<th>1.3</th>
<th>1.4</th>
<th>2.1</th>
<th>2.2</th>
<th>2.3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. reading attitude</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 enjoyment</td>
<td>0.609**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 escape</td>
<td>0.792**</td>
<td>0.415**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 utility</td>
<td>0.692**</td>
<td>0.233*</td>
<td>0.217*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 development</td>
<td>0.708**</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td>0.349**</td>
<td>0.419**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 GPA</td>
<td>0.511**</td>
<td>0.509**</td>
<td>0.386**</td>
<td>0.314**</td>
<td>0.214</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Thai subject</td>
<td>0.311**</td>
<td>0.357**</td>
<td>0.250*</td>
<td>0.147</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.689**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 English subject</td>
<td>0.321**</td>
<td>0.334**</td>
<td>0.207*</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>0.187</td>
<td>0.621**</td>
<td>0.483**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>( \bar{X} )</strong></td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*\( p<.05 \) **\( p<.01 \)
4. Conclusions and Discussions

4.1. Conclusions

This research aimed to develop and verify the quality of the developed reading attitude instrument, to analyze elementary school students’ reading attitude and to study the relations between reading attitude and achievement. Firstly, results showed that the developed reading attitude instrument had an acceptable quality in both reliability and validity. Secondly, the level of elementary school students’ reading attitude in overall was moderate but the students had high level of utility and development. And finally, this research showed that students’ reading attitude related to their achievement.

4.2. Discussions

The instrument used to assess reading attitude consist of four components: enjoyment, escape, utility, and development. Each component has 7 items. The instrument had good content validity, reliability, and construct validity. The four components were in compliance with the components in educational attitude assessment of Lewis and Teale (1980), Greanney and Neuman (1990), and Stockmans (1999).

The research finding showed that the reading attitude of elementary school students, as a whole, was at moderate level. Focusing on each component, students had high level of the utility and development components whilst the enjoyment and the escape components were lower than the other two components. This is worth noticing that Thai elementary school students did not read for fun or escape from their anxiety. They read books mostly for study. Therefore, they should be encouraged to read for enjoyment and imagination to raise their attitude towards their reading.

The results showed that reading attitude related on educational achievement, especially in Thai and English subjects. This could be concluded that the improvement in reading attitude would encourage a better educational achievement, as seen in the improved achievement of Thai and English subjects. Considering in components, it could be said that the enjoyment reading attitude and the escape reading attitude were positively correlated achievement, Thai subject achievement, and English subject achievement. The utility reading attitude was only correlated with GPA. While the last reading attitude, development, had no relationship with the achievement, GPA, Thai subject achievement, and English subject achievement. It could be said that to promote reading attitude for enhancing students’ achievement, we should focus on promote their enjoyment, escape, and utility reading attitude.

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References


