Digital Readiness And Reading Comprehension In English Among High School Students

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ABSTRACT
Research in education accepts digital skills as one of the most urgent demands of the modern era. Digital readiness refers to the level of readiness to acquire the key digital skills by an individual. It comprises the digital skills in communication, handling information, transaction of ideas, problem solving etc. As the digital screen provides all the possibilities for a student and the student becomes screen-bound, the arousing question is whether they are equipped with the language skills needed for their academic language proficiency. Reading comprehension in English is essential for all language and subject students for processing and managing information. It stands for the ability of an individual to comprehend information given in the English language on printed media. The present study focuses on the relationship of digital readiness with reading comprehension in English among high school students. Normative survey method was adopted for the study. Digital readiness scale and reading comprehension tests were used as the tools. The data collected from high school students. To analyse the data statistical measures like arithmetic mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation were used. The major conclusion of the investigation was that there is a positive correlation between Digital Readiness and Reading Comprehension in English among high school students. This shows that digitally-advanced classrooms never decelerate Reading Comprehension in English.
 Key Words: *Digital Readiness, Reading Comprehension in English.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Educational requirements and demands are changing day by day with the changes in the world of innovations and knowledge explosion. Teachers, students and every learning experience should be updated with these changes to make teaching effective and meaningful. Digital innovations accelerate the rate of learning by providing fast-accessing ways to gather, store and retrieve information.

Language is the core of all learning. It is essential for both language learners and subject learners. Mastery in language learning means mastery in the language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Proficiency in LSRW enables the learner to collect information from the lectures they hear, to express fluently and appropriately, to read, collect, and comprehend information from written form of language and to write effectively and meaningfully. English is an international language and it is spread all over the globe. English Language proficiency is inevitable for academic achievements, higher education and social well-being. In addition to this, high scores in English proficiency tests are considered as a criteria for studying abroad or getting jobs in other developed countries. Reading comprehension in English is one of the most active shortcuts in gathering information. At the same time it offers extensive purposes like reading for pleasure and enjoyment.

The degree of eagerness and readiness to learn something new will always increase the rate of learning. Edward Thorndike's law of readiness states that the students learn in an effective way when they have a good attitude and readiness to learn. Being open to new information, skills and experiences is favourable for the induction of input.

Language acquisition develops by acquiring the four-fold skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. A bundle of theories supports the importance of social interaction in language acquisition. Stephen Krashen, (cited in Kohli, 2003) in his theory of Second Language Acquisition states that language acquisition requires meaningful interaction and natural communication in the target language. In Socio-cultural theory Lev Vygotsky emphasised the importance of social interaction in the language process. He proposed a Zone of proximal development where the learners construct the new language with the help of socially mediated interaction. Modern theories of language acquisition stick to the importance of social interaction and meaningful

communication. Social Interactionist theory strongly supports the role of social interaction between a child and linguistically developed adults in the process of language acquisition.

Through the theoretical overview the investigators concluded that inquisitiveness for learning or seeking something new is essential for a learner. And social interaction is inevitable for language acquisition. Nowadays education is turning its face from traditional learning methods to digital platforms. The common mode for interaction in this context is the interaction between the learner and the electronic display monitor. So the investigators focused on the question of whether these digital media are enough to provide a social interaction atmosphere which is significant in language development.

Digital readiness and literacy are much needed competencies for today's learner. Majority of students practised digital possibilities and equipped themselves with digital skills in the pandemic situation as it demands learning through online platforms. Their preparedness and willingness in using digital tools are required for updating themselves in all learning experiences. There is a shift from face to face interaction to screen to screen interaction and textbook oriented learning to digital learning.

As the students become more screen- bound the question arises is whether they get enough time to practise language skills. Language proficiency is needed for effective communication as well as academic achievement. Content-based subjects need reading skill as most of the information resides in printed forms. Usually Reading comprehension in English counts as intensive and extensive reading of books. Traditionally libraries, journals, magazines, newspapers and periodicals are considered as the main resources for gathering information through reading. In depth studies are needed in this area on whether digital readiness promotes reading comprehension. The present study focuses on the relationship of digital readiness and reading comprehension in English among high school students.

In the context of covid-19 pandemic so many studies came out on the problems related to digital and literacy.

Kim, Hong and Song (2019) conducted a study on the roles of Academic Engagement and Digital Readiness in students' achievements in University e-learning environment. They identified an effective adoption of an e-Learning environment by the college students, educators and administrators.

Karthiyayani (1995) identified varied degrees of performance among the students in reading comprehension by her study entitled as Reading Comprehension of Higher Secondary Students on Applied Linguistic Study. The male and female students are equal in their comprehension ability. But urban areas students have better reading comprehension skills than the rural areas students. At the same time high achievers in the achievement test scored more than the low achievers in the reading comprehension tests.

Many investigators focused on the psychological and emotional effects of online classes and digital learning. The requirements and possibilities of digital learning and its role in language acquisition, especially reading comprehension, should be explored more.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study is entitled 'DIGITAL READINESS AND READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS'

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Digital Readiness stands for the attitudes and behaviours that underpin students' preparedness and comfort in using digital tools for learning.

Reading Comprehension in English defines the ability of a learner to read and comprehend English language given in a printed media. It is one among the four- fold skills needed in language acquisition.

High School Students are the group of students who belong to VIII, IX and X standards of state CBSE and ICSE schools. The present study considered 50 eight standard students belonging to state CBSE and ICSE schools.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the level of Digital Readiness among high school students.
2. To find out the level of Reading Comprehension in English among high school students.
3. To find out the relationship between Digital Readiness and Reading Comprehension in English among high school students.

HYPOTHESIS

1. There will be a positive relationship between Digital Readiness and Reading Comprehension in English among high school students.

METHODOLOGY
Normative survey method was adopted for the study.

Population and Sample
Population of the study was high school students studying in State, CBSE and ICSE syllabus. The present study considered a sample of 50 eighth standard students from Ernakulam district, Kerala state, India.

Variables of the Study
Digital Readiness and Reading Comprehension in English were the two variables selected for the study.

Tools Used for the Study
1. Digital readiness scale
2. Reading comprehension test

Both tools are prepared by the investigators.

Statistical Techniques used
For analysing the data the investigators used arithmetic mean, median, mode, standard deviation and Carl Pearson's coefficient of correlation.
Mean
Median
Standard Deviation
Carl Pearson's Correlation Coefficient   (Garrett, 1969)

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA
The investigators measured digital Readiness and Reading Comprehension in English among high school students by administering self-constructed tools. The response sheets were scored and the data was analysed by using statistical techniques like mean, median, mode, standard deviation and correlation.

Objective 1. To find out the level of Digital readiness among high school students.

Table 1
Descriptive analysis of the scores of Digital Readiness among high school students.

Variable	Number	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Digital Readiness	50	18.26	19	19	4.8

The table 1 indicates that the mean of Digital Readiness is 18.26, median is 19, mode is 19 and SD is 4.8. Different levels of digital readiness is calculated by using mean score and standard deviation. Mean+SD and mean-SD are counted as high and low levels of digital readiness respectively. The scores between these points are categorised to average level.

Table 2
Distribution of the scores of Digital Readiness among high school students in different levels.

Variable	Level	Number	Percentage
Digital Readiness	High	5	10
	Average	40	80
	Low	5	10

Table 2 shows that among the 50 students 5 belong to high, 40 belong to average and 5 students belong to the group of low Digital Readiness. 10 percent attained high scores, 80 percent attained moderate scores and last 10 percent got low scores. So the majority of the students possess an average level of Digital Readiness.

Objective 2. To find out the level of Reading Comprehension in English among high school students.

Table 3
Descriptive analysis of the scores of Reading Comprehension in English among high school students.

Variable	Number	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Reading Comprehension in English	50	16.8	16.21	15.03	5.33

From Table 3 it is clear that the mean of reading competition in English among high school students is 16.8, median is 16.21, mode is 15.03 and SD is 5.33. The high, average and low achievers in reading comprehension are categorised by using main score and standard deviation.

Table 4
Distribution of the scores of Reading Comprehension in English among high school students at different levels.

Variable	Level	Number	Percentage
Reading Comprehension in English	High	2	4
	Average	40	80
	Low	8	16

Table 4 reveals that among 50 high school students 4 belong to high, 40 belong to medium and 8 students belong to low level in the reading comprehension. From the result it can be inferred that more than 80 percent of the students are average achievers. 4 percent belongs to high level and 16 percent belongs to low level in the scores of Reading Comprehension in English.

Objective 3. To find out the relationship between Digital Readiness and Reading Comprehension in English among high school students.

The main objective of the study is to find out the relationship between Digital Readiness and the Reading Comprehension in English among high school students.

Table 5
Correlation between Digital Readiness and Reading Comprehension in English among high school students.

Variables	Number	Mean	SD	r	Level of Significance
Digital Readiness	50	18.26	4.8		
Reading Comprehension in English	50	16.8	5.33	0.483	0.05

As Table 5 shows that the mean scores of Digital Readiness and Reading Comprehension in English is 18.26 and 16.8 respectively. The standard deviations are 4.8 and 5.33. The r is 0.483 which is significant at 0.05 level. It is clear that there exists a positive correlation between Digital Readiness and Reading Comprehension in English among high school students at 0.05 level. So the investigators concluded that the students who have high Digital Readiness may excel in the Reading Comprehension in English. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
● Majority of the high school students belong to the moderate level in Digital Readiness.
● Majority of the high school students have an average level of Reading Comprehension in English.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY
● There exists a significant, positive relationship between Digital Readiness and Reading Comprehension in English among high school students.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is a much practised fear that social media and online learning platforms decelerate language development of the students. The investigators found that there exists a positive relationship between Digital readiness and Reading Comprehension in English among high school students. So the Digital Readiness is not a barrier but it supplements the reading habit of the students. Though students are using display devices they are actively engaged in the reading process. In books and on screen written forms of the content are available. This enables the learner to read and comprehend the graphic mode of English. Intensive and extensive reading is possible by using e- libraries. The advancements like portability and convenience of digital equipments increase the rate of reading.

The investigators found out that most of the students acquired minimum digital readiness and their scores on reading comprehension in English is up to the mark. Learners know the utility of digital media and are ready to accept learning experiences through digital platforms. Devices such as smartphones, laptops etc. and social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram are familiar to them. Technical and digital terms are included in their active vocabulary. They knew the techniques of browsing, editing etc. and all these became a part of their daily life. At the same time they were not backward in the techniques of the reading process.

So the digital readiness is enhancing students' skill in reading comprehension. Language proficiency can be obtained in an effective and meaningful way by the help of digital devices. Students solve the strange ideas and problems by using online resources. Both linguistic and subject students can be the beneficiaries. This saves every student from time consuming learning processes to a fast-access knowledge management. The Researchers give the following suggestions to increase Digital Readiness and Reading comprehension.

● Digital readiness is a much needed skill for today's learners.
● Enough practice should be provided in schools for developing digital skills among the students.
● A shift from the hand-written assignments to printed form by using digital advancements is preferable.
● Reading comprehension can be developed not only by using books but also by using digital devices.
● Using online platforms and digital possibilities in education never retards reading comprehension in English.
● By encouraging the students to read e- contents and e- journals, teachers can make them updated with every new information.
● Digital awareness can be used in the classroom for communication, handling information, transacting ideas, problem solving etc.

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