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Article Review: Qualitative Assignment

Educational Research and Assessment

Liberty University

Summary

This qualitative study identified several studies that focused on the relationship between the amount of reading a child engaged in (reading volume) and their overall reading achievement. Data was identified from one study including 2,525 Finnish students ages 5-15. The results of the study concluded, students who were established readers were able to grow in reading achievement by having access to appropriate books, read in the summers and overall increased reading volume over time. The article explained, "At age 17, students from low-income families exhibit a four-year lag in their reading achievement when compared with the reading achievement of students from more economically advantaged families" (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2021, p. S234). The findings of this study concluded that there are two factors that positively impact a student's reading achievement. One was the access that a student has to books and, secondly, the ability to choose their own book for summer reading and leisure reading.

The research design and data analysis would be considered ethnographic in its approach. The research focuses on a specific group of people and looks closely at human behavior. In this case, the behavior that researchers are concerned with is reading volume and consequently reading achievement. Researchers specifically examined low socioeconomic families and found through their analysis that the low income neighborhoods had few books available in the libraries, childcare centers and elementary schools and that data therefore reflected among these families lower reading achievement (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2021).

The method of data collection was through observation. Researchers observed and analyzed the relationships between students self selecting books, the access that students had to

appropriate books, summer reading, low income variables and how these factors impacted overall reading achievement.

Analysis

Although this study went greatly in depth to discover the specifics of reading volume and development among students there is always room for further research on the topic. One area that could benefit from further research in regards to this topic is the amount of age appropriate books available and whether or not students understand how to correctly identify an age appropriate book. This is a skill that students need to be taught and especially in low income areas where access to books is already limited it would be beneficial to understand if students are able to distinguish age appropriate books as this also impacts reading volume directly.

The authors could have enhanced the validity of the qualitative study by implementing negative case sampling. The studies chosen as a part of this study all brought about the same conclusions. With negative case sampling, the researchers could have included samples that don't necessarily confirm their expectations. This would indicate that the authors acknowledged their biases and expectations of the findings.

In this study, there were so many different aspects and factors at play. As a reader, it felt disjointed. The authors of the article could have benefitted from choosing one aspect to specifically focus on, whether that be reading volume, summer programs, low-income situations, book access, self-selection etc.

The implications of the findings suggest that more importance should be placed on reading volume in young students. Many reading interventions seek to improve student's fluency and comprehension, although this is important, maybe educators need to shift focus to reading volume instead.

Additionally, if there are barriers in or outside of the classroom that make it difficult for children to read more frequently, there should be a plan of action to address and remove these barriers for the overall success of students academic achievement.

Reference

Allington, R. L., & McGill-Franzen, A. M. (2021). Reading volume and reading achievement: A review of recent research. *Reading Research Quarterly,* 56(S1), S231-S238. https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.404

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Summary

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between student's literacy and reading practices that parents were utilizing at home. These were children from low income families. The children in the study went to Title 1 schools in urban areas. Parents were included in the study, as well as 198 kindergarten and 1st graders. The study measured several aspects of at home literacy experiences that parents participated in with their children. The demographic variables analyzed in the study include gender, race, parent's education and socioeconomic status. The first research question was, "Does the relationship between home literacy and the child's environment predict the children's vocabulary and literacy skills?" Correlational research was the design implemented for this study. The correlational research looks at the specific relationship between the variables. Survey was the method of data collection in this study. Parents completed a questionnaire and surveys to determine the amount of literacy activities done at home. Among these surveys was the Stipek Home Learning Activities, Home Learning Environment Profile, and Stony Brook Family Reading Profile (Bojczyk, Haverback, Pae, et al., 2019). Children completed several reading, vocabulary and letter identification tests that they were assessed on. The procedure used in this study to analyze the data is analysis of variance (ANOVA). This analysis of variance allowed the researchers to identify the differences between the various demographics within the study. ANOVA was the appropriate choice because it allowed them to include the large number of demographics they tested.

The results of the quantitative study showed that when a student had more frequent interaction with literacy activities in their home environment, then those students had a higher level of vocabulary skills.

Analysis

One pertaining area of focus that could use further research is maternal education and its effects on the child's literacy knowledge. The research states that among other factors, the level of maternal education contributed to the student's literacy knowledge. Further research could look at the relationship between mothers working outside the home and literacy activities. If the mother's education has the greatest impact, the question could be what is the relationship between a mother's time spent at home with their child in early development and the child's literacy knowledge. Likewise, the relationship between a student's literacy and the paternal relationship could be considered along with factors that explain why the paternal relationship is not as impactful as the mothers.

One of the threats to validity within the study is that low internal consistency was reported on the measure of children's books in the home, how often the child engaged with a book, time spent at a library, and the guardians engagement with reading (2019). These behaviors can be hard to measure because they change often.

The article explains that in other studies completed on this topic, significant findings were discovered in that by age three the children living in low income homes had half the vocabulary compared to those in higher income homes (2019). This study chose to focus on preschool age and 1st grade students. The data could have revealed other relationships or factors by focusing on a smaller time frame and looking at the development of these skills up until only 3 years of age.

The implications that these findings have on educators and interventionists is that there should be a heavy focus on early identification of students who are at risk for lower literacy skills and to prioritize building relationships with parents of these students before they are in the

classrooms. Educators can utilize the data to identify steps to take to enhance home learning environments by equipping parents with the appropriate resources.

Reference

Bojczyk, K. E., Haverback, H. R., Pae, H. K., Hairston, M., & Haring, C. D. (2019). Parenting practices focusing on literacy: A study of cultural capital of kindergarten and first-grade students from low-income families. *Early Child Development and Care,* 189(3), 500-512. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2017.1328416

Research Proposal

Educational Research and Assessment

Liberty University

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Abstract

- The following research looks at the relationship regarding the impact that socioeconomic status (SES) has on a student's ability to successfully read on or above grade level.
- Findings suggest that students who come from low SES have lower reading achievement.
- Themes present include
    - The Home Literacy Environment
    - Income Segregation and Achievement Gaps
    - Reading Volume and Literacy Exposure
    - Targeted Interventions

Purpose of the Study

- The purpose of the study is to determine the impact that poverty has on reading fluency.

Research Question

- The research question is “What is the relationship between students who fall below the poverty line and their ability to read fluently at grade level?”

Hypothesis

- Low economic status negatively impacts a student's ability to read fluently on grade level.

Variables

- Independent variable -Family income
- Dependent variable-Student's reading level
- Control group-the reading standard in the school district of the population tested

Key Terms

- **Low socioeconomic status (SES)**
    - “People with a lower socioeconomic status usually have less access to financial, educational, social, and health resources than those with a higher socioeconomic status” (NCI Dictionary of Cancer).
- **HLE- Home Literacy Environment**
    - “An umbrella term used to describe the literacy-related interactions, resources, and attitudes that children experience at home” (Hamilton et al., 2016).

Key Terms

- **OST**
    - Outside of school time reading (Zucker et al., 2022)
- **Gifted services**
    - "...Enhancements and support to academically gifted and talented students whose academic needs may not be met in typical general education settings (Grissom et al., 2019).
- **Literacy skills**
    - Reading, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Operational Definitions

- Family Income
  - Defined as the combined total income received by all members of a family before taxes
- Student reading level defined as
  - A student's instructional reading level is the highest level at which the student has scored on accuracy and comprehension
- Reading standard
  - Measured grade level assessment of student reading proficiency through DRA's (Developmental Reading Assessment)

Review of the Literature

- There literature examines the relationship between socioeconomic status and the impacts that it has on academic achievement, specifically regarding literacy skills.
- Themes of relevance include Home Literacy Environment, Income Segregation and Achievement Gap, Reading Volume and Literacy Exposure and Targeted Interventions

Review of the Literature

- Includes important considerations for administrators, stakeholders, educators and parents/guardians to address concerns that keep all students from any SES status in reaching their full academic potential starting with the building blocks of early literacy skills.

Summary of Themes

HLE- Home Literacy Environment

- Parents/guardians frequent literacy engagement and practices have a positive impact on emerging readers
- “One of the key findings was that parents’ motivation to read was an important predictor of home literacy environment” (Bojczyk et al., 2019, p. 508).
- Important to establish relationships within the community and provide the necessary education to reach young students within the low SES population.

Summary of Themes

Income Segregation and Achievement Gaps

- Prior research has shown students from low income homes and students of color may benefit more from gifted services than their advantaged peers (Grissom, Redding, & Bleiberg, 2019).
- The income disparities result in a lack of resources that could improve education and academic achievement for low SES students
- Important considerations for Educators
    - Student absences, fostering parent/teacher relationships, identifying personal biases when it comes to giftedness referrals and providing access to helpful resources for all students.

Summary of Themes

Reading Volume and Literacy Exposure

- Motivation to read and students' access to books was a large predictor of student's literacy skills
- A study found that students who are living in poverty had very limited access to books for outside of school time reading; more specifically 16 times more books per middle-income child compared to children from low-income backgrounds (Zucker et al., 2022).
- OST, self-selecting books, book access, summer reading programs impact students literacy skills
- Considerations
    - Students from low income homes lose two to three months of reading achievement every summer (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2021)

Summary of Themes

Targeted Interventions

- Emergent skills are foundational for students to be successful with comprehension, drawing inferences and monitoring.
    - Educators should implement explicit interventions early on and assess the data for gaps in emergent literacy skills.
- Interventions should ideally be completed for low SES students who are at risk of reading difficulties by kindergarten and first grade (Suggate, 2016).
- Literature review suggests there is a great need to train children from low SES backgrounds in morphological skills.

Research Design

- Experimental Research is the design for this quantitative study.
- This specific design works for my question because it has the correct components, being a control, manipulation of an independent variable and is able to be observed and measured.

Sampling

- The participants in this study are kindergartners, first graders, second graders, and 3rd graders in a specific public school in my hometown.
- This will be a purposive sampling study because the grade levels to be observed and analyzed represent some of the most important years of reading development (Ary Jacobs, Sorensen, & Walker, 2019).

Methods of Data Collection

- Surveys to measure family income
- Surveys would be completed by guardians of the student in the population- (Selection of specific income range)
- Parents or guardians of K-3rd graders who come to the open house would complete the questionnaire
- The surveys would identify who the guardian's child is, as to correlate income to child's reading level

Methods of Data Collection

- Teachers are trained in completing and assessing DRA's (Developmental Reading Assessment)
- Classroom teachers are the ones conducting the assessment
- Benchmark DRA's
- DRA's will measure the students accuracy and comprehension and the score will determine whether or not the student is meeting expected grade level reading
- Tested in the beginning of the school year, middle of fall semester after interventions are given and at the end of the first semester

Data-analysis Procedures

- Data will be inputted into spreadsheets including family income and K-3rd student's reading scores (those who participated) using frequency distribution
- The correlational relationship between the two variables will be analyzed
- The data analysis will reveal whether or not there is a trend between low income students and their individual reading assessment scores
- Results will be examined, interpreted and defined

Ethics and Human Relations

- Participants have the right to fully understand the purpose of the study
  - This includes risks, benefits, confidentiality, compensation and questions
- Researcher must obtain informed consent from all participants
- Participants have the right to accept or deny participating in the study
- It should be made clear that the participant will be given the respect of privacy with the information given and reported on.

Ethics and Human Relations

- Researcher is expected to report on findings honestly, even if it does not corroborate their hypothesis
- Researcher should consult IRB to determine approval of study
- Abide by and implement AERA's Code of Ethics as standards to guide the completion of the research

Timeline

- Data Collection and Assessments will begin at the beginning of the Fall semester starting at the school's open house (August)
- End results will be collected at the end of the Fall semester (December)

References

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