Domestic Responsibilities and Reading Comprehension Proficiency among Senior High School Students in Samar, Philippines

Kathleen Joy D. Maglasang
San Isidro National High School, District of Zumarraga, Schools Division of Samar
kathleenjoy.maglasang@deped.edu.ph

Abstract: Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that supports students' academic achievement and lifelong learning. However, contextual factors such as domestic responsibilities may influence students' engagement in reading and study activities. This study examined the relationship between domestic responsibilities and the reading comprehension proficiency of Senior High School students in the District of Zumarraga, Schools Division of Samar, during School Year 2024–2025. Specifically, it described students' reading comprehension proficiency in terms of comprehension strategies, vocabulary acquisition, and sentence structure analysis; assessed the incidence of domestic responsibilities in household maintenance and care, food-related activities, and economically productive tasks; and determined the relationships among these variables. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed involving 216 Senior High School students selected through stratified random sampling from four public secondary schools. Data were collected using an adopted questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean and Spearman's rho correlation coefficient. Results revealed that students demonstrated a satisfactory level of reading comprehension, with vocabulary acquisition obtaining the highest grand weighted mean (WM = 3.40), followed by sentence structure analysis (WM = 3.34) and comprehension strategies (WM = 3.23). In terms of domestic responsibilities, students were highly involved in household maintenance and care (WM = 3.55), moderately involved in food-related activities (WM = 2.99), and minimally involved in economically productive tasks. Correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships between household maintenance and care and the reading comprehension domains (ρ = 0.355–0.390) and between food-related activities and comprehension domains (ρ = 0.240–0.316), while economic productive tasks showed very weak, non-significant relationships (ρ = 0.018–0.075). The findings suggest that moderate domestic responsibilities do not necessarily hinder students' reading development and may, in turn, indirectly support discipline and learning.

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that influences learners' academic success and lifelong learning. It enables students to interpret information, analyze ideas, and construct meaning from texts across various disciplines. Strong reading comprehension skills also support the development of critical thinking, problem-

solving abilities, and effective communication (Sarbaitinil et al., 2023; Zare et al., 2021). Despite its importance, many students continue to struggle to develop adequate reading comprehension proficiency due to various contextual and environmental factors.

In the Philippines, the implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum has extended learners' academic journey by adding two years of Senior High School education. The reform aims to strengthen learners' competencies and prepare them for higher education, employment, and lifelong learning (Malbas et al., 2023). However, several studies indicate that Filipino students continue to struggle with reading comprehension skills. Results from the Programme for International Student Assessment conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development show that the Philippines consistently performs below the global average in reading literacy, highlighting persistent challenges in the country's educational system (OECD, 2018).

At the local level, similar concerns are evident in Samar Province. Educational reports indicate that the province frequently performs below national averages in reading comprehension proficiency (Casaljay & Malabarbas, 2022). Several factors contribute to these challenges, including socioeconomic disparities, limited access to learning resources, and environmental conditions that may influence students' learning opportunities (Cular, 2023). The rural, geographically dispersed communities in many parts of Samar also pose additional challenges in providing consistent educational support and learning resources for students (Department of Education, Division of Samar, 2020).

One contextual factor that may influence students' academic engagement is the presence of domestic responsibilities. In many households, adolescents contribute to family tasks such as cleaning, caring for siblings, preparing meals, and assisting in various household activities. While these responsibilities may help develop life skills and foster family cooperation, they may also affect the time and energy students can allocate to academic activities, including reading and studying (Warren, 2022). When domestic responsibilities become extensive, students may experience fatigue, reduced study time, and limited opportunities for focused learning, which may influence their reading comprehension development (Wang & Zhang, 2022).

To support learners' literacy development and ensure their well-being, several policy frameworks have been established within the Philippine educational system. The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act 10533) mandates a learner-centered and inclusive curriculum that promotes literacy and higher-order thinking skills. DepEd Order No. 45, s. In 2002, institutionalized reading programs were implemented to strengthen learners' reading competencies across grade levels. In addition, DepEd Order No. 74, s. In 2009, the institution of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education was established to improve foundational literacy and comprehension. Furthermore, the Child and Youth Welfare Code (Presidential Decree 603) and DepEd Order No. 40, s. The Child Protection Policy of 2012 emphasizes protecting children from conditions that may compromise their development, well-being, and learning opportunities.

In the District of Zumarraga, Schools Division of Samar, reading comprehension challenges remain evident among Senior

High School students. Data from the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory for the past three school years indicate fluctuations and generally low proficiency levels in both Filipino and English reading comprehension across several secondary schools in the district. For instance, San Isidro National High School recorded a decline in Filipino reading proficiency from approximately 60 percent to 50 percent among Grade 11 learners, while English proficiency remained below 50 percent. Similar patterns were observed in Zumarraga National High School, where Filipino proficiency decreased from about 65 percent to 51 percent. Bioso Integrated School maintained relatively stable Filipino proficiency levels but showed stagnant English reading outcomes. In contrast, Mualbual National High School demonstrated modest improvements in Filipino reading proficiency, although gains in English remained limited. These patterns suggest the need to examine contextual factors that may influence students' development of reading comprehension.

In many communities in the district, Senior High School students also participate in household responsibilities, including maintenance, food preparation, and assistance with family livelihood activities. While these responsibilities contribute to family functioning and social development, they may also interact with students' academic routines and learning opportunities. Understanding the extent to which these domestic responsibilities relate to students' reading comprehension proficiency may provide important insights into factors influencing literacy development among learners.

2. Objectives

This study aims to examine the relationship between domestic responsibilities and the reading comprehension proficiency level of Senior High School students in the District of Zumarraga, Schools Division of Samar, as a basis for literacy enhancement strategies and academic support interventions.

It addresses the following specific objectives:

1. to describe the reading comprehension proficiency level of student-respondents in terms of:
   a. reading comprehension strategies,
   b. vocabulary acquisition, and
   c. sentence structure analysis;

2. to assess the level of incidence of domestic responsibilities of student-respondents in terms of
   a. maintenance and care,
   b. food-related activities, and
   c. economic and productive tasks;

3. to determine the relationship between domestic responsibilities and students' reading comprehension proficiency.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between domestic responsibilities and the reading comprehension proficiency level of Senior High School students in the District of Zumarraga, Schools Division of Samar, during School Year 2024–2025.

The descriptive component was used to determine the reading comprehension

proficiency level of the student-respondents in terms of reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary acquisition, and sentence structure analysis. It was also used to assess the level of incidence of domestic responsibilities in terms of household maintenance and care, food-related activities, and economic and productive tasks.

The correlational component was used to examine the relationships between the dimensions of domestic responsibilities and the dimensions of reading comprehension proficiency. Specifically, it determined whether household maintenance and care, food-related activities, and economic and productive tasks were significantly related to students' reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary acquisition, and sentence structure analysis.

This design was appropriate because the study sought to describe existing conditions and determine the degree of association between variables without manipulating them.

3.2 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were 216 Senior High School students enrolled in the four public secondary schools offering Senior High School in the District of Zumarraga, Schools Division of Samar. These schools were Bioso Integrated School, Mualbual National High School, San Isidro National High School, and Zumarraga National High School.

The total population consisted of 470 Senior High School students, from which the sample of 216 respondents was drawn using stratified random sampling. Stratification was done according to school and grade level to ensure proportional

representation of the respondents from each participating institution.

The distribution of respondents was as follows: 52 from Bioso Integrated School, 53 from Mualbual National High School, 41 from San Isidro National High School, and 70 from Zumarraga National High School. This sampling procedure ensured that the respondents adequately represented the Senior High School population of the district.

3.3 Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was an adopted questionnaire composed of two major parts aligned with the objectives of the study.

The first part measured the reading comprehension proficiency level of student-respondents in terms of reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary acquisition, and sentence structure analysis. The items in this section were adopted from Francine (2016) in the questionnaire on English reading comprehension. The instrument used a five-point Likert scale with the following interpretations: 5 = Excellent Comprehension, 4 = Good Comprehension, 3 = Satisfactory Comprehension, 2 = Basic Comprehension, and 1 = Poor Comprehension.

The second part measured the level of incidence of domestic responsibilities in terms of household maintenance and care, food-related activities, and economic and productive tasks. The items in this section were adapted from the Household Care Survey Toolkit developed by Rost et al. (2020). A five-point scale was likewise used, where 5 = Very High, 4 = High, 3 = Moderate, 2 = Low, and 1 = Negligible.

The questionnaire was subjected to expert validation to ensure that the items were clear, relevant, and appropriate for Senior High School students in the District of Zumarraga. Revisions were incorporated based on the comments and suggestions of the validators to improve the content and contextual suitability of the instrument.

3.4 Data Collection Method

Prior to data collection, a formal letter requesting permission to conduct the study was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent of the Schools Division of Samar. Upon approval, coordination was made with the Public Schools District Supervisor and the principals of the participating schools.

After the necessary permissions were secured, the researcher coordinated with the school heads and class advisers regarding the schedule and administration of the questionnaire. The respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, and the voluntary nature of their participation was emphasized. They were also assured that their responses would be treated with confidentiality and used solely for research purposes.

The questionnaires were personally administered to the respondents during the approved schedule. Clear instructions were given before the administration of the instrument to ensure that the respondents understood each part of the questionnaire. After completion, the questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness, and prepared for tabulation and statistical analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical tools consistent with the objectives of the study.

Weighted mean was used to determine the reading comprehension proficiency level of student-respondents in terms of reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary acquisition, and sentence structure analysis, as well as the level of incidence of domestic responsibilities in terms of household maintenance and care, food-related activities, and economic and productive tasks.

The following interpretative scales were used for reading comprehension proficiency:

4.21–5.00 = Excellent
                Comprehension
3.41–4.20 = Good Comprehension
2.61–3.40 = Satisfactory
                Comprehension
1.81–2.60 = Basic Comprehension
1.00–1.80 = Poor Comprehension

For the level of incidence of domestic responsibilities, the following scale was applied:

4.21–5.00 = Very High
3.41–4.20 = High
2.61–3.40 = Moderate
1.81–2.60 = Low
1.00–1.80 = Negligible

To determine whether the variables significantly deviated from normal distribution, the Shapiro-Wilk test was

employed. Since the results indicated non-normal distribution, Spearman's rho (ρ) correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between domestic responsibilities and reading comprehension proficiency.

The significance of the correlation coefficients was tested using Fisher's t-test at the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected when the computed p-value was less than 0.05 and accepted when the p-value was greater than 0.05.

These statistical treatments were appropriate because the study involved ordinal data derived from Likert-scale responses and aimed to determine both the levels of the variables and the relationships between them.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to the ethical standards in the conduct of research. Before data collection, permission was obtained from the concerned educational authorities and school administrators. The respondents were properly informed about the nature, purpose, and significance of the study.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. The respondents were assured that they could decline participation or withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. They were also informed that their responses would be kept confidential and would be used exclusively for academic and research purposes.

To protect the identity of the respondents, no unnecessary personal identifiers were collected in the questionnaire. All gathered data were treated with utmost confidentiality and were stored securely. The findings were reported in summary form only to ensure anonymity and safeguard the welfare of the participants.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Reading Comprehension Proficiency of Students Across Key Domains

Table 1 presents the level of reading comprehension of the student-respondents in terms of reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary acquisition, and sentence structure analysis. The results show that students demonstrated a satisfactory level of reading comprehension across all three domains. In terms of reading comprehension strategies, the grand weighted mean of 3.23 indicates satisfactory comprehension. Most indicators fall within the satisfactory range, although inferring ideas from pictures, charts, or figures obtained a good comprehension level (WM = 3.59).

The data suggest that students employ strategies such as identifying main ideas and interpreting texts to a moderate extent. The use of strategic reading behaviors is essential for improving comprehension and deeper text processing (Zhang & Zou, 2021).

For vocabulary acquisition, the grand weighted mean of 3.40 also reflects a satisfactory level of comprehension. The use of context clues (WM = 3.50) and guessing word meanings within context (WM = 3.42) reached a good comprehension level, indicating that students rely on contextual strategies when encountering unfamiliar words.

Context-based vocabulary learning has been shown to significantly enhance reading comprehension and lexical development among learners (Nation, 2022; Santillan & Daenos, 2020).

Similarly, the results for sentence structure analysis yielded a grand weighted mean of 3.34, interpreted as satisfactory comprehension. While most indicators fall within the satisfactory range, analyzing complicated sentences through structural understanding obtained a good comprehension level (WM = 3.45). These findings indicate that students possess basic syntactic awareness but may encounter

Table 1. Reading Comprehension Proficiency of Students Across Key Domains

Indicator	WM	Interpretation
Based on Strategies		
1. I grasp the main idea of the material while reading English.	3.10	SC
2. I predict the main idea of the whole passage from its title or subtitles.	3.13	SC
3. I guess the meaning of new words by analyzing their roots or prefixes or suffixes.	3.15	SC
4. I try to guess the main ideas of the text based on pictures, charts or figures.	3.59	GC
5. I grasp the gist of the reading material through quickly reading the first and the last paragraphs.	3.11	SC
6. I try to interpret the writer's intention while reading in English.	3.28	SC
Grand Weighted Mean	**3.23**	**SC**
Based on Vocabulary Acquisition		
1. I turn to dictionaries when coming across new words in the English reading.	3.36	SC
2. When I read English articles, I actively pay attention to the words that are new to me, using context clues.	3.50	GC
3. I guess the meanings of new words in context when reading in English.	3.42	GC
4. I predict the main idea of the whole passage from key words.	3.31	SC
Grand Weighted Mean	**3.40**	**SC**
Based on Sentence Structure Analysis		
1. I actively consider the grammatical structure of sentences while reading in English.	3.22	SC
2. Table 13 I pay attention to the implied meaning of the reading material.	3.29	SC
3. I pause and analyze the structure of sentences when reading in English.	3.36	SC
4. I try to understand complicated sentences by analyzing their structure.	3.45	GC
5. I carefully analyze sentences, even those with complicated structures.	3.36	SC
6. I use simple words to replace difficult ones in sentence understanding.	3.40	SC
7. I try to grasp the general idea of a sentence before going to read the next sentence.	3.30	SC
Grand Weighted Mean	**3.34**	**SC**

Legend:
4.21 – 5.00	Excellent Comprehension	(EC)
3.41 – 4.20	Good Comprehension	(GC)
2.61 – 3.40	Satisfactory Comprehension	(SC)
1.81 – 2.60	Basic Comprehension	(BC)
1.00 – 1.80	Poor Comprehension	(PC)
	Weighted Mean	(WM)

difficulties in interpreting more complex sentence structures. Syntactic awareness is recognized as a key factor that supports reading comprehension by enabling readers to integrate meaning across sentences and clauses (Kim & Park, 2022; Basilan & De Sagun, 2024).

The overall results indicate that students demonstrate moderate proficiency in reading comprehension, suggesting the need for instructional strategies that further strengthen higher-order reading skills, vocabulary development, and syntactic understanding to improve overall literacy performance.

4.2 Incidence of Students' Domestic Responsibilities

Table 2 presents the level of incidence of domestic responsibilities of student-respondents across three domains,

namely household maintenance and care, food-related activities, and economic productive tasks. The results indicate that students are most involved in household maintenance and care, with a grand weighted mean of 3.55, interpreted as High. Among the indicators, cleaning the house or compound (WM = 3.71), caring for siblings (WM = 3.67), and washing or mending clothes (WM = 3.62) were rated high, while caring for elderly or ill family members (WM = 3.21) was rated moderate. These findings suggest that students regularly participate in household tasks, reflecting common family expectations in many households where adolescents contribute to daily domestic activities. Studies have shown that household responsibilities are common among adolescents and may influence the amount of time available for academic tasks (Cherewick et al., 2021).

Table 2. Level of Incidence of Domestic Responsibilities of Students Across Three Domains

Indicator	WM	Interpretation
Household Maintenance and Care		
1. Cleaning the house or compound	3.71	H
2. Caring for siblings	3.67	H
3. Caring for elderly, ill, or disabled	3.21	M
4. Washing, ironing, mending clothes	3.62	H
Grand Weighted Mean	**3.55**	**H**
Food-Related Activities		
1. Meal preparation	3.44	H
2. Drying/processing an agricultural product	2.84	M
3. Taking care of farm animals	2.70	M
Grand Weighted Mean	**2.99**	**M**
Economic Productive Tasks		
1. Planting/harvesting crops	2.76	M
2. Carpentry/making furniture	2.44	L
3. House construction/repair	2.53	L
4. Fuel or water collection	2.66	M
5. Selling products/trading	2.50	L
Grand Weighted Mean	**5.50**	**L**

Legend:
4.21 – 5.00	Very High	(VH)
3.41 – 4.20	High	(H)
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate	(M)
1.81 – 2.60	Low	(L)
1.00 – 1.80	Negligible	(N)

In terms of food-related activities, the grand weighted mean of 2.99 indicates a moderate level of involvement. Meal preparation obtained a high rating (WM = 3.44), while drying or processing agricultural products (WM = 2.84) and taking care of farm animals (WM = 2.70) were rated moderate. These results suggest that students participate in basic food preparation activities more frequently than in agricultural tasks. Previous research indicates that involvement in food preparation and household duties can help adolescents develop practical life skills; however, excessive engagement may reduce time allocated for academic learning and reading activities (Gey et al., 2020).

For economic productive tasks, the findings show a low level of involvement, with indicators such as carpentry or making furniture (WM = 2.44), house construction or repair (WM = 2.53), and selling products or trading (WM = 2.50) interpreted as low, while planting or harvesting crops (WM = 2.76) and collecting fuel or water (WM = 2.66) were rated moderate. Overall, this suggests that students are less frequently involved in income-generating or labor-intensive tasks compared to household chores. Research indicates that when adolescents are heavily involved in economic labor, it can significantly affect their study time and educational outcomes (UNICEF, 2021).

The findings indicate that students' domestic responsibilities are primarily concentrated in household maintenance tasks, followed by moderate participation in food-related activities, while involvement in economic productive work is relatively low. These results highlight the importance of helping students balance domestic responsibilities with academic demands to support their learning and reading development.

4.3 Relationship between Domestic Responsibilities and Reading Comprehension Proficiency

Table 3 presents the correlation between students' domestic responsibilities and their reading comprehension proficiency in terms of comprehension strategies, vocabulary acquisition, and sentence structure analysis. The results reveal that household maintenance and care shows a weak but significant positive relationship with comprehension strategies ($\rho = 0.377$), vocabulary acquisition ($\rho = 0.390$), and sentence structure analysis ($\rho = 0.355$), as indicated by $p < .05$. This suggests that students who frequently engage in household maintenance tasks tend to demonstrate slightly higher levels of reading comprehension across these domains. Although the correlations are weak, the results imply that moderate involvement in household responsibilities may be associated with the development of organizational

Table 3. Correlation Between Domestic Responsibilities and Reading Comprehension Proficiency

Domestic Responsibilities	Comprehension Strategies (ρ)	Vocabulary Acquisition (ρ)	Sentence Structure Analysis (ρ)
Household Maintenance and Care	0.377**	0.390**	0.355**
Food-related activities	0.240**	0.245**	0.316**
Economic and productive tasks	0.018	0.028	0.075

Legend: ρ = Spearman correlation coefficient
$p < .05$ = significant

skills and cognitive discipline that support learning processes.

Similarly, food-related activities also exhibit a weak but significant positive correlation with comprehension strategies (ρ = 0.240), vocabulary acquisition (ρ = 0.245), and sentence structure analysis (ρ = 0.316). These findings indicate that participation in routine household tasks such as meal preparation or food-related duties may contribute to students' cognitive engagement and responsibility, which may indirectly support their reading comprehension abilities. Previous studies have noted that moderate household responsibilities can foster time management, independence, and problem-solving skills that positively influence academic outcomes (Cherewick et al., 2021; Gey et al., 2020).

In contrast, economic and productive tasks show very weak and non-significant relationships with comprehension strategies (ρ = 0.018), vocabulary acquisition (ρ = 0.028), and sentence structure analysis (ρ = 0.075). These results indicate that involvement in labor-intensive or income-generating activities has no meaningful association with students' reading comprehension proficiency. This suggests that such activities may not directly influence students' literacy skills, particularly when participation is minimal or occasional.

The overall findings indicate that household and food-related domestic responsibilities are weakly associated with students' reading comprehension proficiency, while economic productive tasks show no significant relationship. These results highlight the importance of maintaining a balanced level of domestic responsibilities among students so that household participation does not interfere

with their academic learning and reading development.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The reading comprehension proficiency of Senior High School students in terms of reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary acquisition, and sentence structure analysis was found to be at a satisfactory level. Among the three domains, vocabulary acquisition obtained the highest grand weighted mean, followed by sentence structure analysis and reading comprehension strategies. These findings indicate that while students are able to apply basic comprehension strategies and contextual vocabulary techniques, their overall reading comprehension proficiency remains at a moderate level and requires further enhancement to support deeper understanding of texts.

In terms of the incidence of domestic responsibilities, the findings revealed that students were highly involved in household maintenance and care, moderately involved in food-related activities, and had low involvement in economic productive tasks. This indicates that students commonly participate in routine household duties such as cleaning, caring for siblings, and assisting in meal preparation, while their involvement in income-generating or labor-intensive activities remains limited.

The results further showed that household maintenance and care and food-related activities had weak but significant positive relationships with reading comprehension proficiency, particularly in comprehension strategies, vocabulary acquisition, and sentence structure analysis. In contrast, economic productive tasks demonstrated very weak and non-significant

relationships with reading comprehension proficiency.

Conclusively, domestic responsibilities are weakly associated with students' reading comprehension proficiency, indicating that moderate involvement in household activities does not necessarily hinder students' reading development. Rather, such responsibilities may foster discipline and a sense of responsibility that can indirectly support learning. Therefore, maintaining a balanced level of domestic responsibilities while strengthening instructional support for reading comprehension is essential in promoting students' academic development.

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