



READING DIFFICULTIES AMONG MIDDLE SCHOOL LEARNERS: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Reading is a fundamental skill that influences academic achievement across all subjects. However, many middle school learners struggle with reading due to limitations in phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. This paper reviews existing literature on reading difficulties among middle school students, with a focus on multilingual contexts such as India. The review identifies major challenges faced by learners and highlights gaps in existing research. The findings indicate a need for structured reading interventions at the middle school level.

KEYWORDS

Reading Difficulties, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension, Middle School Learners

INTRODUCTION

Reading plays a crucial role in the academic and cognitive development of students. It is not only a language skill but also a tool for learning across disciplines. Despite its importance, many students at the middle school level face significant challenges in reading.

In multilingual countries like India, students often learn English as a second or third language, which makes reading more complex. These challenges are more evident in government and municipal schools where exposure to English is limited.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Reading involves decoding, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. These components are interdependent and essential for reading development.

CONCEPT OF READING

Reading is a complex cognitive process that involves decoding written text and constructing meaning from it (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). It includes several components such as phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

According to the National Reading Panel (2000), effective reading instruction must integrate all these components for better learning outcomes.

REVIEW OF STUDIES

International Studies

Snow (2002) emphasized that reading comprehension is essential for academic success and requires active engagement with the text.

Perfetti (2007) introduced the lexical quality hypothesis, stating that strong vocabulary knowledge improves comprehension.

Fuchs et al. (2001) highlighted that reading fluency is a strong predictor of overall reading ability.

Indian Studies

The ASER report shows that many students in India lack basic reading skills even at higher grades (ASER Centre, 2023).

Nag and Snowling (2012) found that multilingual learners face additional challenges in reading English due to differences in language structure.

FACTORS AFFECTING READING DIFFICULTIES

- Lack of phonics knowledge
- Limited vocabulary
- Poor reading habits
- Lack of exposure to English

- Traditional teaching methods

RESEARCH GAP

The review indicates that:

- Limited studies focus on **Class VII students**
- Few studies are conducted in **municipal schools**
- Lack of **intervention-based research**

LIMITATIONS

This review is based on selected literature and may not represent all global studies.

CONCLUSION

Reading difficulties among middle school learners are a significant concern. There is a need for structured reading programmes that address phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Future research should focus on intervention-based approaches to improve reading skills.

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