***Original Research Article***

**The Influence of Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness in Reading on Senior High School Students’ Motivation to Read**

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**ABSTRACT**

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| --- |
| This study examined the influence of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading on the motivation to read among Senior High School students. Using a non-experimental quantitative correlational design, the study involved 243 Grade 11 and 12 students from two private campuses in the Davao Region. A structured questionnaire composed of four sections: autonomy, competence, relatedness, and motivation to read, was utilized. Results revealed that students showed high levels of competence and relatedness, moderate autonomy, and high motivation to read. Multiple linear regression indicated that competence, autonomy, and relatedness significantly predicted motivation, with competence being the strongest predictor. The study emphasizes the importance of supporting students’ psychological needs in reading to foster motivation and engagement in literacy.  **Aims:** This study aimed to examine the influence of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading on the motivation to read among Senior High School students. Guided by Self-Determination Theory, the research sought to determine how these psychological needs predict reading motivation in the context of English language education.  **Study design:** A quantitative correlational research design was employed.  **Place and Duration of Study:** The study was conducted at two private campuses in Davao Region, particularly Davao City and Tagum City, Philippines, from November to December in the academic year 2024-2025.  **Methodology:** A total of 243 Grade 11 and 12 students aged 16 to 18 were selected through simple random sampling. Data were gathered using a structured and validated questionnaire consisting of 88 items: 41 items measured the independent variables—autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading—while 47 items assessed the dependent variable, which was motivation to read. The instrument's internal consistency was verified, yielding Cronbach’s alpha values ranging from 0.712 to 0.872, indicating acceptable reliability. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was applied to analyze the relationship between the variables.  **Results:** Out of 243 respondents, a 100% response rate was achieved using an 88-item questionnaire. Multiple linear regression revealed that autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading significantly predicted motivation to read, F(3, 239) = 72.2, p < .001, R² = 0.475. Competence (β = 0.344, p < .001) was the strongest predictor, followed by autonomy (β = 0.332, p < .001) and relatedness (β = 0.197, p < .001). Descriptive results showed a high level of competence (M = 3.69, SD = 3.88), relatedness (M = 3.86, SD = 0.528), and motivation to read (M = 3.60, SD = 0.431), while autonomy in reading was at a moderate level (M = 3.11, SD = 0.370). These results suggest that students who feel more competent, autonomous, and connected in their reading are more motivated to read.  **Conclusion:** Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading are significant predictors of students’ motivation to read. Promoting these factors may enhance reading engagement among Senior High School students. Further studies are recommended to validate these predictors across different student populations and educational contexts. |

*Keywords: Autonomy, competence, relatedness, motivation to read, self-determination theory*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

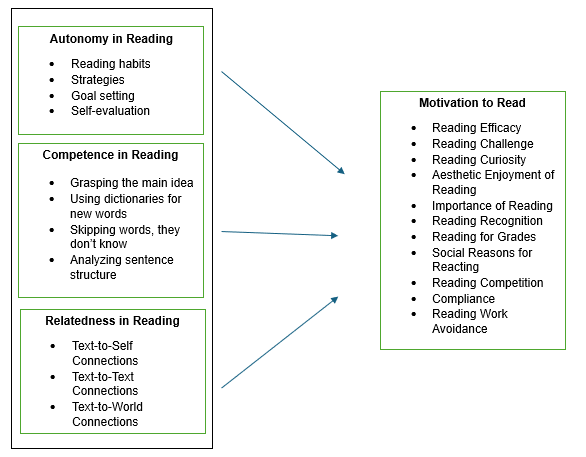
The lack of motivation to read has become an increasing concern in education worldwide, as many young people possess the ability to read but fail to prioritize it in their daily lives (Cremin, 2023). The lack of motivation to read has been closely linked to lower comprehension, reduced vocabulary retention, and overall weaker literacy skills, which may pose significant risks to students' literacy development and long-term academic success (Kheang et al., 2024; Hicks, 2023).

In Southeast Asia, countries like Thailand and Indonesia have observed the lack of motivation to read among students, which is associated with poor comprehension, limited vocabulary skills, and reduced academic performance (Wongsothorn & Yordchim, 2020; Nanda & Azmy, 2020). In the United States, the lack of motivation to read has become an increasing concern, with students often perceiving reading as a burdensome task rather than an enjoyable activity (Huang & Reynolds, 2022). Similarly, in Germany, the lack of motivation to read among older students has been noted in various studies (Locher et al., 2019).

In the Philippines, the lack of motivation to read among students remains a significant challenge to literacy development (Reoperez, 2019). For instance, the low performance of students in the PISA 2018 assessment in Cabanatuan City was attributed to this issue (Tomas et al., 2021). At the University of Santo Tomas, students’ lack of motivation to read has been reported to affect their comprehension and academic success (Gunobgunob-Mirasol, 2019).

According to Perry et al. (2025), the lack of motivation to read undermines students' reading literacy. Thus, this study addresses the issue by highlighting motivation to read as a critical factor in fostering reading literacy skills, particularly in contexts like Mindanao State University-Sulu, where many students continue to struggle due to a lack of motivation to read (Jupakkal, 2024). Despite the urgent need to address the lack of motivation to read, there is a noticeable gap in locally published research on this issue, which remains persistent in the Philippines (Idulog et al., 2023). Therefore, this research was pursued.

Independent Variable Dependent Variable



**Self-Determination Theory**

**Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study**

**2. material and methods**

**2.1 Research Design**

This study utilized a quantitative correlational research design to investigate the relationships among autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading and students’ motivation to read. This non-experimental approach involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify, explain, and predict associations between variables (Bhandari, 2021; Seeram, 2019). This approach allowed for a precise examination of how autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading contributed to students' motivation to read.

**2.2 Research Respondents**

The study targeted Senior High School students from two private institutions in the Davao Region during the academic year 2024–2025. A total of 243 students participated, providing sufficient statistical power to examine the relationships among autonomy in reading, competence in reading, relatedness in reading, and motivation to read, with the latter serving as the dependent variable.

A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure every eligible student had an equal chance of being selected, thereby reducing selection bias and enhancing the generalizability of the findings (Noor et al., 2022). Eligibility criteria included students who had completed the subject "21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World" as part of their English curriculum and were currently enrolled in either of the two campuses.

List 1 : Selection of student

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Institution** | **Year Level** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Campus A | Grade 11 | 121 | 50.0 |
| Campus B | Grade 12 | 122 | 50.0 |
| Total |  | 243 | 100 |

Note. All participants have undergone the 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World subject.

**2.3 Research Instrument**

The primary data collection instrument was a structured, self-administered questionnaire designed to align with the study’s theoretical framework and research objectives. The instrument consisted of items measuring the constructs of autonomy in reading, competence in reading, relatedness in reading, and motivation to read. It included both adapted and researcher-developed components, with modifications made in collaboration with the research adviser and academic validators to ensure content validity (Bodine, 2022). Expert validation was conducted to refine the questionnaire, and a pilot test was carried out with a separate group of 30 non-sample participants to assess the instrument’s effectiveness. Internal reliability was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha, which confirmed acceptable to high internal consistency across all subscales (Frost, 2022). This process ensured that the survey items reliably captured the intended constructs and provided data that directly supported the study’s framework and objectives.

***2.3.1 Section A: Autonomy in reading***

The first section assessed autonomy in reading by examining reading habits, strategies, goal setting, and self-evaluation, adapted and modified from Grammar (2023), reflecting how students took responsibility for their reading process. The 14-item survey utilized a 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire with a level from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The researcher used the Likert scale below to interpret the respondents' responses and measure students' autonomy in reading:

List 2 : Likert Scale questionnaire

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Range of Mean** | **Descriptive Level** | **Interpretation** |
| 4.20 - 5.00 | Very High | The students demonstrate exceptional autonomy in reading. |
| 3.40 - 4.19 | High | The students exhibit strong autonomy in reading. |
|  |  |  |
| 2.60 - 3.39 | Moderate | The students display moderate autonomy in reading. |
| 1.80 - 2.59 | Low | The students display limited autonomy in reading. |
| 1.00 - 1.79 | Very Low | The students display minimal autonomy in reading. |

***2.3.2 Section B: Competence in Reading***

 The second section measured competence in reading, focusing on skills such as grasping the main idea, using dictionaries for new words, skipping unfamiliar words, and analyzing sentence structure, adapted and modified from Francine (2016). This 15-item survey utilized a 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The researcher used the Likert scale below to interpret the respondents' responses and measure students' competence in reading.

List 3 : Competence in Reading

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Range of Mean** | **Descriptive Level** | **Interpretation** |
| 4.20 - 5.00 | Very High | The students have outstanding competence in reading. |
| 3.40 - 4.19 | High | The students have a very good competence in reading. |
|  |  |  |
| 2.60 - 3.39 | Moderate | The students have good competence in reading. |
| 1.80 - 2.59 | Low | The students have poor competence in reading. |
| 1.00 - 1.79 | Very Low | The students have very poor competence in reading. |

***2.3.3 Section C: Relatedness in Reading***

The third section evaluated relatedness in reading, emphasizing text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections, highlighting the relational and social aspects that shaped reading behavior, adapted and modified from Sorice (2018). This 12-item survey utilized a 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The researchers used the Likert scale below to interpret the respondents' responses and measure students' relatedness in reading.

List 4 : Relatedness in Reading

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Range of Means** | **Descriptive Level** | **Interpretation** |
| 4.20 - 5.00 | Very High | The students have a very strong sense of relatedness in reading. |
| 3.40 - 4.19 | High | The students have a strong sense of relatedness in reading. |
|  |  |  |
| 2.60 - 3.39 | Moderate | The students have a moderate sense of relatedness in reading. |
| 1.80 - 2.59 | Low | The students have a weak sense of relatedness in reading. |
| 1.00 - 1.79 | Very Low | The students have a very weak sense of relatedness in reading. |

***2.3.4 Section D: Motivation to Read***

The fourth section examined motivation to read as the dependent variable, incorporating various indicators such as reading efficacy, reading challenge, reading curiosity, aesthetic enjoyment of reading, the importance of reading, reading recognition, reading for grades, social reasons for reading, reading competition, compliance, and reading work avoidance, adapted and modified from Wingfield (1996). This 47-item survey utilized a 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The researcher used the Likert scale below to interpret the respondents' responses and measure students' reading motivation.

List 5 : Motivation to Read

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Range of Mean** | **Descriptive Level** | **Interpretation** |
| 4.20 - 5.00 | Very High | The students have an exceptional level of motivation to read. |
| 3.40 - 4.19 | High | The students have a strong level of motivation to read. |
|  |  |  |
| 2.60 - 3.39 | Moderate | The students have a moderate level of motivation to read. |
| 1.80 - 2.59 | Low | The students have a weak level of motivation to read. |
| 1.00 - 1.79 | Very Low | The students have a very weak level of motivation to read. |

**2.4 Validation and Reliability**

Content validation of the adapted questionnaire was conducted by research experts specializing in language education and assessment. Their feedback guided the revision of the instrument to ensure clarity, construct alignment, and appropriateness for Senior High School students. The validated questionnaire received an overall mean score of 4.61, indicating a "very good" descriptive rating from the expert validators.

List 6 : Reliability analysis using Cronbach’s alpha yielded the following results.

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| **Instrument Section** | **Number of Items** | **Cronbach’s Alpha** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
| Autonomy in Reading | 14 | 0.712 |
| Competence in Reading | 15 | 0.718 |
| Relatedness in Reading | 12 | 0.814 |
| Motivation to Read | 47 | 0.872 |

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**2.5 Data Collection Procedure**

Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from institutional authorities, and informed consent was secured from all participants. For respondents below 18 years old, parental consent was also collected to ensure adherence to ethical standards. The researcher administered the survey questionnaires in person, with classroom-based distribution conducted under direct supervision to maintain consistency. Participants were given 45 minutes to complete the instrument. All completed responses were encoded and securely stored to ensure confidentiality and data integrity

**2.6 Data Analysis**

The collected data were processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, specifically means, were computed to determine the overall levels of autonomy in reading, competence in reading, relatedness in reading, and motivation to read among Senior High School students. Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to examine the strength and direction of relationships between the predictor variables (autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading) and the dependent variable (motivation to read). Furthermore, multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which the independent variables predicted students’ motivation to read.

**3. results and discussion**

### This chapter presented the findings of the study, structured according to the research questions. The results were displayed in tables, accompanied by a detailed narrative discussion that offered deeper insights into the patterns identified in the data.

**3.1 Descriptive Analysis**

*Table 1. Descriptive Mean Level of Autonomy in Reading, Competence in Reading, Relatedness in Reading, and Motivation to Read Among Senior High School Students.*

**Variables SD Mean Descriptive Level**

**Autonomy in Reading 0.370 3.11 Moderate**

Reading habits 0.60 3.88 High

Strategies 0.66 3.83 High

Goal setting 0.62 3.85 High

Self-evaluation 0.54 3.99 High

**Competence in Reading** **3.88 3.69 High**

Grasping the main idea 0.59 3.84 High

Using dictionaries for new words 0.81 4.00 High

Skipping words that they don’t know 0.80 2.79 Moderate

Analyzing sentence structure 0.94 4.24 Very High

**Relatedness in Reading**  **0.528 3.86 High**

Text-to-self connections 0.74 3.92 High

Text-to-text connections 0.61 3.75 High

Text-to-world connections 0.75 3.92 High

**Motivation to Read**  **0.431 3.60 High**

Reading efficacy 0.69 3.58 High

Reading challenge 0.72 3.63 High

Reading curiosity 0.67 4.03 High

Aesthetic enjoyment of reading 0.68 4.14 High

The importance of reading 0.68 4.38 Very High

Reading recognition 0.65 3.70 High

Reading for grades 0.75 3.65 High

Social reasons for reading 0.72 3.64 High

Reading competition 0.88 2.66 Moderate

Compliance 0.85 3.34 Moderate

Reading work avoidance 0.97 2.87 Moderate

Table 1 presents the mean levels of autonomy, competence, relatedness, and motivation in reading among Senior High School students.

For autonomy in reading, students demonstrated strong skills in self-evaluation (M = 3.99, SD = 0.54), goal setting (M = 3.85, SD = 0.62), and reading strategies (M = 3.83, SD = 0.66). However, the overall autonomy score was moderate (M = 3.11, SD = 0.37), indicating inconsistency in applying these skills regularly. This inconsistency may be linked to factors like lack of confidence or external influences, aligning with Bich and Vuong (2022), who noted that personality traits, such as attitudes and motivation, can affect a learner’s autonomy.

Regarding reading competence, the overall mean was high (M = 3.69, SD = 0.88). The highest scores were for analyzing sentence structure (M = 4.24, SD = 0.94), dictionary use (M = 4.00, SD = 0.81), and identifying main ideas (M = 3.84, SD = 0.59). A moderate score for skipping unfamiliar words (M = 2.79, SD = 0.80) suggests a need for stronger contextual reading strategies. These results support Cain and Oakhill (2019), who found that strong reading competence is linked to the ability to extract central themes from texts, which is essential for academic success.

For relatedness in reading, students showed strong connections: text-to-self (M = 3.92, SD = 0.74), text-to-world (M = 3.92, SD = 0.75), and text-to-text (M = 3.75, SD = 0.61), indicating their ability to relate texts to personal experiences and broader contexts. This finding supports Alghonaim (2020), who showed that pre-reading activities that connect texts to personal experiences improve reading comprehension significantly.

Regarding motivation to read, the overall level was high (M = 3.60, SD = 0.43). Key motivations included recognizing the importance of reading (M = 4.38, SD = 0.68), enjoyment (M = 4.14, SD = 0.68), and curiosity (M = 4.03, SD = 0.67). Moderate scores for competition (M = 2.66), compliance (M = 3.34), and avoidance (M = 2.87) suggested that extrinsic motivators had less influence. These results highlight that intrinsic motivation—such as enjoyment and curiosity—plays a major role in fostering a love for reading. This aligns with Locher et al. (2019) and Ryan & Deci (2020), who emphasized that intrinsic motivation, especially personal enjoyment, drives sustained reading habits.

In conclusion, students showed high competence, relatedness, and motivation in reading, with moderate autonomy. Intrinsic motivators were more influential than extrinsic ones, indicating a strong internal drive to read, but consistent self-directed reading habits still require reinforcement.

**3.2 Correlation Analysis**

*Table 2. Correlations between Measures*

Variables \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Motivation to Read\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

r-value p-value Decision on H0 Interpretation

Autonomy in Reading 0.575 0.000 Reject H₀ Significant

Competence in Reading 0.583 0.000 Reject H₀ Significant

Relatedness in Reading 0.541 0.000 Reject H₀ Significant

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Table 2 displays the Pearson correlation coefficients between the independent variables—autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading—and the dependent variable, motivation to read. Autonomy showed a moderate positive correlation with motivation (r = 0.575, p = 0.000), indicating that students with higher autonomy are more motivated to read. This supports Wang and Hu’s (2022) findings that teacher autonomy support fosters internal control, value appraisal, and enjoyment in reading. Moreover, competence also had a moderate positive correlation with motivation (r = 0.583, p = 0.000), suggesting that stronger reading skills enhance motivation. This aligns with Permatasari and Wienanda (2023), who noted that intrinsically motivated readers perform better academically. Similarly, Hwang (2019) found that students confident in their reading abilities achieve better outcomes. In addition, relatedness in reading also showed a moderate positive correlation (r = 0.541, p = 0.000), implying that students are more motivated when reading connects with their experiences. This supports Deci and Ryan’s (2020) emphasis on relatedness as a key driver of motivation, as well as Locher et al.’s (2019) findings that interest-aligned texts boost intrinsic motivation.

Taken together, all correlations were statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypotheses and confirming that autonomy, competence, and relatedness significantly influence reading motivation.

**3.3 Regression Analysis**

*Table 3. The Influence of Autonomy in Reading, Competence in Reading, and Relatedness in Reading on Motivation to Read Among Senior High School Students*

Predictor Estimate SE t p-value Interpretation

Intercept 0.536 0.2117 2.53 0.012 Significant

Autonomy 0.332 0.0688 4.83 0.000 Significant

Competence 0.344 0.0647 5.32 0.000 Significant

Relatedness 0.197 0.0467 4.22 0.000 Significant

F= 72.2 R2 = 0.475 Adjusted R2 = 0.469

Table 3 shows the multiple linear regression results on the influence of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading on motivation to read. Assumptions for regression were met: linearity, independence of errors (Durbin-Watson = 1.83), homoscedasticity, normality (Shapiro-Wilk = 1.46, p > 0.001), and no multicollinearity (VIF < 5). The model was significant, F(3, N) = 72.2, p < 0.001, explaining 47.5% of the variance in motivation (R² = 0.475, Adj. R² = 0.469). All predictors had significant positive effects: competence (β = 0.344), autonomy (β = 0.332), and relatedness (β = 0.197), p < 0.001. This suggests that students who feel more competent, autonomous, and connected in reading are more motivated to read.

**3.4 Summary of Findings**

The study aimed to examine the influence of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading on students’ motivation to read and how these variables contribute to reading performance among senior high school students.

The results revealed that students demonstrated high levels of competence, relatedness, and motivation to read, while autonomy in reading was at a moderate level. Correlation analysis showed that autonomy in reading (r = 0.575, p = 0.000), competence in reading (r = 0.583, p = 0.000), and relatedness in reading (r = 0.541, p = 0.000) were all moderately and positively correlated with motivation to read. These correlations were statistically significant, indicating that higher levels of each psychological need were associated with higher motivation to read. Regression analysis revealed that competence (β = 0.344, p < 0.001), autonomy (β = 0.332, p < 0.001), and relatedness (β = 0.197, p < 0.001) significantly influenced motivation to read. The regression model was statistically significant (F = 72.2, p < 0.001) and explained 47.5% of the variance in students' reading motivation (R² = 0.475; Adjusted R² = 0.469).

Overall, the findings confirmed that autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading are significant predictors of motivation to read, which in turn influences students’ reading performance.

**4. Conclusion**

This study used a quantitative correlational research design to examine how autonomy, competence, and relatedness in reading influence Senior High School students' motivation to read. The results revealed a strong connection between these psychological needs and motivation, with competence being the most significant predictor. These findings align with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2017), highlighting the importance of meeting psychological needs to enhance intrinsic motivation.

While students showed high motivation to read, the moderate level of autonomy suggests they could benefit from more opportunities for independent learning. The role of competence emphasizes the need for fostering a sense of achievement, while relatedness, though important, had a lesser impact, pointing to the need for more supportive reading environments.

This study contributes to ESL education by showing how autonomy, competence, and relatedness impact motivation to read. Understanding these factors is essential in improving ESL students' reading skills and language proficiency. The findings suggest that creating an environment where students feel in control (autonomy), confident in their abilities (competence), and connected to the material (relatedness) can enhance their reading motivation and engagement. Future research could further explore these factors by including qualitative data to better understand students' perspectives.

**DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)**

Grammarly was utilized to enhance the grammar, clarity, and structure of the text. It is important to note that no generative AI tools were employed in the creation or formulation of the study content, ensuring the authenticity of the work.

**ETHICAL APPROVAL AND CONSENT**

The researcher ensured that the study complied with ethical guidelines governing research involving human participants. All individuals participated of their own free will, with informed consent forms distributed and signed before any data collection began. To maintain privacy and protect identities, unique codes were used instead of names, and all information gathered was securely stored on password-protected devices. Ethical clearance was obtained from the appropriate institutional review board, and all research activities were conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

**Competing interests**

The author declares that there are no competing interests related to this research, affirming the objectivity and independence of the study.

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