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The Effectiveness of Peer Tutoring in Enhancing Reading Comprehension of Ninth Grade Students

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Abstract

The study entitled The Effectiveness of Peer Tutoring in Enhancing Reading Comprehension of Grade 9 Students aims to determine the effectiveness of using peer tutoring as a strategy or tool to enhance the reading comprehension of the Grade 9 Students of Samal National High School. The research study utilized an experimental research specifically using pretest-posttest design to investigate the topic. The primary data were collected from a sample of sixty (60) students using a researcher-made reading comprehension questionnaire that had been validated by a panel of experts. Statistical tools such as weighted mean, and t-test were applied to analyze and interpret the data. The results indicated that the ninth grade students achieved the required level of reading comprehension. The study revealed a significant difference in reading comprehension before and after the implementation of peer tutoring, supporting the notion that peer tutoring contributed to the improvement of reading comprehension. As a result, it is recommended to conduct similar studies with a broader understanding of strategies for enhancing reading comprehension, beyond the focus on peer tutoring that has been demonstrated to be effective. Future researchers should encompass a wider scope, different research locations, and additional factors that were not considered in the present study.

Keywords: Peer Tutoring, Reading Comprehension, Experimental Research

Background of the Study

Reading comprehension is a critical skill that allows individuals to understand and make meaning from written texts. However, deficits in reading comprehension can have severe consequences for academic success and life opportunities (Cain & Oakhill, 2011). Many students' reading comprehension still needs to improve; they are worrying, unsatisfactory, and far from the expectation (Rahmasari, 2017). For instance, De La Paz and Felton (2010) noted that students with developmental reading disabilities might struggle with identifying the main idea of a passage, making inferences, or integrating information across sentences and paragraphs. Therefore, it is essential to identify and

address these deficits early on to promote successful academic and career outcomes.

Furthermore, Takeuchi (2015) elaborated that; peer tutoring is extensively recognized as an essential aspect of Western higher-education institutions, contributing significantly to students' academic achievements. The concept of students teaching and learning from their peers is widely acknowledged for its advantageous nature. Peer tutoring is a well-established strategy to improve academic performance in various subjects, including reading comprehension. However, there still needs to be a gap in our understanding of the most effective ways to implement peer tutoring. While some studies have found positive effects of peer tutoring on reading comprehension, others have found no significant or adverse effects (De Lisi & Goldman, 2010; Kim & Han, 2012). Several studies (Topping & Lindsay, 2020; Hsieh et al., 2007) were conducted about peer tutoring. It has been mentioned that peer tutoring can effectively improve academic outcomes, but only when certain conditions are met. These requirements encompass proper training and oversight for peer tutors, a comprehensive comprehension of the aims and objectives of the tutoring initiative, and an emphasis on fostering positive connections between tutors and their tutee. In addition, peer tutoring can be especially advantageous for students with learning disabilities, provided that the tutor receives adequate training and support.

A number of studies also emphasized that peer tutoring can enhance reading comprehension. It was found out in the study of Robison (2022) that the experimental group was categorized superior after the peer tutoring was conducted while the control group was advanced. There was also a significant difference in the pre and post oral assessments of the experimental group. It was concluded by Roma et al. (2019) that peer tutoring has a strong effect in teaching reading comprehension of narrative text. Peer tutoring strategy has a good effect and effective in reading comprehension to the eight grade students (Sholikhah, 2018).

Based on the literatures above, it suggests that there may be factors that influence the effectiveness of peer tutoring for improving reading comprehension that still needs to be fully explored. One potential research gap is the need for more understanding of the specific aspects of peer tutoring, most effectively enhancing reading comprehension. While researchers have conducted some studies on the benefits of peer-led discussions and shared reading experiences, they have yet to determine which techniques or strategies are most effective in improving reading comprehension through peer tutoring. Roscoe and Chi (2007) studied the understanding of tutor learning. However, further investigation is required to ascertain the practical application of this knowledge in improving the efficiency of peer tutoring specifically in the context of reading comprehension.

Consequently, additional research is necessary to identify the most optimal techniques and approaches within peer tutoring that can enhance reading comprehension. Furthermore, there is no research on peer tutoring in the locality of the researchers. Thus, it is crucial to investigate the effectiveness of peer tutoring for students with diverse

abilities and examine how it can be tailored to meet their specific needs.

Generally, the study aimed to determine the effectiveness of peer tutoring in enhancing reading comprehension of ninth grade students. Specifically, it seeks to address the questions as follows:

1. What are the pre-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups?
2. What are the post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups?
3. Is there a significant difference in the pre-test mean scores of the students in the control and experimental groups?
4. Is there a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students in the control group?
5. Is there a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students in the experimental group?
6. Is there a significant difference in the mean gain scores of the students in the experimental group who utilized peer tutoring and the students in the control group who were exposed to the traditional approach?

Literature Review

Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is not a recent concept, and its existence can be traced back to early forms of collaboration and community engagement, which may have occurred implicitly or indirectly (Topping, 2005). However, within the evolving landscape of higher education, there is a growing trend towards more structured and even evaluated approaches to peer teaching.

In a literature review, Topping and Lindsay (2020) found that peer tutoring can effectively improve academic outcomes, but only when certain conditions are met. These requirements encompass proper training and oversight for peer tutors, a comprehensive comprehension of the aims and objectives of the tutoring initiative, and an emphasis on fostering positive connections between tutors and their tutee. However, they also noted that peer tutoring can be ineffective or detrimental when unmet conditions exist. For example, if peer tutors are not adequately trained or supervised, they may inadvertently reinforce misconceptions or provide incorrect information.

Additionally, according to a research conducted by Hsieh et al. (2017), it was discovered that peer tutoring can be especially advantageous for students with learning disabilities, provided that the tutor receives adequate training and support. They noted that peer tutors should receive training on specific strategies for working with students with disabilities, such as providing additional explanations, using visual aids, and checking for understanding. Additionally, they found that ongoing supervision and support from a teacher or

other adult was essential for ensuring the tutoring sessions were practical and addressing any issues.

Reading Comprehension

As stated in the study of Snow et al. (2005), the development of reading comprehension skills has shown that it is essential for academic success. However, many students struggle with reading comprehension, which can negatively impact their overall academic performance (Oczkus, 2018). Based on a particular context, it has been observed that providing direct guidance and instruction on reading comprehension strategies can have a substantial positive impact on students' reading comprehension skills (Abedi et al., 2010). Additionally, some students may struggle with reading comprehension due to learning disabilities, such as dyslexia (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2005). However, interventions such as explicit instruction in vocabulary and comprehension strategies have been shown to improve reading comprehension outcomes for struggling readers (Carlo et al., 2018).

An example of this is the implementation of the summarizing strategy, which entails guiding children to identify the main concept of a text and rephrase it using their own words while reading. This strategy requires children to discern the crucial information from the less significant details, condensing it into a concise summary using minimal words. It is important to note that this strategy should not be limited to the conclusion of the story; instead, children should be instructed to summarize periodically throughout the narrative. It is crucial for children to comprehend the text they read in order to derive meaning from it (Brandon, 2021).

Methodology

Research Design

To establish a cause-and-effect connection, the researchers employed an experimental research design (The True Experimental Research Design, 2013). The focus of the study was to assess the effect of peer tutoring on the reading comprehension skills of ninth grade students. Two groups were formed in this design: the experimental group, which received the intervention of peer tutoring, and the control group, which did not receive any intervention but underwent the same tests during the same time frame. Pre-test and post-test methods were used to evaluate the reading comprehension abilities of the learners (Shuttleworth, 2009).

Research Respondents

The participants of the study consisted of ninth grade students from Samal National

High School. Two sections, namely Sapphire and Reyes, were included, comprising a total of 60 students. The researchers selected 30 students from each section to ensure diversity and balance among the participants from both groups. For the experimental group, the researchers randomly assigned the students into three groups to undergo peer tutoring. As for the control group, a traditional approach involving proper discussion was conducted on topics identified as indicators of reading comprehension.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents

Section	**Sample**
Sapphire (Control Group)	30
Reyes (Experimental Group)	30
Total	60

Research Instrument

The instrument the researchers used in this study was the validated questionnaire used to determine the level of Reading Comprehension of the Grade 9 students in Samal National High School with the indicators; main idea, topic sentence, synonyms, antonyms, verbs, and linking words. To improve its validity, the researchers created a Table of Specifications as a blueprint for creating questions for the pre-test and post-test of the students. The distribution of questions was based on the existing Department of Education guidelines.

The validated questionnaire instrument used in this study was for the conduct of the pre-test that addressed the six mentioned indicators of Reading Comprehension. The questionnaire consisted of 10 items for the first four indicators and five items for the last two indicators, with a total of 50 items questions. After successfully conducting the instructional discussion with the two groups separately, the researchers administered the same questionnaire as a post-test to the respondents. The purpose was to assess the level of comprehension and identify any changes that occurred as a result of the instructional intervention.

Descriptive Interpretation of the Score Interval

Scale	Descriptor	Interpretation
42.00 and above	Outstanding	It means that the student at this level exceeds the core knowledge, skills, and understanding requirements and can transfer them automatically and flexibly through authentic performance tasks.
38.00-41.99	Very Satisfactory	It means the student at this level has developed the fundamental knowledge, skills, and core understanding and can transfer them independently through authentic performance tasks.
34.00-37.99	Satisfactory	It means that the student at this level has developed the fundamental knowledge, skills, and core understanding and, with little guidance from the teacher and some peer assistance, can transfer this understanding through authentic performance tasks.
30.00-33.99	Fairly Satisfactory	It means that the student at this level possesses the minimum knowledge, skills, and core understanding but needs help throughout authentic tasks.
Below 30.00	Did Not Meet Expectations	It means that the student at this level struggles with his/her understanding; prerequisite and fundamental knowledge and skills are not acquired or developed adequately to aid understanding.

Results and Discussion

Pre-test Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

Table 2 shows the pre-test mean scores of the experimental and controlled groups in the reading comprehension test. The experimental group, consisting of thirty (30) respondents, achieved a mean score of 27.70, which falls under the descriptive category of

"Did Not Meet Expectations." This indicates that the students require assistance in developing their understanding, prerequisites, and foundational skills to enhance comprehension. Similarly, the control group obtained a pre-test mean score of 24.70, also categorized as "Did Not Meet Expectations," highlighting the students' need for support in comprehension.

The pre-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups reflect their respective levels of reading comprehension. Notably, the pre-test mean score of the experimental group surpasses that of the control group. However, it is important to note that these scores were recorded prior to the delivery of any instructional intervention or discussion.

In general, the results indicate that students require assistance in comprehending the texts they are reading, as evidenced by their poor performance in the reading comprehension tests. Specifically, students would benefit from additional reading strategies and support to improve their understanding, thereby addressing the challenges they encounter in reading comprehension. Students lacking effective reading strategies require guidance in comprehending the text.

Table 2: Pre-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
Experimental	30	27.70	7.54	Did Not Meet Expectations
Control	30	24.70	9.57	Did Not Meet Expectations

Note: N = Sample Size, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Students who are acquainted with reading techniques like skimming and scanning may experience frustration as they require additional resources to excel in reading comprehension tests (Duarte, 2005). Furthermore, students lacking efficient reading strategies can pose difficulties when it comes to tackling reading comprehension tests (Fajar, 2009).

Post-test Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

Table 3 presents the mean scores of the post-test in reading comprehension for both the experimental and controlled groups. The experimental group, consisting of thirty (30) respondents, achieved a post-test mean score of 35.37, which corresponds to the descriptive category of "Satisfactory." This indicates that the students in the experimental group have successfully developed the fundamental knowledge, skills, and core understanding. Conversely, the control group, also comprising thirty (30) respondents, obtained a post-test mean score of 27.97, falling under the descriptive category of "Did Not Meet Expectations. This suggests that the students in the control group encounter challenges with their understanding.

Table 3: Post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
Experimental	30	35.37	7.13	Satisfactory
Control	30	27.97	8.07	Did Not Meet Expectations

Note: N = Sample Size, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

The reading comprehension level of the experimental and control groups were assessed through post-test mean scores following the delivery of instruction and actual discussion. The findings indicate that students who received peer tutoring achieved higher mean scores compared to those who received traditional instruction. This suggests that the traditional teaching approach employed by teachers may be less effective, as there is a substantial difference in mean scores between the two groups.

Numerous studies have identified peer tutoring as an effective approach for improving students' reading performance and fostering their self-confidence throughout different stages of formal education (Ginsburg-Block et al., 2006; McMaster et al., 2006). Recent research has further emphasized the significance of peer tutoring in developing essential reading skills, such as word recognition, pacing, comprehension, and fluency (Miller et al., 2010; Oddo et al., 2010; Topping et al., 2011).

Significant Difference in the Pre-test Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control Group

Table 4 provides evidence of a notable contrast in the pre-test mean scores between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group obtained a pre-test mean score of 27.70, indicating that their performance fell below the expected level. This suggests that these students require additional support to enhance their understanding, prerequisites, and fundamental skills for improved comprehension.

Likewise, the control group achieved a pre-test mean score of 24.70, which also signifies that their performance did not meet expectations. This suggests that students in this group face difficulties in grasping the content. Although the mean difference between the two groups is 3.27, it is not statistically significant.

Both the experimental and control groups received mean scores below 30, which corresponds to a descriptive category of "Did Not Meet Expectations." While the difference between the groups is not substantial, it indicates that both groups require further assistance to enhance their reading comprehension. The computed t-value is 1.349, and the p-value is 0.183, leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the pre-test mean scores between the control and experimental groups. These findings emphasize the importance of implementing reading strategies to enhance the reading comprehension skills of students in both the experimental and control groups.

Table 4: Significant difference in the pre-test mean scores of the experimental and control group

Pre-test Mean Scores		Mean Difference	Computed t-value	p-value	Remark
Experimental	*Control*				
27.70	24.70	3.00	1.349	.183	Not Significant

Simultaneously, students struggle to employ effective reading strategies that can assist in improving reading comprehension (Jitendra & Gajria, 2011). Denton et al. (2011) stated that, effective reading instruction for secondary students with reading difficulties involves teaching word analysis skills and reading comprehension strategies to enhance overall reading comprehension. Furthermore, research by Kamil et al. (2008) demonstrates that a comprehensive understanding of both functional and content-area vocabulary can lead to improved reading comprehension.

Significant Difference in the Pre-test and the Post-test Mean Scores of the Control Group

Table 5 displays a notable contrast between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the control group. The initial mean score in the pre-test, which was below 30 at 24.70, fell short of meeting the expected level. This suggests that students at this proficiency level encounter challenges in understanding, indicating a deficiency in the acquisition and development of prerequisite knowledge and essential abilities necessary for facilitating comprehension.

Table 5: Significant difference in the pre-test and the post-test mean scores of the control group

Mean Scores of Control Group		Mean Difference	Computed t-value	p-value	Remark
Pre-test	*Post-test*				
24.70	27.97	3.27	1.429	.158	Not Significant

It indicates that at this stage, students require additional support to improve their reading comprehension. For instance, implementing reading strategies can be beneficial in fostering reading comprehension. Reading strategies enable struggling readers to actively engage with the text and assist in understanding (Fritschmann et al., 2007; Swanson et al., 2011).

In contrast, the post-test mean score, which was still below 30 at 27.97, did not meet the expected level. This suggests that although there was improvement in student reading comprehension after the class discussion, further enhancements are needed.

Students faced difficulties in understanding the various components covered in the pre-test and post-test reading comprehension questions. Therefore, interventions involving reading strategies are necessary. Consistent use of reading strategies by readers leads to improved reading comprehension (Antoniou & Souvignier, 2007). Additionally, the traditional approach to learning or teaching did not significantly enhance student reading comprehension.

Overall, the control group mean scores in the pre-test and post-test did not exhibit a significant difference. However, based on the data, it is evident that there was an increase in test results before and after the instruction was conducted. The computed t-value is 1.429, and the p-value is 0.158, leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis.

Significant Difference in the Pre-test and the Post-test Mean Scores of the Experimental Group

Table 6 presents the contrast between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental group. Initially, the pre-test mean score of 27.70 fell short of expectations. This indicates that students at this level require assistance in understanding, as there is a need to acquire or develop prerequisite knowledge and skills to facilitate comprehension. Additionally, their comprehension level could be higher, and they need support in understanding the various factors addressed in the pre-test reading comprehension questions.

On the contrary, the mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test phase reached 35.57, which falls within the range considered "good" based on the descriptive criteria. This indicates notable enhancements in the students' foundational knowledge, skills, and overall comprehension. They are now capable of applying this understanding in real-world performance tasks with guidance from the teacher and some support from their peers. Peer tutoring has been recognized as a proven strategy for improving students' reading performance and boosting their self-confidence throughout various stages of formal education (Ginsburg-Block et al., 2006; McMaster et al., 2006).

Table 6: Significant difference in the pre-test and the post-test mean scores of the experimental group

Mean Scores of Experimental Group		Mean Difference	Computed t-value	p-value	Remark
Pre-test	*Post-test*				
27.70	35.57	7.67	4.046	.000	Significant

In general, there is a noteworthy difference of 7.67 in the mean scores of the experimental group between the pre-test and post-test stages, with a computed t-value of 4.046 and a p-value of 0.000. This outcome confirms the statistical significance of the

variance in mean scores between the pre-test and post-test within the experimental group.

As a result, the implementation of a peer tutoring strategy proves advantageous in enhancing students' reading comprehension. Peer tutoring can be utilized to facilitate experiential learning that is focused on specific goals, supported by evidence, culturally appropriate, and tailored to individual differences and needs (Schmidt et al., 2002). Numerous studies provide evidence of the effectiveness of peer tutoring across different age groups, highlighting its educational benefits in terms of reading performance and socio-emotional aspects (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2014; Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; Ginsberg-Block et al., 2006). Consequently, these results contradict the hypothesis that assumed no significant difference in mean scores between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group.

Significant Difference between the Mean Gain Scores of the Experimental and the Control Groups

The analysis of Table 7 examines the significance of the difference in mean gain scores between the experimental and control groups. In the experimental group, the mean gain score was 7.67, while the control group achieved a mean gain score of 3.27. This data reveals a mean difference of 4.40 between the two groups, with a computed t-value of 2.381 and a p-value of .021.

Therefore, we can conclude that there is a substantial distinction between the mean gain scores of the experimental and control groups. This outcome refutes the hypothesis that assumes no significant difference between the students who received peer tutoring in the experimental group and those in the control group who followed the traditional approach.

Table 7: Significant difference between the mean gain scores of the experimental and the control groups

Mean Gain Scores		Mean Difference	Computed t-value	p-value	Remark
Experimental	*Control*				
7.67	3.27	4.40	2.381	.021	Significant

The results indicate that implementing the peer tutoring strategy has resulted in a significant improvement in the reading comprehension skills of the learners in the experimental group. The teacher's strategy has generally enhanced the learners' abilities in comprehending written material. The peer tutoring strategy is well-documented and provides teachers with effective techniques to engage learners from various cultural and academic backgrounds in language acquisition and improving reading comprehension (Jones et al., 2017). Furthermore, numerous literature reviews and research studies have consistently supported the effectiveness of peer tutoring across various academic and

behavioral domains (Okilwa & Shelby, 2010; Stenhoff & Lignugaris/Kraft, 2007).

In conclusion, peer tutoring provides a straightforward and practical approach that can be easily implemented. It serves as an effective intervention to address the disparities among learners from various academic and cultural backgrounds within a classroom setting, especially in situations where resources may be limited. Peer tutoring also enables teachers to identify and diagnose the reading challenges and obstacles faced by students with diverse needs, interests, and individual differences. This knowledge allows teachers to develop targeted interventions that specifically target and rectify these gaps, particularly in the areas of reading comprehension and language conventions (Alzahrani & Leko, 2017).

Conclusion

Based on the findings above, the following conclusions were drawn:

From the results above, the researchers concluded that there was demonstration of effectiveness of peer tutoring in improving the reading comprehension of ninth-grade students, specifically those in the experimental group. The noticeable increase in the average scores of the students from the pre-test to the post-test indicates a significant improvement in their reading comprehension. This suggests that peer tutoring serves as an effective mechanism or strategy for fostering and enhancing students' understanding.

On the contrary, although there was an increase in the students' mean scores of the control group from their pre-test to post-test; it does not make any difference. The result shows that the traditional way of instruction utilized in the control group might be less effective as no change was observed and there was decrease in the mean score. Thus, it implies a significant difference between peer tutoring and the traditional way of instruction. This strategy, therefore, can be an effective alternative to the traditional way of instruction in further enhancing the students' reading comprehension as it has shown effects on the reading comprehension of the ninth grade students of Samal National High School.

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