A Study of Investigating the Reading Motivation of Elementary School Students

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Abstract

This study investigated the important factors affecting the reading motivation of elementary school students. This study performed literature review to investigate the important factors affecting the reading motivation of elementary school students and develop the preliminary structure. Afterwards select the experts who actually promote reading courses as the respondents to conduct two rounds of modified Delphi method expert questionnaire surveys to establish measurement criteria. Thirdly, this study enrolled higher grade elementary school students as the subjects in order to confirm the important factors affecting the reading motivation of elementary school students.

This study suggested the main criteria of important factors affecting reading motivation of elementary school students included the following factors: 1) personal effectiveness; 2) personal goals; 3) society; 4) leisure and recreation. The sub-criteria included 12 factors.

Keywords: Reading motivation, Elementary School, Modified Delphi method

1. Introduction

The 21st century is the era of knowledge economy, and knowledge is a sharp weapon for competition. Francis Bacon (1561~1626) said, "Knowledge is power." Reading can guide children to increase their knowledge and expand their horizons through texts, pictures, and images, and even trigger their brainstorming process to exhibit more creativity and imagination. Therefore, reading has a huge impact on children. Reading enables us to stand on the shoulders of giants and look higher and further [1]. Reading is the key to national and individual competence, as well as an important indicator for inspecting the success/failure of personal learning and national educational policies. Reading is a habit, and has to be induced. However, how to trigger children's reading motivation and enable them to develop reading behavior and a reading habit to become competitive in the era of knowledge economy has become the objective to which parents, teachers and various education-related authorities attach importance [2]. Reading has apparently become the learning revolution of the new generation. The rapid development of 3C electronic products has led to children's obsession with video games and internet. However, "reading," a real learning ability of children, has declined day by day. As a result, children fail to possess basic strength and face challenges in the era of knowledge explosion. Most of the existing studies on reading still emphasized the investigation on perception dimension, and attached less importance to the affection and motivation of reading field [3]. Therefore, this study intends to further investigate and understand the reading motivation of elementary school students, as well as to perform an in-depth investigation on the important factors affecting reading motivation of elementary school students, in order to enable elementary school students to develop active reading habit.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reading Motivation

Reading motivation refers to individuals' reasons and purposes to engage in reading activities. It can induce and maintain individuals' reading activities, and is an internal process of individuals' reading objectives. It is also the internal and psychological power that encourages and guides reading behaviors [4]. According to the literature review, this study investigated the reading motivation of elementary school students from multiple perspectives.

Liou, Jian, and Song (2003) [5] integrated relevant domestic and foreign studies on reading motivation and found that, the factors developed for motivation of reading specific fields and reading motivation are

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"ability and efficacy belief," "achievement value and objectives," and "society." "Ability and efficacy" includes efficacy, challenges, and avoidance of reading. "Achievement value and objectives" include curiosity, devotion, importance, grades, recognition, and competition. "Society" refers to the situation where an individual who becomes a member of a certain community through the sharing with peers, friends, or family members during reading process or the pursuit of meanings of reading will read to comply with social culture and meet external expectations or other people's expectations.

Mcevoy and Vincent (1980) [6] indicated that, the most frequently mentioned reading motivation is divided into two categories: one is to obtain general knowledge, and the other is to satisfy interest. Readers will view reading as a leisure and entertainment activity. Chen (2002) [7] mentioned that, the reading motivations of teenagers include: to understand the world, to understand internal world of selves, to engage in emotional exchanges with other people, and to enrich selves. Hao (2001) [8] suggested that reading motivation is to meet four needs: knowledge need, thinking need, need for referring to reading tools, and recreational need. Chen (2002) [9] integrated scholars' discourses to classify reading motivation into four types: obtainment of information, personal identity, integration & social interaction, and leisure and entertainment. Huang (2010) [10] investigated reading motivation of university students by dividing it into interest & preference, learning of new knowledge, job need, leisure & entertainment, and social interaction. Gao (2014) [11] divided reading motivation into 8 dimensions: reading efficacy, reading for venting emotions, competition in reading, reading for recognition, reading for compliance, reading for grades, and reading for social reasons.

2.2 Modified Delphi Method

Delphi method is a research method using both quantitative and qualitative scientific integration. During research process of a specific issue, Delphi method uses the anonymous and constant written discussions of experts to induce them to reach a consistent consensus using their professional competence, practical experiences, and personal opinions and further solve or replicate uncertain questions. Murry and Hammons (1995) [12]

modified Delphi method, and skipped the procedure of open-ended questionnaire survey. They used literature review or expert interviews to develop preliminary criteria and replace the procedure of preliminary open-ended questionnaire survey that summarize experts' individual opinions.

3. Research Method

3.1 Tables and Figures

The purpose of this study is to investigate the important factors affecting the reading motivation of elementary school students. Firstly, this study developed the theoretical basis based on literature review. Secondly, this study used modified Delphi method to select the experts promoting reading courses of higher grade students as the respondents to develop the assessment criteria. Lastly, this study confirm the hierarchical structure of indicators affecting the promotion of reading courses and activities, develop the questionnaire, and enroll higher grade students as the subjects to obtain the important reference for future teaching plans or discussions. The research flow is as follows:
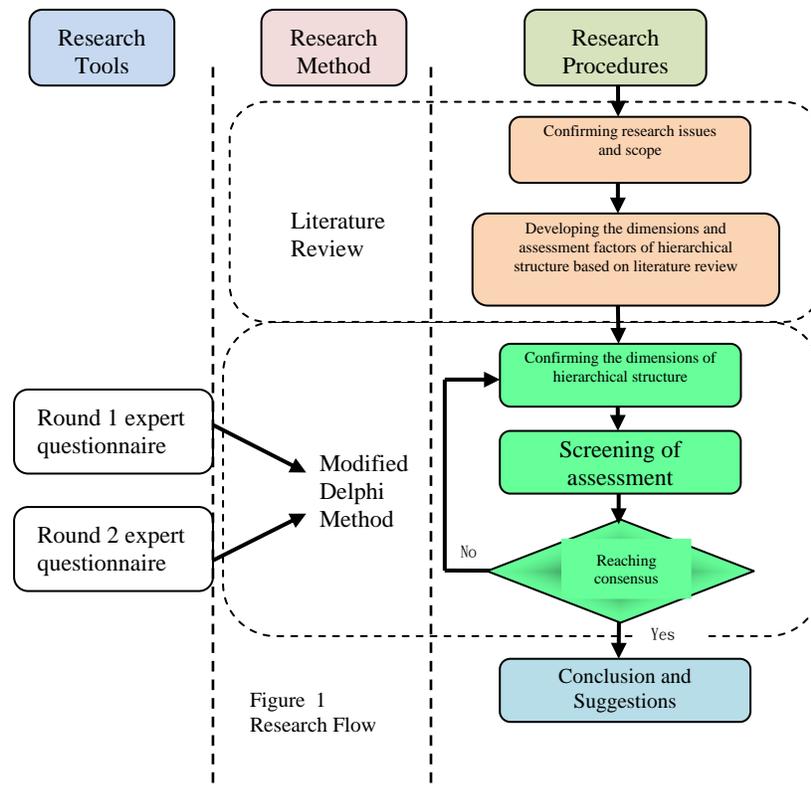

Figure 1
Research Flow

Step 1: Literature Review

This study summarized relevant studies investigating the important factors affecting the reading motivation of elementary school students, and divided the main criteria of important factors affecting reading motivation into personal efficacy, personal goals, society, and leisure & entertainment. Personal efficacy included 3 sub-criteria: personal capacity, challenges, and avoidance of reading; personal goals included 6 sub-criteria: curiosity, level of devotion, importance of reading, school grades, peer recognition, and peer competition. Society included 3 sub-criteria: social stress, family expectation, and social interactions. Leisure & entertainment included 4 sub-criteria: venting emotions, interest & preference, killing time, and enriching spiritual life.

Step 2: Modified Delphi Method

The Delphi method questionnaire survey in this study selected the experts promoting reading courses of higher grade students in elementary schools as the respondents. The experts were invited to score the importance of indicators (points 1-5) of important factors affecting the reading motivation of elementary school students.

For the results of Delphi method questionnaire survey, if the mean is <3, the importance of the indicator is low and the indicator can be deleted [13]. Moreover, this study used Coefficient of Variance (C.V.) to measure the differences among respondents and determine whether experts and scholars had reached consistent consensus. When CV $\leqq$ 0.3, experts and scholars reached highly consistent consensus [13]. The factors were retained and deleted based on the results of 2 rounds of questionnaire surveys, as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Results of Round 1 Modified Delphi Method Questionnaire Survey

Factors of Main Criteria Hierarchy				
	Mean	SD	CV	Results
Personal efficacy	3.89	0.93	0.24	Accepted
Personal goal	4.33	0.85	0.20	Accepted
Society	4.11	0.65	0.16	Accepted
Leisure & entertainment	3.89	1.05	0.27	Accepted
Factors of Sub-criteria Hierarchy				
Factor 1-Personal efficacy				
Personal efficacy	3.89	0.78	0.20	Accepted
Challenges	4.22	1.03	0.24	Accepted
Avoidance of reading	3.78	0.98	0.26	Accepted
Factor 2-Personal goals				
Curiosity	4.67	0.50	0.11	Accepted
Level of devotion	4.67	0.50	0.11	Accepted
Importance of reading	3.89	1.14	0.29	Accepted
School grades	2.78	2.39	0.86	Deleted
Peer recognition	3.56	1.63	0.46	Deleted
Peer competition	3.33	1.80	0.54	Deleted
Factor 3-Society				
Social stress	3.67	1.00	0.27	Accepted
Family expectation	4.11	0.91	0.22	Accepted
Social interactions	4.22	1.02	0.24	Accepted
Factor 4-Leisure & entertainment				
Venting emotions	3.44	0.88	0.26	Accepted
Interest & preference	4.67	1.39	0.30	Accepted
Killing time	3.67	1.14	0.31	Deleted
Enriching spiritual life	3.89	1.04	0.27	Accepted

Table 2 Results of Round 2 Modified Delphi Method Questionnaire Survey

Factors of Main Criteria Hierarchy				
	Mean	SD	CV	Results
Personal efficacy	4.22	0.83	0.20	Accepted
Personal goal	3.78	0.96	0.25	Accepted
Society	3.56	0.88	0.25	Accepted
Leisure & entertainment	4.78	0.74	0.15	Accepted
Factors of Sub-criteria Hierarchy				
Factor 1-Personal efficacy				
Personal efficacy	4.00	0.87	0.22	Accepted
Challenges	4.33	0.94	0.22	Accepted
Avoidance of reading	3.78	1.00	0.26	Accepted
Factor 2-Personal goals				
Curiosity	4.44	0.53	0.12	Accepted
Level of devotion	4.33	0.72	0.17	Accepted
Importance of reading	4.00	0.85	0.21	Accepted
Factor 3-Society				
Social stress	3.11	0.93	0.30	Accepted
Family expectation	3.78	0.83	0.22	Accepted
Social interactions	4.00	1.18	0.29	Accepted
Factor 4-Leisure & entertainment				
Venting emotions	3.89	0.78	0.20	Accepted
Interest & preference	4.89	1.11	0.23	Accepted
Enriching spiritual life	4.00	0.87	0.22	Accepted

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After two rounds of modified Delphi method questionnaire surveys on anonymous experts, this study found that, the important factors affecting the reading motivation of elementary school students included 4 main criteria: personal efficacy, personal goals, society, and leisure & entertainment. 3 sub-criteria were retained in personal efficacy: personal efficacy, challenges, and avoidance of reading. 3 sub-criteria were retained in personal goals: curiosity, level of devotion, and importance of reading. 3 sub-criteria were retained in society: social stress, family expectation, and social interactions. 3 sub-criteria were retained in leisure & entertainment: venting emotions, interest & preference, and enriching spiritual life. There were a total of 12 sub-criteria.

Among the 4 main criteria, the mean of leisure & entertainment was the highest, and its coefficient of variance was the lowest, suggesting that leisure & entertainment is the main factor affecting the reading motivation of elementary school students. During the design of reading courses, reading should be integrated into students' entertainment to motivate their active reading during leisure time. Among the 12 sub-criteria, the mean of curiosity was the highest, and its coefficient of variance was the lowest, suggesting that curiosity is the main internal driving force of reading motivation of elementary school students. Therefore, to trigger, retain, and maintain curiosity of elementary school students is an important factor that cannot be overlooked for the promotion of reading courses.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

For the important factors affecting the reading motivation of elementary school students obtained from 2 rounds of Delphi method, this study used the "Questionnaire on Important Factors Affecting the Reading Motivation of Elementary School Students" to perform analyses.

For the analysis of results of the questionnaire survey on 4 main criteria of important factors affecting the reading motivation of elementary school students, this study used relevant formulas to calculate the various criteria.

The results showed that, during elementary school students' reading of extracurricular reading materials, the most important factor affecting their active reading is "leisure & entertainment." The importance of "leisure & entertainment" is higher than that of "personal goals" and "society." The importance of "personal efficacy" is significantly lower than that of other three factors.

The research results showed that, higher grade elementary school students suggested that "enriching spiritual life" is the most important factor affecting their reading motivation. The greatest benefits of reading to individuals is enriching self-spirit to achieve the objective of independent thinking. The reading motivation triggered in response to "interest & preference" of individuals cannot be overlooked during the arrangement of reading courses. It is necessary to comprehensively understand students' interest and preference, and provide them with reading materials in a timely manner to trigger their reading motivation, enable them to enjoy the sense of satisfaction after reading, and strengthen their interest & preference. There is a cause-and-effect relationship between interest & preference and reading motivation. Therefore, students' active reading habit can be developed by strengthening their interest & preference. To trigger and maintain students' "curiosity" to strengthen their reading motivation and expand their horizons is important. For the top 3 sub-criteria, 2 of them were in the main criteria of "leisure & entertainment," and their importance was top 1 and top 2, indicating that higher grade elementary school students suggested that "enriching spiritual life" and "interest & preference" in leisure & entertainment are important factors affecting their willingness to engage in active reading. In order to enrich spiritual life, students are more willing to read. Interest & preference motivate them to be more willing to read books. These two internal factors affecting reading motivation showed that students can exert more self-potentials through reading and expand their horizons through reading as well.

5. Conclusion

The understanding of students' reading motivation is the most fundamental and basic work to promote reading courses in elementary schools. However, students' reading behavior cannot become meaningful and it is possible for them to develop lifelong reading habit unless they are willing to engage in active reading. The results of the questionnaire showed that, among the 4 main criteria,

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"leisure & entertainment" is the most important assessment indicator affecting the reading motivation of elementary school students, followed by personal goals, society, and personal efficacy.

In terms of 12 sub-criteria, "enriching spiritual life," "interest & preference," and "curiosity" are the most important factors affecting reading motivation. Among the top 3 sub-criteria, two of the sub-criteria of the main criteria "leisure & entertainment" are top 1 and top 2, suggesting that reading can become one of the students' activities for leisure and entertainment purposes. The sense of joy created by reading for leisure and entertainment purposes can strengthen students' reading motivation. In terms of enriching spiritual life, this study suggested that students' reading motivation can be extended strengthened by understanding their needs of spiritual life to arrange reading courses and providing them with adequate number of reading activities in a timely manner. In terms of interest & preference, for students whose interest & preference are confirmed, the reading materials in which they are interested can be expanded and extended. On the contrary, for students who do not understand their own interest & preference, exploratory reading courses can be arranged in the beginning of reading courses to enable them to understand their own interest & preference to further strengthen their reading motivation. In terms of curiosity, elementary school teachers are obligated to maintain students' curiosity. Everyone has curiosity. Therefore, during the promotion of reading courses, reading activities can be used to trigger students' curiosity and make them to devote themselves to reading.

In the era of knowledge explosion, reading is similar to a window leading students to expand their horizons, explore the new world, and exert unknown potentials. Reading extracurricular reading materials enables students to reduce the anxiety caused by competitions in formal courses, as well as effectively triggers their learning motivation. Reading vivid and readable reading materials enables students to enjoy learning and increase their language proficiency through reading a lot. Both internal reading motivation and external reading motivation can strengthen students' reading motivation through their mutual stimulation. The ultimate objectives of promotion of reading courses are to strengthen students' reading motivation, enable them to engage in active learning, and help them develop lifelong reading habit.

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