

# Reading Anxiety and Academic Performance of Grade 8 English Students

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**Abstract --** This study was conducted to determine the level of reading anxiety and academic performance of Grade 8 English students. Specifically, it looked into the profile of the Grade 8 learners of Daniel Maramba National High School in terms of their age, sex, parent's highest educational attainment: father and mother, birth order, monthly family income, mother tongue, reading materials read at home or school and number of hours allotted reading at home or school and the level of academic performance of Grade 8 students in the School Year 2019-2020.

Likewise, the level of reading anxiety of the students was assessed in terms of physical and cognitive. These variables were correlated to their profile and academic performance. The descriptive design was used. A survey-questionnaire was developed to gather the needed data from 221 respondents. Frequency counts, percentage distribution, average weighted mean (AWM) and chi-square and spearman-rho were used in the analysis of data.

The research revealed that the students are in their early adolescent age, predominantly female by sex, whose parents are high school graduates with low monthly family income, speak Tagalog, read storybooks and allot 1 to 2 hours reading at home. Their academic performance was at satisfactory level. Also, the level of their reading anxiety is high with 2.66 average weighted mean. The level of their anxiety in terms of the cognitive indicators is higher than of the physical indicators. Sex and parents' highest educational attainment showed significant influence to the level of their reading anxiety. It is also proven that the level of reading anxiety in terms of physical indicators is inversely proportional to the academic performance of the students.

An Intervention Activity Plan to Reduce Anxiety was developed by the researcher as a possible tool to address the reading anxiety levels of Grade 8 English students.

**Keywords** – reading, reading anxiety, academic performance, reading comprehension

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the macro-skills, along with listening, writing, speaking, and viewing. Of the five skills, reading can be regarded as especially important because reading is assumed to be the central means for learning new information [1].

The issue of anxiety in English as a Foreign Language learning has concerned language educators and researchers for many years. According to Seligman, Walker and Rosenhand [2], anxiety is a psychological and physiological state characterized by somatic, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components. It is the displeasing feeling of fear and concern. It is anxiety that learners experience while they are reading in their new target language.

Anxiety has become one of the factors involved in the success of language learning, either it is in positive or negative way. Krashen's affective filter hypothesis also stated that affective variables such as motivation, self-confidence and anxiety play a facilitative role in second language acquisition. To be precise, he said that learners with low anxiety have less affective filter to block their language acquisition [3].

Reading anxiety can result in physical and cognitive reactions. Physical reactions may include the release of adrenaline and symptoms such as sweating, feeling shaky, a pounding heart, rapid breathing and stomach ache. Cognitive reactions may include an overwhelming sense of dread, low self-esteem, feelings of helplessness and expectations of public humiliation [4].

People who have issues with reading are sometimes described as poor, reluctant, or

struggling readers. These descriptions tend to focus on children rather than their reading problems. While it is important to focus on strategies to help them improve their reading skills, emotional aspects of the reading experience are sometimes neglected. Repeated neutral experiences, such as reading aloud, paired with peer ridicule, for example, can cause learners to associate reading with negative emotions [4].

Their pattern of thinking that regarding learning English is a hard thing to be done might be resulted from their consideration that they have to learn to make sentences, have to become accustomed to the sounds of the language, have to remember a lot of vocabulary and have to learn the pronunciation of words as well. These numbers of worries itself already make them lose the spirit to learn English and then arouses their anxiety of English.

When students struggle to read, reading becomes demotivating and students avoid reading. Reading comprehension is hindered when students lose interest and disengage from reading. Many students begin to dislike reading because they struggle to gain meaning from what they read. While research supports a strong correlation between reading engagement and reading ability, students often do not read well because they do not spend time reading. A cycle of reading apathy begins, which makes it more challenging to support struggling readers [5].

Attentional Control Theory proposes that anxiety inhibits performance. It is well documented that anxiety reduces working memory capacity, and consequently people tend to retain less information from reading a text when they are anxious. Similarly, Blair [6] postulated that negative emotions of young children would lead them to focus on the object of their emotions rather than on the academic tasks they are asked to perform. Thus, negative emotions interfere with scholastic activities by reducing resources needed to integrate and attend to important details [7] or by disrupting the effort students bring to their studies.

An alternative hypothesis is that children's reading affect develops in response to reading experiences [8]. As many students judge their self-worth through academic success or failure, perceived failure on a test may increase fear of negative judgment and threat to self-worth.

Premised on the above context and conditions, the researcher found the exigency to understand the reading anxiety and academic performance of Grade 8 English students. Moreover, it has been observed by the researcher that students in Daniel Maramba National High School are hesitant to read in front of the class and afraid to answer questions thrown to them after reading. The same feedback from other teachers who handle language subjects in both junior high and senior high schools. Thus, the researcher is interested in exploring the topic to help language learners to overcome their reading anxiety and to improve the levels of performance in reading.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study attempted to determine the reading anxiety and academic performance of Grade 8 English students enrolled during the school year 2019-2020 in Daniel Maramba National High School of Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan.

Specifically, this study aimed to achieve the following:

1. Determine the profile of Grade 8 students in terms of:
  - a. age;
  - b. sex;
  - c. parent's highest educational attainment;
  - d. birth order;
  - e. monthly family income;
  - f. mother tongue;
  - g. reading materials read at home or school; and
  - h. number of hours allotted for reading per day at home or school.
2. Determine the academic performance of grade 8 students in the school year 2019-2020;
3. Determine the level of reading anxiety of the students, in terms of:
  - a. physical and
  - b. cognitive.
4. Find the correlation between the level of reading anxiety of Grade 8 English students across their profile variables and academic performance in English.

5. Develop an intervention activity plan could be proposed to reduce the reading anxiety level of students.

This study generally focused on determining the relationship of the reading anxiety and academic performance of Grade 8 English students enrolled during the school year 2019-2020 in Daniel Maramba National High School of Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan.

### RESEARCH PARADIGM

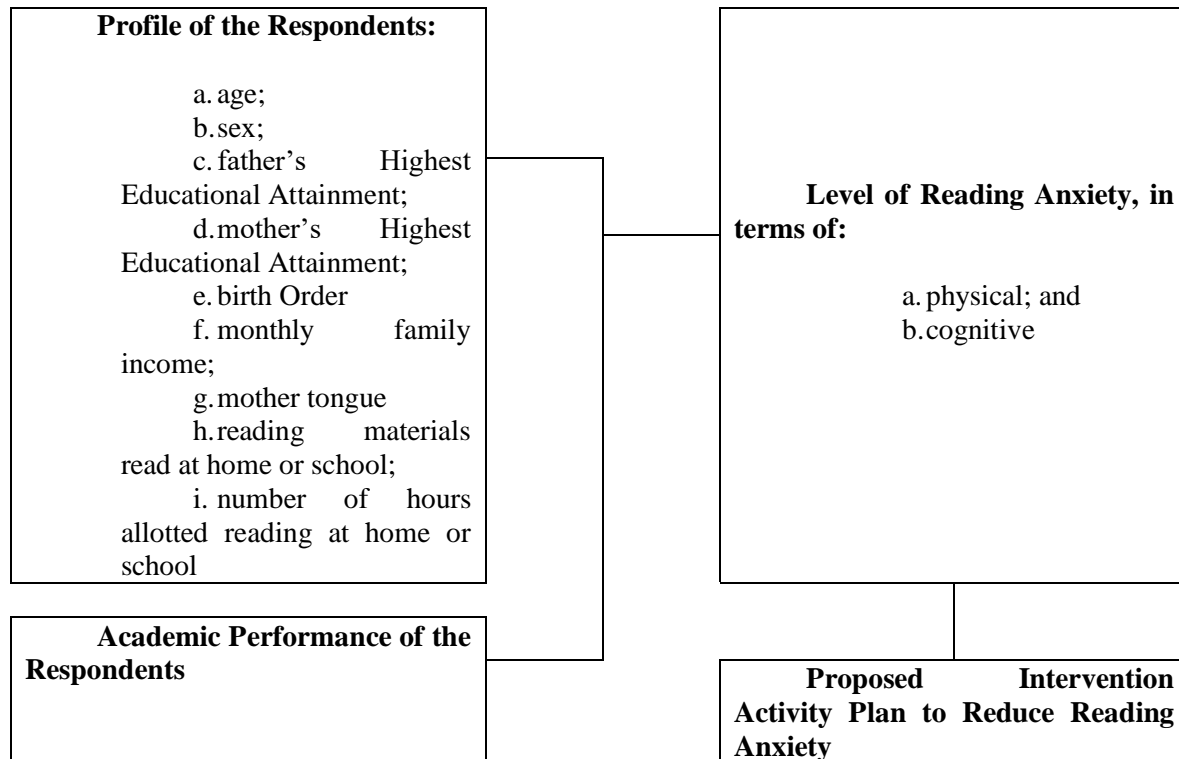


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

The diagram presents the paradigm of the study. The two boxes represent the data of the students, their profile and academic performance relating it to their reading anxiety in terms of physical and cognitive factors which is seen on the third box. Upon the analysis done on the data, a Proposed Intervention Activity Plan to Reduce Reading Anxiety shown on fourth box was formulated which may be used to address the reading anxiety of the students.

### MATERIALS AND METHOD

#### Research Design

The study used the descriptive-correlational method of research to determine the reading anxiety and academic performance of

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Grade 8 English Students in Daniel Maramba National High School, Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan. The correlational method was used to find the relationship of the profile of the respondents and their level of reading anxiety and their reading

anxiety and academic performance. Descriptive research provides a detailed account of a social setting, a group of people, a community, a situation, or some other phenomenon. This kind of research strives to paint a complete and accurate picture of the world [9].

### **Respondents of the Study**

The respondents of this study consisted of the Grade 8 High School Students enrolled in the school year 2019-2020 in Daniel Maramba National High School located at the Municipality of Sta. Barbara, under the Schools Division Office I of Pangasinan.

### **Instrument**

The main instrument used to collect the data was survey-questionnaire. The questionnaire was adopted by the researcher in the study of MasoudZoghi [10] entitled An Instrument for EFL Reading Anxiety: Inventory Construction and Preliminary Validation. The questionnaire assessed the reading anxiety of Grade 8 students. Specifically, two areas of reading anxiety were assessed: physical and cognitive. It was a 4-point scale questionnaire with the choices totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and totally disagree.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The mean was interpreted as follows:

Scale	Description
3.26 – 4.00	Totally Agree
2.51 – 3.25	Somewhat Agree
1.76 – 2.50	Somewhat Disagree
1.00 – 1.75	Totally Disagree

To answer problem number 4 which is to determine the significant relationship of the profile of the students and their level of reading anxiety, Chi-square and Spearman-rho were used.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Profile of the Respondents**

A letter of request to conduct the study was submitted to the Superintendent of Schools Division Office I Pangasinan for approval.

Once her request was approved, the researcher started with the data collection process by distributing personally the questionnaires to the respondents. Since the researcher administered the distribution of questionnaires, she was able to answer the clarificatory questions.

### **Statistical Treatment of Data**

To answer the problem number 1, frequency count and percentages was used to establish the profile of the respondents.

To answer problem number 2, average weighted means (AWM) was computed based on the respondent's academic performance.

To answer problem number 3, average weighted means (AWM) was computed based on the respondent's judgments in the 4-point likert scale.

The weighted mean was used to determine the reading anxiety of Grade 8 English students.

### **Interpretation**

Very High Level of Reading Anxiety
High Level of Reading Anxiety
Low Level of Reading Anxiety
Very Low Level of Reading Anxiety

To answer problem number 5 which is to determine the significant relationship of the reading anxiety and academic performance of the students, Spearman-rho was used.

Table 1 on the following page shows the tabulated data on the profile of the respondents in terms of the variables aforementioned. To establish the profile of the learners, the frequency counts, percentages were used and ranked.

It can be gleaned from Table 1 that most of the respondents' age is 12-14 years old (93.4percent) with 197 frequency count. There are fourteen (14) learners (6.6 percent) aged 15-18 years old.

The data show that the highest percentage as to the age of the respondents is 12-14 years old which is the common age for a Grade 8 learner in the country's basic education curriculum. Republic Act 10157 otherwise known as the Kindergarten Education Act sets that children who are at least five (5) years will have one year of preparatory education as a prerequisite for Grade I. Former education chief Armin Luistro issued DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016 or Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education [11] serving as basis in implementing the kindergarten program of the department in public and private schools. If a learner successfully passed the kindergarten, elementary education and Grade 7, he or she would

be 13 years old in Grade 8. Nonetheless, the recorded ages of the respondents are common ages for school children under K to 12 Program of the country.

The table also shows that the class is female- dominated based on the figures. Regarding the sex variable, 116 of the respondents (55 percent) are female while 95 (45 percent) of the learners who took part in the study are male.

As to father's educational attainment, majority of the respondents answered that their fathers are high school graduates. One hundred eight (108) of them (51.2 percent) responded that their fathers finished high school. Eighty (80) (37.9 percent) answered that their fathers graduated in college. On the other hand, 22 (10.4 percent) of the respondents have fathers who are elementary graduates. Only one learner has a father who achieved a master's degree.

**Table 1Profile of Grade 8 Students**

Profile	Category	Frequency	%
Age	12-14	197	93.4
	15-18	14	6.6
Sex	Male	95	45.0
	Female	116	55.0
Parent's Highest Educational Attainment			
Father	Elementary Graduate	22	10.4
	High School Graduate	108	51.2
	College Graduate	80	37.9
	Masteral Graduate	1	0.5
Mother	Elementary Graduate	16	7.6
	High School Graduate	117	55.5
	College Graduate	69	32.7
	Masteral Graduate	9	4.3
Birth Order	Youngest	63	29.9
	Middle	63	29.9
	Eldest	85	40.3
Monthly Family Income	5-000-9,999	84	39.8
	10,000-14,999	39	18.5
	15,000-19,999	31	14.7
	20,000-24,999	19	9.0
	25,000 and Above	38	18.0
Mother Tongue	Tagalog	107	50.7
	Pangasinan	100	47.4
	Ilocano	3	1.4
	Others	1	0.5
Reading Materials Read at Home or School	Novels	56	26.5
	Story Book	121	57.3
	Comics	28	13.3
	Encyclopedia	1	0.5
	Academic Books	3	1.4
	Newspaper	2	0.9
Number of Hours Allotted Reading at Home or School	1-3	168	79.6
	4-6	41	19.4
	7-9	1	0.5

As to mother's educational attainment, majority of the respondents have mothers who are able to finish high school education. There were 117 (55percent) who have mothers who are high school graduates. There were 69 (32.7 percent) of the participants who responded that their mothers graduated college. Meanwhile, there are 16 (7.6 percent) who answered that their mothers are elementary graduates. The remaining 9 (4.3 percent) of the learners have mothers who obtained a master's degree.

Analysing the educational attainment variables, the parents of the participants are literate as there are many high school and college graduates who took basic and higher education. It is also worth noting that there are parents who are seeking for advanced studies. Having literate parents is advantageous as they can help their children in learning literacy skills like reading. Shoukat et al. [12] concluded in their study that parent's education has an impact on children's educational performance.

Regarding the birth order, 85 respondents answered they are the oldest among their siblings in their respective families. The said birth order has the highest percentage with 40.3 percent. Sixty- three (63) learners are the youngest among their siblings, while the other 63 are middle children in their respective families. Both birth orders have recorded 29.9 percent.

For monthly income, majority of the respondents answered that their families earn PHP 5,000-9,999. Eighty- four (84) or 39.8percent percent belong to this bracket; 39 or 18.5 percent have families earning around PHP 10,000 to 14,999; 31 or 14.7 percent have families earning around PHP 15,000 to 19,999; 19 or 9 percent have families earning around PHP 20,000 to 24,999; and 38 or 18 percent have families earning PHP 25,000 and above.

Using the Family and Income Expenditure Survey conducted by Philippine Statistics Authority, majority of the learners come from poor family. Poor income bracket has indicative range of family income of less than PHP 11,690 per month while low income families earn between PHP 11,690 to 23,381 per month. Thirty-eight (38 percent) of the learners belong to lower

middle class with monthly family income within the bracket, PHP 23,381 to 46,671.

Having these economic conditions could cause reading anxiety and could affect academic performances of the students. This is related to what Kilinc and Yenen [13] found out that students from lower to middle class schools had higher levels of anxiety in the sub-dimensions of factors supporting reading, reading comprehension and analysis compared to students from upper class schools.

For the mother tongue, more than half of the respondents speak Tagalog as native language. This has a frequency count of 107 (50.7percent). One hundred respondents (100) or 47.4 percent have Pangasinan as first language. Only three learners are Ilocano native speakers. There is one (1) learner who answered others or having language spoken which is not included in the questionnaire.

In terms of reading materials read at home or school, story books have the highest frequency count. There are 121 learners (57.3 percent) who answered that they have story books, 56 (26.5 percent) have novels, and 28 (13.3 percent) have comics. Meanwhile fewer respondents have the following materials: academic books (3 or 1.4 percent), newspapers (2 or 0.9 percent), and encyclopedias (1 or 0.5 percent). No one answered articles and magazines.

It is worth noting that all learners have materials to read. However, the low counts on academic books, newspapers, and encyclopedias are alarming as these materials have vast information and rich vocabulary that will really enhance learners' reading skills.

Regarding the number of hours allotted for reading at home or school; most of the respondents spend a range of 1-3 hours. One hundred sixty- eight (168) or 79.6 percent answered that they allot up to three hours for reading, 41 (19.4percent) spend 4-6 hours; only one (1) or (0.5 percent) answered 7- 9 hours, and another one (1) or 0.5percent answered 10 above.

### **Academic Performance of Grade 8 Students**

**Table 2**  
**Academic Performance of Grade 8 Students in the School Year 2019-2020**  
**n=211**

<b>Level of Performance</b>		<b>Frequ ency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Grading Scale</b>	<b>Description</b>		
90 and Above	Outstanding	45	21.3
85 – 89	Very Satisfactory	0	0.0
80 – 84	Satisfactory	122	57.8
75 – 79	Fairly Satisfactory	41	19.4
Below 75	Did not meet expectation	3	1.4

It can be gleaned from Table 2 that majority of the respondents (122) have satisfactory level of academic performance. There are 45 (21.3 percent) of students who have 90 and above grade which is described as outstanding, 41 (19.4 percent) of students who have 75-79 grades with fairly satisfactory description, and three (1.4 percent) with below 75 grades who did not meet expectations. Nobody got a rating of very satisfactory or a grade between 85-89 grade range.

The outstanding and satisfactory performances of students in English implies a good start to better understand the world. According to Racca and Lasaten [14], when students are proficient in English they could have better grasp of understanding in Technology, Science and Mathematics. English is a crucial element in the learning of other fields of knowledge.

Table 4 on the next page presents the descriptive statistics on the academic performance of grade 8 students in the school year 2019-2020.

**Table 3**  
**Descriptive Statistics on the Academic Performance of Grade 8 Students in the School Year 2019-2020**  
**n=211**

<b>Statistics</b>	<b>Value</b>
Minimum	73.75
Maximum	94.50
Mean	84.12
Std. Deviation	5.26
Skewness	-0.007
Std. Error	0.167
Kurtosis	-1.063
Std. Error	0.333

The minimum and maximum results of the table imply the lowest and highest grade of the grade 8 students in English. It can be gleaned from the table that the minimum is 73.75 and the maximum is 94.50 with mean statistic of 84.12 and standard deviation of 5.26.

This table further specify the results on the academic performance of the students in English showing that not all students passed the subject given the lowest grade of 73.75. The English subject may be tough for others but with the help of the teachers, they scaffold the prior knowledge of the students to go beyond extraordinary and be proficient English language learners.

Kong et al. [15] have proven that low language proficiency is considered barrier to learning and academic success, where students seeking admission are often required to obtain a score on English language proficiency tests indicating that they have enough English proficiency to be academically successful. There is a correlation between language proficiency and academic performance in the K to 12.

### Level of Reading Anxiety of the Students

**Table 4**  
**Level of Reading Anxiety of the Students (Physical)**  
n=211

Reading Anxiety	VH	H	L	VL	WM	DE
Physical						
1. I stutter when I read due to nervousness.	58	94	36	23	2.89	H
2. I feel shaky when I read in front of my classmates.	63	90	36	22	2.92	H
3. My hands, face, and other parts of the body are sweating when tasked to read.	17	68	53	73	2.14	L
4. My facial muscles twitch when I start to read.	25	30	63	93	1.94	L
5. I suffer stomach ache when I read in front of the class.	11	21	20	159	1.45	VL
6. My heart is pounding fast when asked to read.	67	72	43	29	2.84	H
7. My face blushes when I am afraid to read.	28	47	44	92	2.05	L
8. My tongue twists when I read.	43	73	45	50	2.52	H
9. I lose my poise in front of the class when I read.	67	48	62	34	2.70	H
10. I do not feel at ease when the title of the text is unfamiliar to me.	54	72	57	28	2.72	H
11. I am nervous when a certain sentence is long and has a complex structure.	66	80	42	23	2.90	H
12. I feel worried and shake when the unknown word is difficult to pronounce.	102	58	35	16	3.17	H
13. It makes me feel uneasy when the teacher corrects my pronunciation or translation mistakes.	49	70	51	41	2.60	H
14. It bothers me when the teacher calls on me to read out.	45	52	57	57	2.40	L
15. I feel that my pulses are quickening when I read in front of the class.	50	70	46	45	2.59	H
16. It upsets me when the teacher chooses uninteresting text to read in class.	20	41	79	71	2.05	L
17. When the teacher asks me reading comprehension questions is worrying to me.	67	66	54	24	2.83	H
18. I am nervous when the teacher uses English as a medium of instruction and hardly ever makes use of our first language.	48	78	55	30	2.68	H
19. I become anxious when I have to read English in class.	20	76	75	40	2.36	L
<b>Weighted mean</b>	<b>2.51 – High</b>					

Note: Highest frequencies are in boldface; DE=Descriptive Equivalent; WM= Weighted Mean

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 **VL – Very Low**; 1.76 – 2.50 **L – Low**; 2.51 – 3.25 **H – High**; 3.26 – 4.00 **VH – Very High**

Table 4, bears the results on level of reading anxiety of the respondents in terms of physical indicators. The mean of the learners' responses was computed and described. Then, the figures were interpreted using the reading anxiety levels range from very low level up to very high level.

In terms of the physical indicators, it is perceived from Table 5 that the students are highly anxious when they feel worried if the unknown word is difficult to pronounce. The indicator has the highest mean with 3.17 or high level of reading anxiety. Guimba and Alico [16] found out the

same situation among the students who were involved in the study which is categorized under bottom- up processing.

Learners have high level of reading anxiety as they feel shaky when they read in front of their classmates. They are also highly anxious when they are asked to read as a result their hearts are pounding fast. These two situations are examples mentioned by Jalongo and Hirsh [5] about physical reactions caused by reading anxiety. The reactions manifest when the learners are having a difficult time in reading. The following



are also signs of physical reactions made by reading anxiety: they stutter when they read due to nervousness; they are also highly anxious they lose poise in front of the class when they read; they feel their pulses are quickening when they read in front of the class; and their tongues twist as they read.

The data further show that learners are highly anxious when they see a certain sentence which is long and has a complex structure, when they do not feel ease when the title of the text is unfamiliar to them, and when their teacher uses English as a medium of instruction. These indicators are signs of academic anxiety. Stahl [17] pointed out that learners cannot fully engage with the material presented in class as they feel anxious. The learners tend to underperform in class as they worry of underachieving. The difficulty on reading titles and sentences of the text can lead to poor reading comprehension

English as a foreign language can trigger anxiety among learners. Saito, Garza, and Horwitz [18] found this in their study. The learners have problems understanding their teacher who uses the language in teaching them.

The respondents answered they have high level of reading anxiety that they feel uneasy when the teacher corrects their pronunciation or translation mistakes. Tsai and Lee [19] found in their research that fear of getting mistakes makes learners anxious to study a foreign language. Teachers who are teaching reading, are suggested have better approaches to teach the skill.

It can be gleaned from the table that when the learners are asked reading comprehension questions, they worry. Sellers [20] underscored the role of teachers in helping the students to overcome reading anxiety. Proper feedback mechanism is important as what Magno [21] found in his study. The teachers must utilize anxiety-reducing strategies to students as what Salehi and Marefat [22] recommended in their study

On the other hand, the students have low level of reading anxiety as they feel bothered me when the teacher calls them to read out, when they are anxious when they have to read English in class; their hands, face, and other parts of my body sweat when tasked to read; their faces blush when they are afraid to read; they feel upset when their teacher chooses uninteresting text to read in class; their facial muscles twitch when they start to read;

and they suffer stomach ache when they read in front of the class.

Sweating and stomach ache are samples of physical manifestations mentioned by Jalongo and Hirsh [5]. There are fewer participants who experience these. Even the numbers are low, the teachers still must look into these two as these make the learners anxious and their performance is affected.

Students find being asked to read English in a class less anxious. They also feel the same when they are reading uninteresting text in a class. Exposure to English texts in classes can make learners less anxious. Rajab, Zakaria, Rahman, Hosni, and Hassani [23] found in the study that exposure to English language can make low anxiety level among students. Learners, who have been studying English for years, have adapted the habit of reading in class particularly in English studies.

Table 5 bears the results on level of reading anxiety of the respondents in terms of cognitive indicators.

Exploring the table, the result shows that the learners have high level of reading anxiety in all the remaining fourteen cognitive indicators. The results imply that the learners are struggling in managing reading process in their minds. Barrot [24] wrote that reading is a two- way process that involves the communication between the author and the reader.

These characteristics of the macro- skill tell that a reader needs to interact with author by using strategies to understand the written ideas. Hence, highly anxious readers cannot successfully grasp the information presented by the texts they read.

The first, eighth and ninth indicators are examples of bottom up processing and rest of the indicators are examples of top- down processing. Learners analyse text with their background knowledge, context, and overall meaning going to lower level reading processes. Having high level of reading anxiety with these indicators show that learners are problematic in critical reading activities such as understanding the context embedded in the text as vocabulary impedes them. Furthermore, idioms are figurative language. Learners with literal level of understanding will have problem in understanding figurative

statements in a text such as idioms. The results revealed that learners are also highly anxious about word classes and word formation. They are bothered about the grammar particularly to the

roles of parts of speech in the text and on the structure of a word like a word could have affixes that add up to the syllables.

**Table 5**  
**Level of Reading Anxiety of the Students (Cognitive)**  
n=211

Reading Anxiety	VH	H	L	VL	M	DE
Cognitive						
1. It is worrying to me when the ideas expressed in the text are culturally unclear.	39	89	6 3	20	2.70	H
2. I get upset when I lack the previous knowledge about the ideas expressed in the text.	62	70	5 2	27	2.79	H
3. I worry when I cannot get the gist of the text although no new vocabulary items or grammatical points exist in the text.	61	94	3 2	24	2.91	H
4. When I cannot recognize minor ideas (details) of the text is worrying to me.	53	80	4 9	29	2.74	H
5. I am nervous when I cannot spot the main idea of a certain paragraph.	74	80	4 7	10	3.03	H
6. It bothers me when I cannot express my opinion or feelings about the text.	75	80	3 5	21	2.99	H
7. I feel uneasy when I cannot figure out meanings of unknown words.	79	61	4 5	26	2.91	H
8. I get upset when I cannot figure out the meaning of a word that I feel I have seen before.	85	73	4 0	13	3.09	H
9. It bothers me when I feel unable to look up a word in the dictionary.	46	79	5 3	33	2.65	H
10. I get confused when the word that I know has a different meaning in the sentence.	77	63	5 0	21	2.93	H
11. I get upset when I come across idioms that are unfamiliar to me.	57	85	5 4	15	2.87	H
12. It makes me feel uneasy when an unfamiliar is made up of several parts of syllables.	59	77	4 8	27	2.80	H
13. I get confused when what I know about a grammatical point does not make any sense.	52	86	4 9	24	2.79	H
14. I worry when I am unable to recognize different parts of speech as adjectives, adverbs, or connective words.	65	66	5 9	21	2.83	H
15. I feel upset when the tense of a certain sentence is unclear to me.	51	86	5 3	21	2.79	H
<b>Weighted mean</b>				<b>2.85 – High</b>		

*Note: Highest frequencies are in boldface; DE=Descriptive Equivalent; WM= Weighted Mean*

*Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 VL – Very Low; 1.76 – 2.50 L – Low; 2.51 – 3.25 H – High; 3.26 – 4.00 VH – Very High*

Learners are highly anxious as they are nervous when they cannot spot the main idea of a certain paragraph. Also, they are worried when they cannot recognize minor ideas (details) of the text.

Furthermore, the respondents have high level of reading anxiety when they get confused when the word that they know has a different meaning in the sentence; they feel uneasy when they cannot figure out meanings of unknown words; they worry when they cannot get the gist of the text

although no vocabulary items or grammatical points exists in the text; they get upset when they come across idioms that are unfamiliar to them; they get confused when what they know about grammatical point does not make any sense and they worry when the ideas expressed in the text are culturally unclear. These indicators have something to do with level of competence in reading comprehension.

Giang [25] made a study that revealed the respondents of the said study are merely in the

state of being literal in dimension. Learners who are struggling in decoding the meaning of a sentence or a paragraph cannot go beyond literal level. Al-sohban [26] identified unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topic, and unfamiliar English culture are some of the difficulties of the learners in reading foreign language.

The researcher recommended that making the learners realize that reading is an interaction between the reader and the writer. Thus, teachers need to employ strategies for the learners set this kind of mind set about reading process.

Additionally, learners are highly anxious in reading when they are bothered when they cannot express their opinion or feeling about the text, and they get upset when they lack previous knowledge about the ideas expressed in the text. Woolley [27] claimed that reading needs prior knowledge in getting new information. With this, the learners cannot process the text as they are hindered by their limited knowledge.

Learners feel that being unable to look up a word in a dictionary bothers them. This tends to develop a feeling of helplessness [5] as they cannot locate a word which can help them understand its meaning and its context in the text they are reading.

The Department of Education in South Australia believes high level of anxiety hamper

learners' cognitive skills. Processing and retrieving information from a text will not be fully attained by learners who are highly anxious.

The findings has similarities to the study of Ismail [28] which the major sources of anxiety of the students are related to both strategies and language problems like lack of vocabulary and grammar background knowledge. The learners who have limited vocabulary and knowledge about grammar will find a text difficult to decipher that makes the reading material unclear.

### Relationship in the Profile of Grade 8 Students and Their Level of Reading Anxiety

Table 6 presents the test on relationship between the level of reading anxiety across their profile of grade 8 students using Chi – square test and Spearman – rho correlation. Results are presented in Table 6.

Based on the result, the level of reading anxiety along Physical was found to be significantly related with the sex and parent's highest educational attainment of the student. The result is based on the significant value ( $p < .05$ ) which is lower than the .05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

**Table 6**  
**Relationship of the Profile of Grade 8 Students and Their Level of Reading Anxiety**

Profile	Physical		Cognitive	
	Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.
Age <sup>b</sup>	0.051	.827	0.210	.836
Sex <sup>a</sup>	14.506**	.002	5.142	.024
Parent's Highest Educational Attainment <sup>b</sup>				
Father	-.154*	.025	0.012	.916
Mother	-.167*	.015	0.027	.863
Birth Order <sup>b</sup>	0.041	.836	0.008	.930
Monthly Family Income <sup>b</sup>	0.030	.863	0.040	.869
Mother Tongue <sup>a</sup>	3.9	.047	5.142	.024

	53	.267	546	.136
Reading Materials Read at home or school <sup>a</sup>	16.	0	1	0
	497	.057	6.066	.066
Number of Hours Allotted Reading at Home or School <sup>b</sup>	0.1	0	-	0
	10	.111	0.080	.249

<sup>a</sup>Chi-square test, <sup>b</sup>Spearman – rho correlation

\*Significant at 0.05 level

The same result was found by Lien [29] that females tend to be slightly more anxious than males in reading. This is in consonance with Kiya [30] who found out that sex can positively affect students' reading anxiety. In fact, students with language anxiety tend to have reading anxiety.

On the other hand, the level of reading anxiety of the students is significantly related with the parent's educational attainment of the students. According to Conger and Donnellan [31], parents with a higher socio-economic position are willing to invest more affection to their children. It involves family support on the following: (a) learning materials available in home; (b) parents simulation of learning; (c) the family's standard of living; and (d) residing in a location that helps the child develop competencies. Silinskas et al [32]

has shown that the frequency of parental involvement in children's reading is related to children's reading ability.

Meanwhile, none of the profile variable was found to be significantly related with the level of reading anxiety along cognitive.

### Relationship in the Level of Reading Anxiety and Academic Performance of the Grade 8 English Students

Table 7 on the next page presents the test on relationship between the levels of reading anxiety across their profile of grade 8 students using Spearman – rho correlation.

**Table 7**  
**Relationship of the Level of Reading Anxiety and Academic Performance of the Grade 8 English Students**

Profile	r	Sig.
Physical	-.229**	0.001
Cognitive	0.012	0.861

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the result, the level of reading anxiety along Physical was found to be significantly correlated with the academic performance of the students ( $r = -.229$ ,  $p = .001$ ). The result is based on the significant value ( $p = .001 < .05$ ) which is lower than the .05 level. Hence, there is a sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The result also revealed that the correlation between academic performance and level of reading anxiety along Physical was found to be inversely proportional. This suggests that the higher perceived level of reading anxiety along

Physical, the lower academic performance of the students.

### Proposed Intervention Activity Plan to Reduce Anxiety

Table 8 shows the proposed Intervention Activity Plan to Reduce Reading Anxiety which include the reading interventions which could be used to address the reading anxiety of students and improve their academic performance.

It has six columns. The first column includes the indicators of the study with high level of reading anxiety in terms of physical and cognitive. The second column includes the objectives to resolve the identified reading anxieties of the students. The third column includes the intervention activities that will be the course of action towards achieving lesser reading anxiety. The fourth column includes the main focal persons which includes both internal and external stakeholders of the school. The fifth and sixth includes the timeline and budgetary requirements, respectively.

Reading interventions are activities and strategies that help struggling readers develop their ability to read. Struggling readers can be students who are not able to decode or break up words into syllables, those who cannot comprehend what they are reading, and those whose oral reading is poor. As shown in the table above, the intervention activities target to address the causes of the students' reading anxiety concentrating on their vocabulary building in terms of pronunciation and comprehension.

**Table 9**  
**Proposed Intervention Activity Plan to Reduce Reading Anxiety**

Indicators	Objectives	Intervention Activities	Focal Persons	Timeline	Budgetary Requirement
<b>PHYSICAL</b> I feel worried when the unknown word is difficult to pronounce.	Establish proper pronunciation, vocabulary and concept development	Reinforce the Corrective Reading Program to the Grade 8 learners through remedial reading sessions outside class hours.  Corrective reading is used for struggling readers of junior high school students to guide the learner with word recognition or decoding, oral reading or fluency and reading comprehension. If the school has a speech laboratory among its facilities, it may also be used.	Supervisors  Principal  Head Teacher  English Teachers	July to February (2 times a week during Interdisciplinary Cooperative Learning (ICL) periods)	Department Funds
I feel shaky when I read in front of my classmates.	Develop reading confidence, fluency, speed and a positive attitude towards reading.	Introduce peer reading and sharing and other ways of diverting anxiety to other modes. Create sessions for reading in front of a limited number of audience. This may begin with one listener (one classmate) and as sessions go on, gradually expose the learner to a greater number of listeners.			
I stutter when I read due to nervousness.	Address causes of nervousness towards formal reading assessment	Provide and expose the student to a wide array of reading materials from easy to difficult. No change in the reading performance may indicate the need to address the reading ability level of the student in terms of vocabulary.			
<b>COGNITIVE</b> I get upset when I	Build up vocabulary knowledge	Integrate explicit instruction in teaching English. Suggested Activities	Supervisors	July to March (once a week)	Department Funds

cannot figure out the meanings of unknown words.		for better understanding of vocabulary words are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preview and Review of Context Clues</li> <li>• Prefix, Suffix, Root Study</li> <li>• Word Family Association</li> </ul>	Principal  Head Teacher  English Teachers		
I am nervous when I cannot spot the main idea of a certain paragraph.	Expand reading skills such as identifying the details in a text	Promote inferential reading through establishing connections on feelings and motives of characters, words and photos, places, causes and effects. Begin with easy to comprehend paragraphs and gradually introduce more complex reading materials as sessions go on.			
It bothers me when I cannot express my opinion or feelings about a text.	Develop knowledge on differentiating facts and opinions and how to create opinions about different texts	Encouraging the use of journals in reflective reading. The students will be asked to first write down thoughts and reflections on passages which they were asked to read. Upon doing so, they will be encouraged to read whatever they have written. Throughout the sessions, allow more opportunities for sharing and open ended questioning, moderately detaching the use of journals and allowing students to openly give opinions.			

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn: (a) The Grade 8 students are in their early adolescent age, predominantly female by sex whose parents are high school graduates with low monthly family income, speak Tagalog, read storybooks and allot 1 to 3 hours reading at home. (b) The students have satisfactory level of academic performance. (c) The level of anxiety of the students in terms of the cognitive indicators is higher than in terms of the physical indicators. (d) Sex and parents' highest educational attainment significantly influence the level of reading anxiety. (e) Higher level of reading anxiety in terms of physical indicators is equal to lower academic performance of the grade 8 students.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing findings and conclusions, the researcher made the following recommendations: (a) A variety of reading materials in English may be provided at home and school to increase the academic performance of the

students in reading. Academic books like journals, research publications and encyclopedias may be provided to the students to read and reading assignments may be given as extensions for students to continue reading at home. (b) Implementation of reading remediation programs and other activities regarding the improvement of confidence level of students in terms of reading may help in the reduction of students' anxiety levels towards reading. (c) Teachers may use this study to create activities to address the anxiety levels of students in terms of cognitive indicators. (d) It is recommended that other researchers may look into other factors that may affect the reading anxiety of the students and their academic performance in English. (e) The proposed reading remediation activity may be used by the school administrators and teachers in improving reading performance of students with high reading anxiety levels in English.

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