

Original Research Article

Gender Differences in Comprehending Literary Pieces Writing by Edgar Allan Poe among Senior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Gender roles have been so prominent in this generation. People always see gender differences in different aspects and try to find who has greater ability between male and female. Thus, this study compares the reading comprehension of the two different genders on the literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe. This study utilized the quantitative method specifically the comparative research design. In this study, a sample of 80 senior high school students from a certain University are randomly selected in which 40 of them are males and another 40 are females. The data gathered are analyzed using T-test for independent samples. The findings reveal that there is a significant difference in the comprehension skills between the two (2) genders. Moreover, the results revealed that female students are superior in comprehending the literary pieces by Edgar Allan Poe compared to their counterparts. The findings explicate that female students established a higher level of understanding on the literary pieces and give the teachers an idea for them to come up with various strategies or differentiated instruction in order to address the existing differences between the gender groups.

Introduction

Comprehension is the ability to understand, process and recall what we have read, thus comprehension is really important in reading. This is the ability on how we understand literary pieces or text, hence individual comprehends differently according to their perceptions and real life experiences (Wilhelm, 2017). There are different levels of comprehension with accordance to our age. We comprehend texts or literary pieces through literal, inferential, evaluative and appreciative way. Literary pieces or literature is any oral or written work that lasts up to this day. Literature is classified into two: the oral literature, these are passed down by words of mouth; and the written literature, these are passed down through writings. There are also two types of literature which is prose and poetry (Rexroth, 2018). Some of the famous literary pieces are the haikus from Japan, the Mahabharata and Ramayana from India, the Greek mythology from Greece and the Ibong Adarna and Biag ni Lam ang from the Philippines. Behind those fascinating literary pieces are exceptional writers who have influenced our ways because of their works. Some of these writers are William Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost but one of the famous literary writers that brought so much contribution to literature is Edgar Allan Poe. He is an American writer, editor and literary critic best known for his poetry and short stories. Poe was born on January 19, 1809 in Boston Massachusetts. He is a pioneering writer to earn a living through writing alone (Cappuzo, 2019). Two of his famous writings that influenced the world are "The raven" and "Annabel Lee" which brought a big impact to the life of the readers. On the other hand, gender role is very prominent on this age, thus this study will cater the two different genders. Gender is the state of being male or female. Since K to 12 is newly implemented by the government, thus the respondents of this study are the senior high school students. The K to 12 program covers 12 years of basic education (six years of primary education, four years of junior high

school, and two years of senior high school). Hence, this study aims to know and compare the level of comprehension on literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe between the two genders (male and female) among senior high school students.

Gender differences really affect the choices of reading materials and reading motivations. The study proves that females are engaged with neutral books compared to males (McGeown, 2015). A study also found out that males have low knowledge integration and text inference but there is no gender difference in the remaining cognitive components. Hannon (2014) also averred that females have high knowledge integration and text memory. On the other hand, Yau and Lee (2018) did a study on gender gaps in reading motivation; the results show a major impact on the achievement of EFL reading in all aspects of the studied motivation in reading, as well as a major impact on gender differences in favor of women readers particularly in social motivation. As per Alnasser and Mohammed (2018), there are no statistically differences between male and female participants where in both sexes generally believed similarly in English language policies (ELPs). In the study of Mahmud (2010), it highlights impact of English language teaching gender differences and explores the learning styles of students affected by the differences in communication between men and women. It reveals their attitudes to different sexes, an opinion strategy, group work preferences, activity or passivity and their perception of increasing English skills dealing with sexual difference. The study further indicates that more female students were hesitant to speak to different sexes; females preferred the direct way of expressing opinions, working with the same sex and tend to be passive in class. Furthermore, women saw a great opportunity to increase their English skills by working with the same sex.

The common thing that we could find in the studies that have been mentioned above is it talks about gender differences in different aspects. The first one is about gender differences affecting reading choices and reading motivations, the second talks about gender differences in cognitive components of adult reading comprehension, the third one tackles about gender differences in acquiring English as a Foreign Language in Taiwan and gender gaps in reading motivation. The fourth one is a study about gender differences on English language policies (ELP) and last study that has been mentioned above talks about English language teaching gender differences. Just like their study, this research study is also about gender differences. However, this study focuses on the ability of the two different genders in comprehending literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe.

Both genders have different perceptions on things, they both think differently, act differently, and even have different levels of emotion. Since gender roles are very prominent in this generation, thus, this study aims to know if the two different genders (male and female) and their roles have an effect on how they comprehend and draw meaning from the texts or literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe. This study also determines who has a higher level of comprehension between the two genders.

Research Objective

The objective of the study is to know the difference of the two genders (male and female) in senior high school in the University of the Visayas in comprehending literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe.

Null Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference in the reading comprehension on the literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe between male and female students.

Methodology

This study applies the quantitative approach specifically the comparative research design. A quantitative research is a type of research that is dependent on the collection of verbal, behavioral or observational data that can be interpreted in a subjective manner. A comparative method is a research method that compares two or more variables from the data that has been collected. Thus, this research is a quantitative comparative research because it compares the level of understanding of the two genders, male and female.

The study was conducted in the senior high school department of a University in the City of Cebu, Philippines. The University is considered as one of the pioneering universities in the province of Cebu which was founded on 1919. The University envisions of becoming a research driven university.

The respondents of this study were the senior high school students of a University in the City of Cebu, Philippines. The senior high school of the University comprises Academic Track which includes STEM, ABM, HUMSS and GAS; and Technical Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) Track which includes Home Economics and Maritime. The respondents were composed of 40 females and 40 males, each participant was chosen randomly. The respondent must be officially enrolled in the senior high

school department in the said university with no age requirement. The respondents were given the right to participate in the study and were allowed cancel their participation if they wanted to.

The researchers utilized a self-made questionnaire. This questionnaire underwent validity and reliability testing. Three (3) experts were asked to check the validity of the questionnaire and gained a content validity index (CVI) of 0.83. Content validity index (CVI) establishes the validity of the instrument (Gagani, Diano, & Inocian, 2016). Then, a dry run was conducted to 30 randomly selected Senior High School students in one of the public schools in the city. The data was analyzed using the Kuder-Richardson formula 21 and gained a reliability coefficient of 0.87.

Approval from the authority was obtained prior to the data collection including the clearance from the University of the Visayas-Institutional Review Board. The researchers then started the data collection; the implied consent was attached together with the questionnaire. It was clearly explained to the respondents that their participation must be completely voluntary and they may be allowed to withdraw their participation in the study as well as they may receive a token of appreciation.

The data gathered were tallied and analyzed using the following statistical treatments: mean, standard deviation, and t-test for independent samples. To test the hypothesis the t-test for independent samples was used and was compared to the alpha level of significance, 0.05.

Results and Discussion

The reading comprehension on the literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe of the senior high school students is determined. The mean and standard deviation are utilized and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 : *Reading Comprehension of the Senior High Schools Students*

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Male	40	2.00	1.24	Below Average
Female	40	2.60	1.37	Average

Note. 0.00-2.00 – Below Average; 2.01-4.00 – Average; 4.01-6.00 – Above Average.

The results revealed that female students got an average performance in relation to their reading comprehension skills on the literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe. On the other hand, the male group gained a below average reading comprehension performance on the same test. Further, the female students performed slightly scattered compared to their male counterparts. The results imply that female students have slightly higher reading comprehension skills compared to the male students in relation to the literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe. The reading comprehension skills are believed to be influenced by the student's interest and academic performance. Menaka and Jebaraj (2017) supported this statement in her study indicating that reading comprehension and academic performance in English are significantly related.

The difference on the reading comprehension on the literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe of the senior high school students when grouped according to gender is evaluated. The t-test for independent samples was utilized and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 : *Difference on the Reading Comprehension on the Literary Pieces Written by Edgar Allan Poe of the Senior High School Students When Grouped According to Gender*

Groups	t-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Male	-2.050	0.044	Reject Ho	Significant
Female				

Note. Significant if $p\text{-value} < \alpha 0.05$

The results depict that there is a significant difference on the reading comprehension skills on the literary pieces written by *Edgar Allan Poe* of the male and female senior high school students ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, female students performed significant higher compared to the male students. The difference on the students' reading comprehension may be associated with the mental processing skills of the students. Hannon (2014) averred that male respondents performed low knowledge integration and text inference while female respondents have high knowledge integration and text memory.

Conclusion

The reading comprehension skills play a vital part in fully understanding the text or article read. Understanding the text or literary pieces requires deep mental process which varies from each individual. Moreover, individual differences may have influenced the reading comprehension on the literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe. Thus, this quantitative study determines the reading comprehension of the two different genders on the literary pieces written by Edgar Allan Poe and ascertains what group has better reading comprehension skills. The findings show that male group gained below average while female group gained average rating in reading comprehension. In addition, the reading comprehension on the literary pieces of the female group was found to be statistically higher than the male group. The findings explicates that female students established a higher level of understanding on the literary pieces and give the teachers an idea for them to come up with various strategies or differentiated instruction in order to address the existing differences between the gender groups.

However, the researchers acknowledged some limitations of the study such as the scope covered and the number of participants. Furthermore, the researchers would like to recommend the following future studies: (1) a study on the determinants of the reading comprehension skills of the students; (2) a study on the lived experiences of the students in comprehending literary pieces written by foreign authors; and (3) a study on the correlation of the academic performance in English and the reading comprehension of the students.

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