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The Effects of Marital Status on In-Service Teachers' Reading Interest

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine marital status influences on reading interest of in-service teachers working in the colleges of education of Punjab. The current study utilized six indicators viz; suitability, prior knowledge, novelty, personal relevance, sequence order and fluency in reading to determine in-service teachers' reading interest for understanding how marital status has influenced in-service teachers' reading interest. The paper utilizes quantitative data obtained from the study. The results show that no significant differences were observed between marital status and in-service teachers' score on the indicators; suitability, prior knowledge, novelty and fluency in reading however responses were influenced by the indicators; personal relevance, sequence order and total score of reading interest.

Keywords: fluency in reading, in-service teachers, marital status, novelty, personal relevance, prior knowledge, reading interest, sequence order, suitability

1. Introduction

Reading interest is the most powerful motivational force to cope up with the demands of literacy which is growing faster and faster these days. Krashen (2004). To meet this challenge learning on behalf of an individual is required as a process which is not related to one's compulsory education anymore because every professional require more knowledge and information even after completion of their education. In other words, everyone has to continue to develop themselves by getting involved in activities which enhance their knowledge. According to Wang (2009); individual perspective profession in learning can be achieved by some personal interests and goals in the career. For example, if a person enjoys learning he/she chose to read with interest according to their personal and professional demands which brings vital improvement by assuming responsibility as quality 'teachers' by becoming more aware, empowered, novel and creative. This means as a result, a person can improve his engagement and attention towards learning. These ideas were strengthened by Kintch (1980) who conceived reading interest as a long lasting pre-disposition because it helps to get associated with increased knowledge and information, previous experiences, values and positive effects.

For present study, marital status is highlighted as one of the most important factor in reading interest from individual perspective. Researchers have shown that reading interest of an individual is guided by marital status practices (Scales and Burley (1986); Diamond (1987); Valdez and Gutek (1987), Kim and Merriam (2004); Solomon (2011); Matheson and Rosen's (2012)). In the present study, an attempt is made to compare between married and unmarried in-service teachers with respect to different identified indicators of reading interest. Going by the above reviews, the present study attempt to make three contributions in the field of teachers' reading interest research and practice as; Firstly by connecting indicators of reading interest so as it opens a window to view teachers' reading interest.

Secondly, teachers as professionals might find out which indicators determine reading interest of them in practice. Thirdly, framing a comparison: between married vs. unmarried in-service teachers. All these results will contribute to an understanding about how marital status takes part in shaping teachers' reading interest.

2. Operational Meaning and Definition of the Terms Used in Study

2.1. Marital Status

Glossary of Statistical Terms (2006) referred marital status as the civil status of an individual in relation to marriage laws or customs of the country, i.e. never married, married, widowed and not remarried, divorced and not remarried, married but legally separated, de facto union.

Oxford Dictionary (2011) conceived marital status as a person's state of being single, married, separated, divorced, or widowed. Free Dictionary (2013) perceived marital status as a condition of being married or unmarried. Going by the above definitions the present study identified marital status from the aspect of married and unmarried in-service teachers.

2.2. Reading Interest

Panigrahi and Panda (1996) interpreted reading interest as a way towards creative and pragmatic education which involves the habit of personal investigation, self-study and self-analysis.

Renninger (1998) regarded reading interest as a personal variable which means a characteristic of an individual, which takes time to develop, but become stable with passage of time towards a certain topic or domain and is influenced by degree of knowledge, values and positive feelings.

Ryan and Deci (2000) referred reading interest with intrinsic motivation because it is based on personal interest in the activity itself and readers who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to find a variety of topics that interest and benefit them by accompanying with sense of pleasure.

Ainley, Hidi and Berndorff (2002) characterized that interest has a strong influence on learning. They further emphasized that individuals display more persistence, engagement and positive affect toward tasks that they are interested in.

Hidi (2006) conceived reading interest as a unique motivational variable, as well as a psychological state that occur during interactions between individuals and their objects of interest and is characterized by increased attention, concentration and affect.

Misuta (2006) highlighted the fact that teachers' interest in reading is very much important because it act as a technique of surveying pupils' interest by looking deceptively.

Willingham (2009) found that reading interest effect the performance of a teacher by affecting knowledge and structures and thus increasing the power to recall main ideas and higher degree of cognitive ability.

Ebbers (2011); reported the fact that reading interest act as a motivation for teachers to improve their quality and efficiency in the process of teaching and learning.

Hidayat and Aisah (2013) perceived that reading interest is obtained skill after someone born. So, it can be fertilized, build, and developed and its building is needed to do early starting from family, school surroundings and further in community surrounding.

Going by the above definitions and reviews for the undertaken study, reading interest of in-service teachers was perceived by six indicators as; suitability, prior knowledge, novelty, personal relevance, sequence order and fluency in reading.

2.3. In-Service Teachers

In-service teachers are the teachers working in those educational institutes which prepare teachers for the future. They are actually operating and performing the role as teacher.

Duffy and Anderson's (1982) reported in-service teachers as practicing teachers' whose responses and inconsistencies get influenced by the actual experiences in the classroom.

The Forest Group (1994); posited that in-service teachers have mastery in the art of adaptation so they adapt to the maximum to achieve their literate potential.

So, we can say that in-service teachers are the teachers working in those educational institutes which prepare teachers for the future. They are actually operating and performing the role as teacher.

3. Reading Interest Indicators

On the basis of studies conducted by; Kintch (1980); Hidi (1990); Hidi and Anderson (1992); Schiefele (1992); Panigrahi and Panda (1996); Schiefele (1996); Olofsson and Niedersoe (1999); McDaniel et al (2000); Murphy and Alexander (2000); Ryan and Deci (2000); Wang and Fwu (2001); Delmore and Shaker (2002); Cooper and Tamber (2004); Krashen (2004); Pullman (2004); Sheldrick-Ross, McKechnie and Rothbauer (2005); Hidi and Renninger (2006); Osiki (2008); Kirby, Ball and Geir (2011); six indicators of reading interest were identified. They are classified as;

3.1. Suitability

Reading must be in accordance to the level of understanding of students and teachers. It largely depends on; easiness to apply, usefulness, readability and experience. Further, it acts as an effective strategy to focus attention on ideas and details.

Richardson (1994) demonstrated the fact that the teachers who teach reading as way of learning rather than a collection of unrelated facts are lightly to send forth pupils who have learnt bits and pieces of incorrect and misinterpreted facts.

Thoman, Sansone and Pasupathi (2007) reported that reading in a responsive manner and without distraction significantly affect the higher levels of interest by predicting sustainable interest.

Hall (2009) perceived teachers as struggling readers who attribute competency and interest as behavior to support and develop the depth of learning process.

3.2. Prior knowledge

This knowledge familiarizes the reader to a text topic and rely on that knowledge what they know and recognize it. It helps the learner to comprehend and learn the text, draw connections between student knowledge, reading, support and promote student thinking about the text

Kintsch (1986) identified that with prior knowledge readers recognize and learn new ideas and are more likely to learn the ideas that interest them.

Boulton-Lewis, Wilss and Mutch (1996) conceived that learning is like building because in the process of learning, one acquires small chunks at a time and they gradually fit together, but sometimes all these chunks have to be start again because of some new information. They further stressed that for an individual learning involves risk taking, making a mistake, knowing that you know you have made a mistake and not doing it again or fixing it up.

Grant (1996) found that prior knowledge cannot be learnt during a year program. He further stated that it is through this knowledge one go off the deep end and float around and be creative. At last, he referred that with prior knowledge one can become critical and participate in intellectual discussion.

Bransford, Brown and Cocking (2000) stated the fact that one becomes focused with prior knowledge because of its established role in influencing learning.

According to Pressley (2002); the frequent admonition for children to 'read, read, read' makes sense that extensive reading promotes fluency, vocabulary and background knowledge.

Hattie (2003) examined attributes that enhance the success levels of the individuals. His study revealed that it is a multi-faceted approach and teachers' who are equipped with prior knowledge skills and attitudes can really make a difference.

Abd-El-Khalick and Akerson (2004) said prior knowledge is needed most for science teachers to fit the content and elements of content in an arranged manner.

Chitpin and Evers (2005) described prior knowledge as type of knowledge which could be compressed and organized in the form of case studies and is directly generated in the form of reading interest.

Liakopoulou (2011) stated that prior knowledge of teachers consists of; professional knowledge of the teacher's reading his subject.

Ell, Hill and Grudnoff (2012) perceived that prior knowledge has a significant role to play in learning and therefore in learning to teach, and secondly, that being able to recognize key features of student work as an important task for teachers which enables them learning in their classroom situations.

3.3. Novelty

Novelty in reading means surprising, unusual, different and new information. It is with novelty, reading is conceived as a creative activity sharpened by readers' expectations and experiences.

Schraw, Flowerday and Lehman (2001) reviewed reading interest among teachers as spontaneous situational interest which can be provided by something unusual different and new.

Holden (2004) conceived novelty in reading as a 'creative activity', shaped by readers' expectations, experiences as well as the social contexts in which it takes place.

Paavola and Hakkarainen (2005) identified the emerging views of learning as knowledge creation. They further added that the dynamics of learning lies in creativity and originality.

Hidi and Renninger (2006) suggested reading material in terms of variables of incongruity, surprisingness, intensity and personal relevance.

Malloy (2008) revealed that novelty in reading leads towards low-level of content knowledge, literacy complexity and teachers would move towards similar reading orientation through their instruction that is somehow implicitly or explicitly conveyed towards personal orientation.

3.4. Personal relevance

It is an approach towards availability of various sources of information and that too in terms of frequency.

Blau (1982) identified personal relevance as information and simplification.

Panigrahi and Panda (1996) considered personal relevance as an approach to various sources of information like various forms of documents, newspapers, text-books, magazines, storybooks, journals, novels etc.

Applegate and Applegate (2004) referred ideal readers as engaged readers or avid readers. They are the ones who read regularly and enthusiastically for their own purposes. Avid readers tend to be different from nonreaders on a variety of cognitive skills, behavioral habits and background variables.

Edmunds and Bauserman(2006) recommended that reading interest among elementary children can be built by giving weightage to self select the books by students; personal interest in a book; and active involvement of others.

Mills (2010) perceived that quality aspect of teaching and learning rests on the success of future teachers and students. They further opined that to ensure quality of learning the teachers are expected to have in-depth knowledge of the pedagogy in their subject areas, so that they can understand the effective way of organizing and presenting the subject matter and evaluating as a consonance with the set objectives.

3.5. Sequence order

It is a way that make easy for the readers to understand and master the facts and engage themselves to thinking according to the knowledge.

Wineburg (1991) reported that it is through reading three disciplines; history, science and literature can be connected and understood. He further posited that sequential order enhance the levels of understanding, mastery of facts, consider and interpret three disciplines in a way, that it becomes easy for reader to engage in thinking according to events.

Borich (2003) stated the fact that with focused observations teachers can achieve empathy establish co-operative relationships, become realistic, establish direction, attain confidence, express enthusiasm, become flexible and become self-reliant. He further stressed that for teachers there is not only one right way to teach rather there have many characteristics one must have in order to be an effective reading teacher.

Spear-Swerling, Brucker and Alfano (2005) stressed that increased literacy-related content knowledge facilitates teachers' interpretation of assessments, selection of appropriate words for reading and spelling instruction, analysis of reading and spelling errors, and constructive feedback to students' errors.

3.6. Fluency in reading

It is the way to understand one's own experiences in a better way. Further, it provides an exciting voyage to self discovery.

Chaudhury and Misra (1990) expressed fluency in reading as a way for better understanding of one's own experiences and an exciting voyage to self discovery.

Carver (1997) revealed fluency in reading as a reliable trait that a skilled reader exhibits across various types of texts but reading rates vary to a certain degree as functions of reading purpose.

National Reading Panel (2000) considered fluency in terms of; oral reading accuracy, speed and expression. The reading panel concluded the fact that fluency yields significant and positive effect on reading comprehension, reading behavior and outcomes of reading.

Barr (2001) revealed fluency in reading as qualitative engagement of the teacher because reading becomes a constructive activity when combined with interest.

Hansen, Invernizzi, Everton (2002) revealed that an effective balance of reading, writing and word study instruction can be achieved when it meet the diverse needs of the students and empower them according to their level of interest and learning.

4. Reviews Related to Reading Interest and Marital Status

Scales and Burley (1986) undertook a research study of 233 males and 61 females in Egypt. The findings of the study revealed that more married than single and more males than females read religious material.

Diamond (1987); Valdez and Gutek (1987) conducted research studies and inferred that women get interrupted in their careers and process of learning because of their spouses careers or parenting responsibilities. Their studies further revealed that men get less disrupted because of these reasons.

Osmany and Khan (2003) conducted a research study on teacher educators and found that married teachers are more stressful due to dual roles than unmarried teachers.

Kim and Merriam (2004) worked on older adults and found that marital status, level of education and length of residence in the state emerge as significant variables to determine their learning. Their study further revealed that married were less motivated by reading material than participants who were widow, divorced or single. They further inferred this may be due to their family together factors and social contacts because reading interest does not make them easily motivated/interested.

Solomon (2011) revealed that male professors whose wives did not work full time felt more comfortable whereas female professors regardless of their spouse profession felt that being married and having children interfere in their profession.

Matheson and Rosen's (2012) studied both male and female married teachers and found that women professors were not able to balance between personal life and work. This pointed that the learning experiences of female professors are honed and their interest is not much with their work.

Asgari (2012) conducted a research study on effects of gender and marital status on burnout of English teachers in Iran and found that no significant difference between marital status and English teachers score on burnout.

Nagra and Arora (2013) conducted a research study on occupational stress and health among teacher educators with respect to their gender and marital status and found significant among teacher educators regarding occupational stress with respect to married and unmarried teacher educators.

5. Objectives

- To work out differences on the basis of marital status among in-service teachers on every indicator of reading interest viz; suitability, prior knowledge, novelty, personal relevance, sequence order and fluency in reading and on its total score.
- To study the interaction effects of marital status on every indicator of reading interest and on its total score.

6. Hypotheses

- No significant differences will be observed on the basis of marital status among in-service teachers working in colleges of education of Punjab on different indicators of reading interest and on its total score.
- Marital status will not interact with one another to produce statistically significant differences on different indicators of reading interest and on its total score.

7. Sample

The data was collected by using questionnaire survey. In-service teachers were sampled from 28 colleges of education situated in Punjab. The final sample included 145 married and 155 unmarried teachers out of which 136 were men and 164 were women. The data was collected personally by the investigator herself. The researcher explained the questionnaire to the teachers how to fill each statement on the identified indicators of reading interest.

8. About the Tool

A self made questionnaire was developed by the researcher herself. The responses of the participants were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (5-Strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-no response, 2-strongly disagree, 1-disagree). The original scale included demographic information and 80 questions on eight indicators viz; suitability, prior knowledge, novelty, quality of knowledge, personal relevance, sequence order, fluency in reading and awareness. After the reliability test, six indicators remained and two indicators quality of knowledge and awareness were deleted and along with them 50 statements were also deleted. Thus, the final questionnaire consisted of; six indicators suitability, prior knowledge, novelty, personal relevance, sequence order, fluency in reading and 30 statements. Five statements under each identified indicator. Reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.891. Content and face validity were also determined. So, the final questionnaire consisted of two parts;

8.1. Related to Demographic Information

The demographic information of the in-service teachers was provided by Part-A questionnaire which refers to the in-service teachers' name of the college, name, gender, marital status, educational level, teaching experience and so on.

8.2. Related to Six Indicators of Reading interest

It consisted of 30 questions under various indicators viz; suitability, prior knowledge, novelty, personal relevance, sequence order and fluency in reading.

9. Method/Design of the Study

Marital status was taken as an independent variable whereas six indicators of reading interest were taken as dependent variables. Marital status was investigated singly as well as taken together to determine interaction effects. SPSS statistics software was used to analyze the data which interpreted according to the indicators and variables. The study used ANOVA to test whether different aspects of marital status affect the reading interest of the in-service teachers. The mean, standard deviation, t-values and level of significance were obtained for different indicators of reading interest.

10. Results

The overall descriptive statistics are presented in Table-I and II which shows a comparison between married and unmarried in-service teachers.

Reading Interest Indicators	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-Value	p value/Remarks	Level of Sig.
Suitability	38.880	1	38.880	2.222	0.137/SD	-
Prior Knowledge	50.430	1	50.430	1.668	0.198/SD	-
Novelty	66.270	1	66.270	3.550	0.061/SD	-
Personal Relevance	155.520	1	155.520	7.692	0.006/SD	0.01
Sequence Order	322.403	1	322.403	13.372	0.000/SD	0.01
Fluency in Reading	8.003	1	8.003	.273	0.601/SD	-
Total score of Reading Interest	1075.413	1	1075.413	6.571	0.011/SD	0.01

Table 1: (Marital Status-wise) Interaction Effects of Reading Interest of In-Service Teachers

Reading Interest Indicators	ASPECT	N	MEAN	S.D.	T	p value/Remarks
Suitability	Married	145	16.00	4.287	1.465	0.144/SD
	Unmarried	155	15.28	4.225		
Prior Knowledge	Married	145	16.38	5.660	1.251	0.212/SD
	Unmarried	155	15.56	5.694		
Novelty	Married	145	16.91	4.933	-1.717	0.087/SD
	Unmarried	155	17.85	4.541		
Personal Relevance	Married	145	18.87	4.870	2.418**	0.016/SD
	Unmarried	155	17.47	5.431		
Sequence Order	Married	145	17.26	5.556	3.253**	0.000/SD
	Unmarried	155	15.19	5.483		
Fluency in Reading	Married	145	15.51	5.537	-0.516	0.606/SD
	Unmarried	155	15.84	5.422		
Total score of Reading Interest	Married	145	100.93	17.352	2.007*	0.046/SD
	Unmarried	155	97.15	15.267		

Table 2: (Marital Status-wise) t- ratio of Reading Interest of In-Service Teachers

** Significant at 0.01 Level of Confidence

* Significant at 0.05 Level of Confidence

The above table shows statistical significant differences between married and unmarried in-service teachers on the indicators personal relevance ($t=2.418$) and sequence order ($t=3.253$), values of both significant at 0.01 level of confidence. Whereas, for the total score it was observed that t-value 2.007 was found to be significant at 0.05 level of confidence. No statistical significant differences were observed between married and unmarried in-service teachers on the indicators suitability, prior knowledge, novelty and fluency in reading of the variable reading interest.

The results showed that indicator personal relevance of the reading interest was found to be statistically significant at 0.01 level of confidence. The findings further suggest that married in-service teachers were more selective in the process of reading interest as compared to unmarried in-service teachers. The married also scored significantly high on the sequence order suggesting that with sequence order understanding process become simpler and easy and motivate further to read more and more with interest. For rest of the indicators viz; suitability, prior knowledge, novelty and fluency in reading marital status do not play any mediating role. Thus, hypothesis no-2 was accepted for suitability, prior knowledge, novelty and fluency in reading.

11. Conclusion

The above analysis implied that married in-service teachers have the highest scores on the indicators; suitability, prior knowledge, personal relevance and sequence order as compared to their counterparts. This implies that married in service teachers are confident about their interest in reading. On the other hand, married teachers feel that their reading interest is based on sequence order and personal relevance rather than novelty and fluency in reading (Wineburg (1991), Borich (2003), Spear-Swirling, Brucker and Alfano (2005)) indicating that they have characteristics to become an effective reader by attaining more confidence by establishing direction in reading. It signifies that unmarried in-service teachers view their occupation as professionals and are more satisfies in teaching and reading that material with interest which facilitate student teaching learning process (Osmany and Khan (2003), Nagra and Arora (2013)).

On the other hand, it was observed that the mean ratings and standard deviations do not deviate on the basis of marital status significantly. This means that 21st century has threatened both married and unmarried in-service teachers to adapt them in accordance to the present scenario and update themselves in knowledge and awareness by interest in reading.

12. Practical Implications

This research gave some practical implications to married and unmarried in-service teachers regarding their reading interest. From the married teachers perspective in order to enhance their reading interest they should increase their desires for more awareness and increase their promotion opportunities so that they can focus on reading interest which will gradually improve their working abilities, teaching-learning skills, awareness, growth of knowledge and so on. From unmarried teachers perspective they should consider reading interest activities in combination with their profession so that they can find out appropriate reading interest material to develop them in the profession and improve their working skills. At last, we can say reading interest helps to improve the working skills of teachers by enhancing their novelty, personal relevance, prior knowledge, sequence order and fluency in reading.

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