

## Exploring Learners' Perception of Different Types of Reading Strategies in Academic Reading

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### Abstract

This study was intended to find out learners' perception of different types of reading strategies in Academic Reading. The utilization of reading strategies is important so that learners will be able to comprehend reading materials effectively. According to Khairiani (2012), the utilization of reading strategies has been recognized as a crucial element in enhancing students' reading comprehension. The study is also aimed at transforming the learners' perception on the difficulties of reading and lessening their views of it as being burdensome. The purpose of this quantitative study is to identify how learners perceive their use of reading strategies (Global Reading Strategies, Problem-Solving Reading Strategies and Support Reading Strategies). A questionnaire to explore motivation factors for learning among undergraduates was administered to 113 foundation students. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey rooted from Mokhtari & Reichard (2002) and it consists of 4 sections. Section A has items on Demographic Profile. Section B has 13 items on Global Reading Strategies. Section C has 8 items on Problem-Solving Strategies and Section D has 9 items on Support Reading Strategies. Findings showed that these strategies will contribute to an overall comprehension in Academic Reading and it has also been found that there is a positive relationship across all reading strategies. It is recommended to study the effect of reading strategies on learners' achievement and future researchers may also explore other avenues to further expand the reading strategies such as the usage of technological devices that are built to accommodate learners.

**Keywords:** Reading Strategies, Academic Reading, Metacognitive Awareness

**Introduction****Background of Study**

Reading is a cognitive process that allows individuals to comprehend and make meaning from written language, enabling them to explore new ideas, expand their perspectives, and engage with the world of information and ideas. Reading serves as an enduring skill essential for academic learning and achievement among students. Research indicates that students must employ diverse strategies to effectively acquire, retain, and recall information from written texts, leading to a profound understanding of the content. Nonetheless, post-secondary students are facing challenges in reading comprehension, as evidenced by their academic performance, and these difficulties arise from a variety of factors. Firstly, their limited exposure to effective strategies can impede their capacity to understand complete texts. Additionally, insufficient prior knowledge and vocabulary may present obstacles in comprehending new information. Lastly, a lack of motivation and access to supportive materials can contribute to their reluctance in employing reading strategies. For one to comprehend a written text, reading strategies must be applied. According to Khairiani (2012), the utilization of reading strategies has been recognized as a crucial element in enhancing students' reading comprehension. The study of metacognitive reading strategies on the other hand has been a topic of interest in the field of education and cognitive psychology for several decades. Metacognition refers to the awareness and control of one's own thinking processes, and metacognitive reading strategies involve the ability to reflect on and regulate one's own reading processes (Ahmadi et al., 2013). The use of metacognitive reading strategies has been found to be associated with improved reading comprehension, as well as with greater motivation and engagement in reading (Habók & Magyar, 2019). Ahmadi et al (2013) suggest that learning metacognitive reading strategies can solve the problems faced by readers since it is an effective way to facilitate their reading comprehension. This study on the application of reading strategies amongst learners will act as a tool for educators and learners in Malaysia to identify their perception on particular reading strategies.

**Statement of Problem**

In fostering knowledge and critical thinking skills among university students, possessing the ability to comprehend academic texts is essential, which can be achieved with the utilisation of reading strategies. Several of the past studies acknowledge the significance of metacognitive awareness in both native language and second language reading comprehension. It is widely agreed upon that being aware of and actively monitoring the comprehension process are crucial components of skilled reading (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001). The beneficial extent of improving a learner's metacognitive practices includes compensating a learner's cognitive limitations (Veenman et al., 2004; Wang et al., 1990 as cited in Cambridge Assessment International Education, n.d.). Thus, if lower proficiency students can make use of their metacognitive reading strategies, improvement in reading comprehension will also occur. Most importantly, apart from fostering critical thinking and deeper understanding with reading materials, this study will motivate students to be consistent in employing reading strategies to enhance their academic performance and overall learning experience. On the other hand, educators can create a more enriching and effective learning environment. With the encouragement to use these strategies, they instil valuable lifelong learning skills in students. Hence, to attain a better insight into this topic, it is imperative to investigate learners' perception on reading strategies that they employ in academic reading.

Research has shown that many university students have a limited understanding of effective reading strategies and struggle to monitor their comprehension while reading. Comprehending English texts is still considered hard by most students because of their lack of vocabulary mastery and grammar knowledge (Aziz, Nasir & Ramazani, 2019). Being noticeably absent from many classrooms and largely unknown to many language learners and teachers, metacognitive reading strategies have fallen into oblivion in English language teaching, research, learning, and assessment (Sasani, Ganji & Yarahmadzahi, 2018). They may not be aware of the importance of pre-reading activities such as previewing the text or setting a purpose for reading, or they may not know how to use strategies such as predicting, questioning, and summarizing to enhance their comprehension. This lack of metacognitive awareness can result in difficulties with understanding and retaining the material, as well as a slower reading rate and a higher level of frustration. In addition, while the importance of metacognitive awareness is widely acknowledged, there is a scarcity of research on this topic, especially in Malaysia. It is necessary to conduct studies that explore metacognitive awareness among diverse populations, encompassing various proficiency levels and reading objectives, in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002; Anderson, 2002).

### Objective of the Study and Research Questions

This study is done to explore the perception of learners on their use of reading strategies. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

- How do learners perceive their use of global reading strategies?
- How do learners perceive their use of problem-solving reading strategies?
- How do learners perceive their use of support reading strategies?
- Is there a relationship across all reading strategies for academic reading?

### Literature Review

#### Reading Difficulties

Despite adoption of a common school-designed English curriculum, both of which were to contribute to shared literacy objectives, students and teachers often have difficulties in the reading techniques and acquisition. One of the theories in reading difficulties among students, especially, is the *Literacy-Related Tracking* theory by Learned (2017). Tracking refers to the grouping of students by perceived learning ability. Hence, this theory suggests the effects of students being unproductively positioned at odds according to their level of reading proficiency which will in turn affect their attitudes, behaviours and perceptions on reading. To further enlighten, this theory suggests that youths and teachers believe that proficient reading is related to what students do with texts. They tend to discuss reading difficulty as related to students' attitude or effort. The *Literacy-Related Tracking* theory is also similar to Holland's (1998) notion that our understanding of context is the notion of identity, which we define as individuals' understandings and enactments of themselves that are mediated by social positions.

#### Reading Strategies

Garner (1987) defines reading strategies as generally intentional and purposeful actions carried out by active learners, often with the aim of addressing perceived cognitive challenges. Garner argues that these strategies support the understanding of a text and can be imparted through instruction. There has been extensive research focusing on the role of

reading strategies in developing effective readers. Researchers like Chamot and O'Malley (1996) differentiated between cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies. Cognitive reading strategies refer to the strategies that students employ to complete reading tasks. These strategies are further characterized by Oxford (1990) as techniques like note-taking, summarizing, making inferences, drawing on prior knowledge, predicting, analyzing, and utilizing context clues. On the other hand, metacognitive strategies involve self-reflection and conscious thinking about the act of reading and the learning process itself. Flavell (1979) believed that the observation and management of diverse cognitive activities are facilitated by the interplay and involvement of four categories of phenomena: (a) metacognitive knowledge, (b) metacognitive experiences, (c) goals or tasks, and (d) actions (or strategies). Graham & Kelly (1997) argue that the most important function to play in improving learning is served by metacognitive methods that enable students to plan, regulate, and assess their learning. The context of academic reading is now the subject of more recent reading research with many focusing on the reading strategies used in academic reading, particularly the metacognitive practices among native and non-native English learners and ESL/EFL learners (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001; Anderson, 2002). Many agree that there is a positive correlation between readers' metacognitive awareness and their achievement in second language (L2) reading comprehension and performance. Furthermore, the development of metacognition in readers is influenced by both their reading proficiency and overall proficiency in the L2 (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001; Anderson, 2002; Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004). The focus of this study will look at the metacognitive reading strategies which are subdivided by Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) as global, problem-solving and support reading strategies. The global strategy encompasses a collection of reading strategies focused on a comprehensive analysis of the text. These strategies can be considered as broad and intentional reading techniques aimed at establishing a foundation for the reading process. Problem-solving strategy seemed to revolve around problem-solving techniques used when encountering challenging text. These strategies equip readers with action steps to skilfully navigate through text. They serve as targeted problem-solving or corrective strategies utilized when difficulties arise in comprehending textual information. The support strategy primarily centred around utilizing external reference materials, note-taking, and other practical techniques can be characterized as functional or supportive strategies. These strategies fulfil a practical purpose for certain students who employ them when necessary. They serve as supportive mechanisms intended to maintain engagement and effective responses to reading.

#### *Past Studies on Reading Strategies*

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the use of reading strategies among ESL learners ranging from different education levels (Rajab, Rahman, Wahab, Nor, Zakaria & Rajim, 2017; Khreisat, 2022), especially focusing on the three reading strategies which are Global, Problem-solving, and Support reading strategies.

The study by Rajab et al (2017) studied the metacognitive reading strategies among undergraduates. The respondents consisted of 54 undergraduates in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). The three reading strategies (Global, Problem-solving and Support) were investigated using the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARS) model by (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002). It was found that the students greatly preferred utilizing the Problem-Solving strategies more than the other two. From the study, the researchers concluded that the findings provided them with a better insight into the

undergraduates' perceived use of reading strategies and their preference in using the Problem-solving strategy could be due to overcoming any reading difficulties. Another study investigating the use of reading strategies was conducted by Khreisat (2022). This study focused on 355 EFL learners at the tertiary level in Saudi Arabia as its respondents. The revised version of MARSİ (MARSİ-R) by Mokhtari et al (2018) was employed to investigate the respondents' use of reading strategies. The results from the survey were then analysed in terms of their relationship with other variables; gender, reading ability and year level. The results of the study revealed that the participants possessed a moderate level of awareness regarding various metacognitive reading strategies. The analysis further indicated that Saudi students predominantly utilized problem-solving strategies (PSS) as their primary approach, followed by support reading strategies (SRS). Conversely, global reading strategies (GRS) were found to be the least frequently employed strategy. Students' awareness levels differed based on their self-perceived abilities, with only poor readers demonstrating significantly lower awareness compared to other proficiency levels. Gender differences were not statistically significant across all aspects of reading strategies. The study concludes by suggesting several pedagogical implications such as incorporating more metacognitive reading strategies into the education system, requiring teachers, reading specialists, and curriculum designers to integrate these strategies into textbooks, activities, and teaching approaches, and calling education policymakers to reconsider current curricula and evaluate the quality of instruction in educational institutions. The study further recommends conducting quasi-experimental studies to explore the impact of direct training and instruction on reading strategies, as well as investigating whether reading comprehension difficulties stem from language proficiency or a lack of awareness and utilisation of reading strategies.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The skills needed to read academic texts are different from reading non-academic texts. One of the many reasons learners find academic reading is their perception of it being difficult (Rahmat et.al., 2020). This perception affects the learners' approach and also attitude to reading and may snowball to further reading difficulties. As such, learners need to internalise good reading strategies to make sense of academic reading (Jincheng & Rahmat, 2022). Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. The concept of this study is rooted from Mokhtari & Reichard (2002) who reported that there are three metacognitive reading strategies that learners use whether or not they are conscious of the use. The strategies are (a) global reading strategies, (b) problem-solving reading strategies and (c) support reading strategies. More often than not, readers begin with global reading strategies. This is when they find the purpose of the text. They look for the gist of the text. They make efforts to provide schemata of the reading text. Next, as they read further, readers constantly perform problem-solving reading strategies. This takes place as the reader finds the text more difficult to comprehend. They would re-read some sections. They would also try to guess the meanings of some difficult words as they read along. In addition to that, they may seek help from other sources. This is when they use support reading strategies to make sense of what they are reading. This can come in the form of asking for help, checking the dictionary or even reading other related texts.



Figure 1- Relationship of different types of reading presence in online reading

### Methodology

This quantitative study is done to explore motivation factors for learning among undergraduates. A purposive sample of 113 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted from Mokhtari & Reichard (2002) to reveal the variables in table 1 below. The survey has 4 sections. Section A has items on demographic profile. Section B has 13 items on global reading strategies. . Section C has 8 items on problem-solving strategies. Section D has 9 items on support reading strategies.

Table 1

*Distribution of Items in the Survey*

SECTION	READING STRATEGY	NO OF ITEMS
B	Global Reading Strategies	13
C	Problem-Solving Strategies	8
D	Support Reading Strategies	9
		30

Table 2

*Reliability of Survey*

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.913	30

Table 2 shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .913, thus, revealing a good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.



**Findings**

Findings for Demographic Profile

Q1 Gender

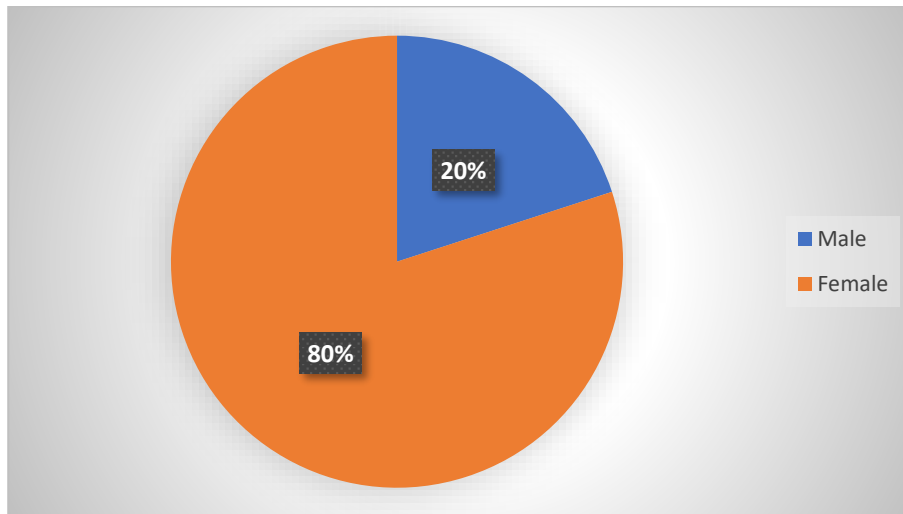


Figure 2- Percentage for Gender

Female respondents represented (refer to figure 2) the majority with 80% of the total number of 113 and the male respondents with 20%.

Q2 Age

Table 3

Percentage for Age

1	18	11%
2	19	84%
3	20	5%

Figure 3- Percentage for Age

The age of majority of the respondents (refer to table 3) was 19 with 84%, followed by age 18 (11%) and age 20 (5%).

Q3 Discipline

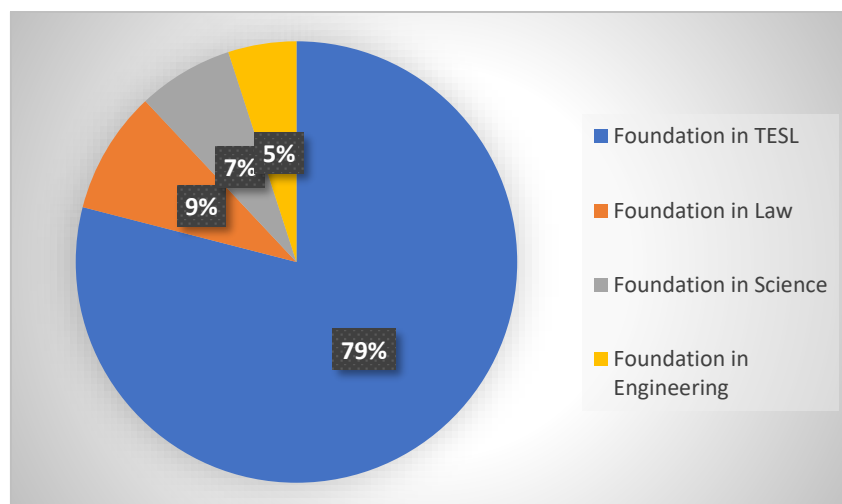


Figure 4- Percentage for Discipline

The biggest discipline group of the respondents with 79% was Foundation in TESL, while distantly followed by other disciplines; Foundation in Law (9%), Foundation in Science (7%), and Foundation in Engineering (5%).

#### Q4 Reading proficiency

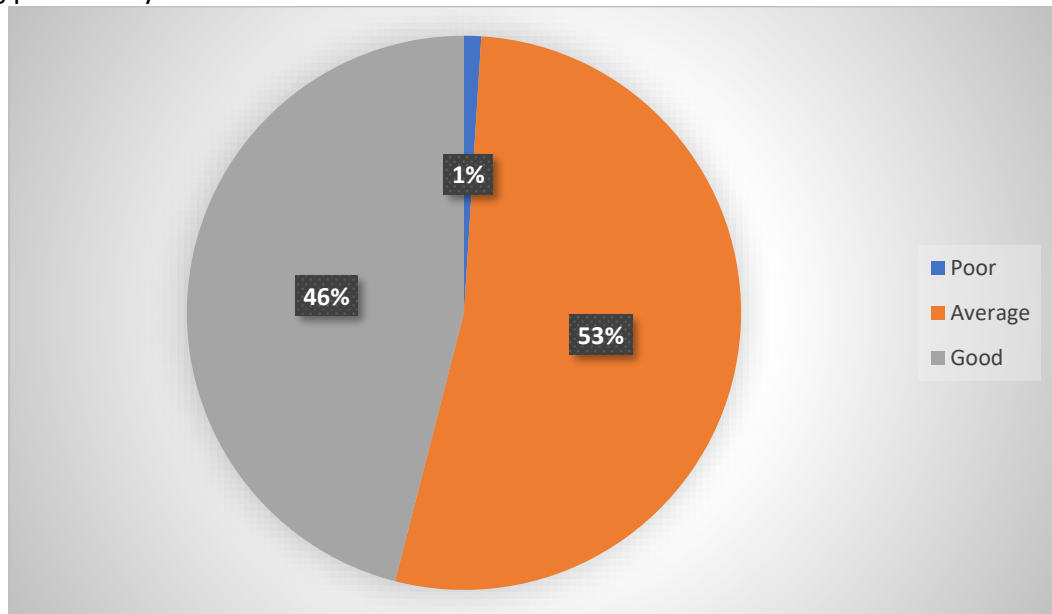


Figure 5- Percentage for Reading Proficiency

Majority of the respondents (refer to figure 5) perceived their own reading proficiency as Average (53%), followed closely by Good (46%), and only 1% deemed their reading proficiency as Poor.

#### *Findings for Global Reading Strategies*

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do learners perceive their use of global reading strategies?



## GLOBAL READING STRATEGIES (GLOB)

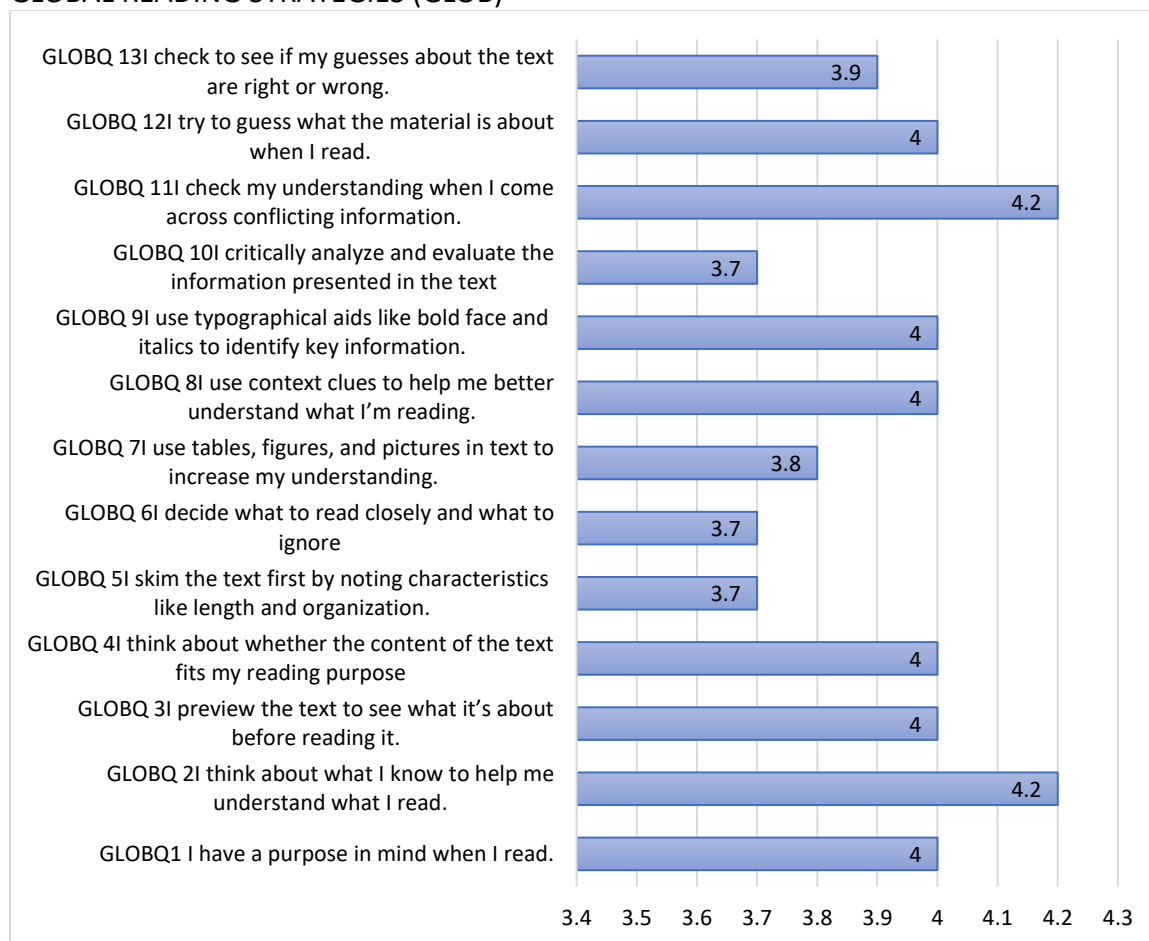


Figure 6 - Mean for Global Reading Strategies

According to figure 6 – Mean for Global Reading Strategies, there are a total of six items that all share a mean of 4 and they are items: “I have a purpose in mind when I read, I preview the text to see what it’s about before reading it”, “I think about whether the context of the text fits my reading purpose”, “I use context clues to help me better understand what I’m reading”, “I use typographical aids like bold face and italics to identify key information”, and “I try to guess what the material is about when I read”. Furthermore, there are two items that have a mean of 4.2 and they are “I think about what I know to help me understand what I read” as well as “I check my understanding when I come across conflicting information”. To add to that, item number 5, 6 and 10 all share a mean of 3.7 and they are “I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization”, as well as “I decide what to read closely and what to ignore”, and “I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text”. Next, is item 7, “I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding”, which has a mean of 3.8. The mean for item 11 is 4.2 which is for “I check my understanding when I come across conflicting information”. Lastly, item 13 which is for “I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong and it has a mean of 3.9”.

*Findings for Problem-Solving Reading Strategies*

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive their use of problem-solving reading strategies?

## Problem-Solving Strategies (PROB)

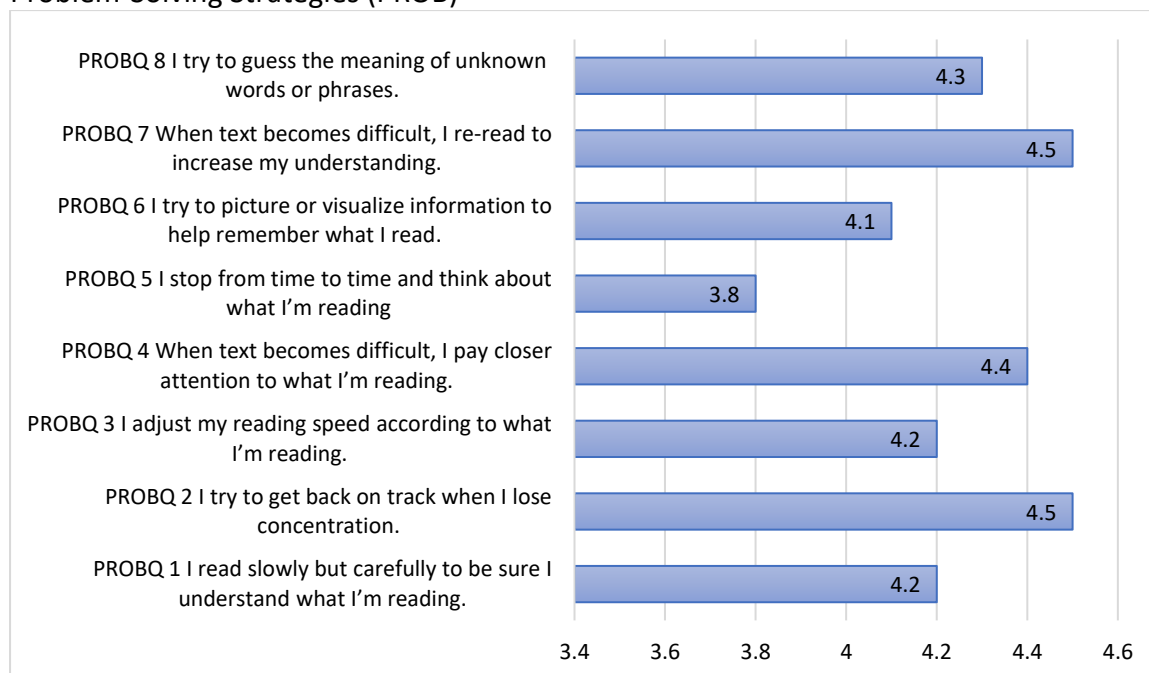


Figure 7- Mean for Problem-Solving Strategies

On average, the respondents (refer to figure 7) rated between Very Often to Always for most of the Problem-Solving Strategies questions. The highest mean (4.5) is exhibited in Item 2 and Item 7, whereby the respondents would try to get back on track when they lose focus, and they would re-read the text to increase their understanding when it became difficult. The lowest mean (3.8) is reflected in Item 5 in which most of the respondents rated between Sometimes and Very Often for when they would stop from time to time and think about what they were reading.

## Findings for Support Reading Strategies

This section presents data to answer research question 3- How do learners perceive their use of support reading strategies?

## Support Reading Strategies (SUPP)

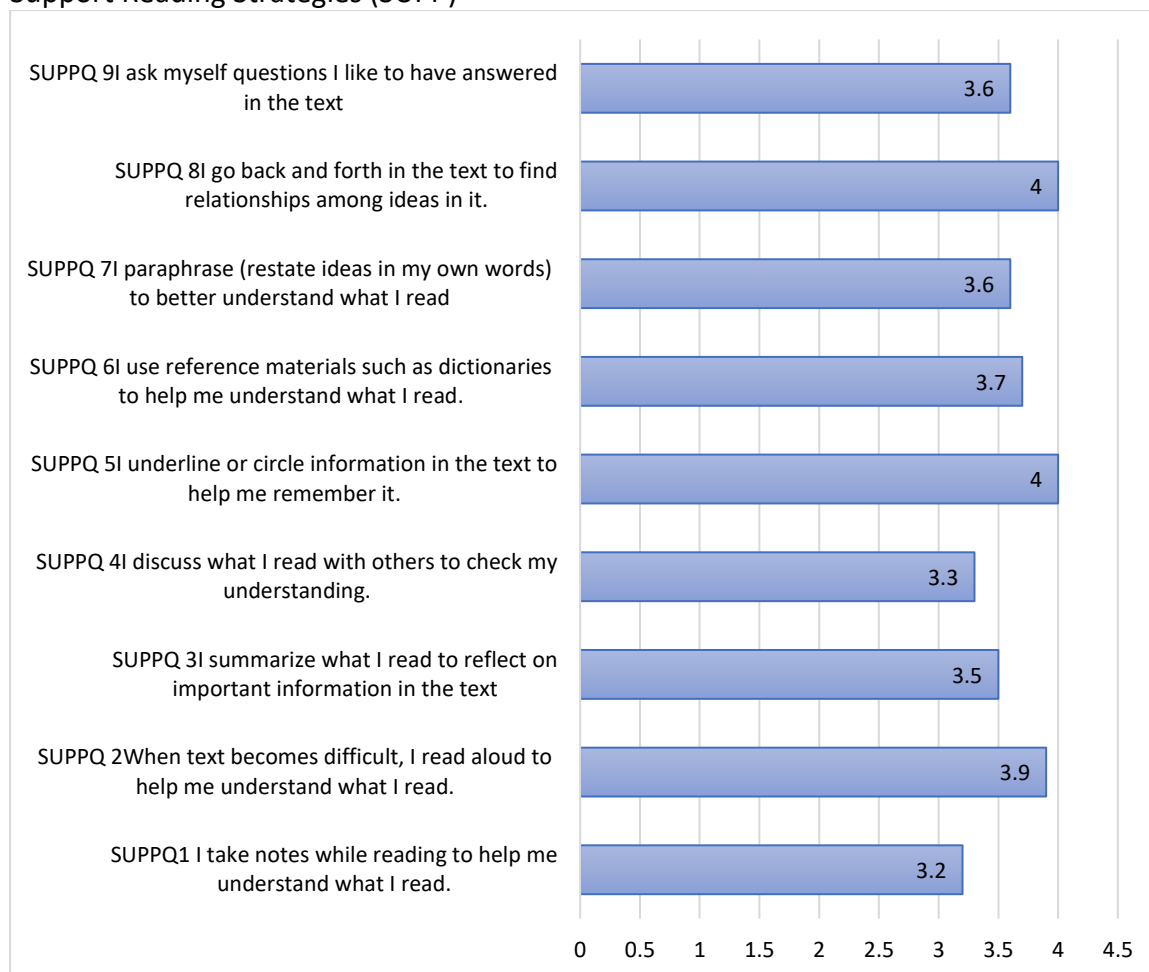


Figure 8- Mean for Support Reading Strategies

The information in Figure 8 - Mean for Support Reading Strategies shows that for item 1, “I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read”, has a mean of 3.2. The following item, which is “When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read” has a mean of 3.9. For item 3, the mean is 3.5 and the item is “I summarize what I read to reflect on important information in the text”. The next item is for “I discuss what I read with others to check my understanding” which has 3.3 as a mean. Next, for both items 5 and 8 which are “I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it” and “I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it”, respectively, the mean is 4. Moreover, item 6 has a mean of 3.7 and it represents “I use reference materials such as dictionaries to help me understand what I read”. Lastly, both items 7 and 9 have a mean of 3.6 and they are “I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read”, and “I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.”

## Findings for Relationship across all Reading Strategies

This section presents data to answer research question 4 - Is there a relationship across all reading strategies for academic reading? To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between support reading, global reading and problem-solving strategies data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in table 3 and 4 below.

Table 3

*Correlation between Support Strategies and Global Reading Strategies***Correlations**

		SUPPORT	GLOBAL
SUPPORT	Pearson Correlation	1	.667**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	113	113
GLOBAL	Pearson Correlation	.667**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	113	113

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

Table 3 shows there is an association between support and global reading strategies. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between support and global reading strategies ( $r=.667^{**}$ ) and ( $p=.000$ ). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between support and global reading strategies.

Table 4

*Correlation between Support Strategies and Problem-Solving Strategies***Correlations**

		SUPPORT	PROBLEMSOLVING
SUPPORT	Pearson Correlation	1	.538**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	113	113
PROBLEMSOLVING	Pearson Correlation	.538**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	113	113

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

Table 4 shows there is an association between support and problem-solving reading strategies. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between support and problem-solving reading strategies ( $r=.538^{**}$ ) and ( $p=.000$ ). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive

correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between support and problem-solving reading strategies.

## **Conclusion**

### *Summary of Findings and Discussions*

In this study, researchers examined various strategies employed by readers to enhance their reading comprehension. The findings shed light on the prevalence and effectiveness of Global Reading Strategies (GLOB), Problem-Solving Strategies (PROB) and Support Reading Strategies (SUPP). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that readers employ a variety of effective Global Reading Strategies (GLOB). Proficient readers are actively involved in employing diverse strategies to enhance their reading strategies. As for Research Question 2, the findings indicate that readers generally employ Problem-Solving Strategies (PROB) frequently during their reading experiences. Last but not least, the findings for Research Question 3 suggest that readers employ a range of Support Reading Strategies (SUPP) to enhance their understanding and engagement with the text. These strategies highlighted the importance of verifying understanding when encountering conflicting information, deepening understanding, and retaining information that will contribute to an overall comprehension and critical thinking skills. These findings are aligned with the study by Rajab et al (2017), where the utilization of reading strategies by undergraduates helped to overcome any reading difficulties. Not only that, awareness of reading strategies is also essential for readers to become proficient and independent learners, capable of effectively navigating various texts and extracting meaning from them. It is believed that competent reading entails the essential aspects of strategic awareness and monitoring of the comprehension process (Sheorey & Mokhtari (2001) as cited in (Zare & Othman, 2013). As stated by Mokhtari & Sheorev (2002) and Anderson (2002), to develop a thorough comprehension of reading strategies, it is important to carry out studies that examines metacognitive awareness across readers with varying levels of proficiency to establish how individuals approach and utilize metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. Finally, from the findings, it has been found that there is a strong positive relationship across all reading strategies for academic reading. This finding is consistent with previous study conducted by Zare & Othman (2013) on The Relationship between Reading Comprehension and Reading Strategies among Malaysian ESL Learners. This correlation indicates that the wide use of strategies may influence students' academic reading achievement. In other words, students who can comprehend reading texts effectively would show higher achievement in academic reading.

### *Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research*

Findings revealed that students employ reading strategies while reading texts. The study concluded there is a strong positive relationship across reading strategies in Academic Reading. This shows that it is vital for educators to be more flexible in their pedagogical approach and incorporate various reading strategies in the classroom. This will help learners in identifying the relevant and suitable reading strategies to accommodate their reading experience. Besides that, educators can empower learners to become proficient and independent readers. It is suggested that the researchers undertake a more focused investigation on reading strategies, specifically addressing the phenomenon observed in this study. Future researchers are also recommended to study the effect of reading strategies on learners' achievement. Not only that, but future researchers may also explore other avenues

to further expand the reading strategies such as the usage of technological devices that are built to accommodate learners.

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