

The Implementation of Rally Coach Strategy in Teaching Reading Comprehension: A Quasi Experimental Research

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Abstract. Students' comprehension of narrative texts was hampered in the chosen educational setting, necessitating the implementation of effective interventions. The Rally Coach strategy, an emerging approach, is based on the notion that collaborative learning boosts student performance. This study aims to determine if there is a significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between students taught using the Rally Coach Strategy and those taught using traditional methods. A quasi-experimental research design was employed to assess the efficacy of Spencer Kagan's Rally Coach Strategy in improving students' reading comprehension skills. The study's t-test results showed a significant improvement in reading comprehension, with a value of 6.039 exceeding the t-table result of 2.048, indicating a substantial improvement in reading comprehension achievement. These findings support the alternative hypothesis, implying that implementing the Rally Coach Method in the experimental classroom would significantly improve the quality of reading comprehension instruction. Overall, this study adds valuable empirical evidence to support the Rally Coach strategy's effectiveness in improving students' reading comprehension skills. This study addresses a critical educational concern by identifying a successful intervention to address low reading comprehension achievement and emphasizes the importance of cooperative learning strategies, such as the Rally Coach Strategy, in improving students' overall reading comprehension abilities.

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the crucial role that reading comprehension skills play in academic success and overall learning development, the issue of low reading comprehension achievement among secondary school students has sparked significant concern among educators and practitioners (Raudszu et al., 2021; Silalahi et al., 2022; Cain, 2022). As educators and practitioners observed the difficulties students encountered in comprehending narrative material, it became clear that proficient reading comprehension is necessary for excelling in language arts and has a significant impact on other curriculum areas. The ability to comprehend and analyse academic texts effectively is essential in various disciplines, and students' difficulties in this area can hinder their overall academic performance and capacity to engage critically with the subject matter.

Concern about low reading comprehension achievement in the chosen academic setting likely prompted educators to consider the potential causes of this problem. They may have recognized that the inability of students to comprehend narrative material could be attributed to a variety of factors, such as insufficient reading strategies, limited exposure to diverse reading

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materials, or language proficiency issues (Cain, 2022; Fatahillah et al., 2023). In addition, educators may have observed that students' poor comprehension skills affected their academic performance and had far-reaching implications for their future academic and professional endeavours (Okkinga et al., 2022). Addressing this issue became imperative as a direct impact on students' abilities to access and comprehend complex information, conduct research, and develop critical thinking skills.

Educators and practitioners may have discussed the selection and implementation of effective interventions to address the problem of low reading comprehension achievement. They may have investigated a variety of teaching strategies, educational programs, and initiatives designed to improve reading comprehension skills among secondary students. This process of identifying appropriate interventions included evaluating the viability, scalability, and impact potential of various approaches. In addition, they may have considered the significance of fostering a supportive learning environment that promoted collaboration and active student engagement in reading activities, allowing students to develop their comprehension skills in a meaningful and sustainable manner.

The Rally Coach Strategy is a teaching approach that stems from the cooperative learning model, and it was employed in a research study involving eighth-grade junior high school students (Kagan, 2017). Cooperative learning is a pedagogical method involving organizing students into small groups to work together to achieve learning objectives (Erickson and Berns, 2016). The Rally Coach Strategy is specifically designed as a group activity within the cooperative learning model. It involves students working in pairs; one student solves a problem or completes an assignment while the other student coaches and assists (Kagan, 2017). The roles are then reversed, and the process is repeated.

Thus, the Rally Coach Strategy is an interactive and collaborative teaching approach that encourages active student participation and engagement (Davoudi & Mahinpo, 2012; Pertiwi & Kartono, 2019). By working in pairs and taking turns as the coach or solver, students can develop their problem-solving and critical thinking skills while improving their ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with others (Kagan, 2017). The Rally Coach Strategy is useful for teachers looking to promote cooperative learning and enhance their students' academic achievement.

The Rally Coach Strategy offers numerous advantages for teachers and students during the teaching and learning process (Stewart, 2015; Pertiwi & Kartono, 2019; Harianja, 2020). Firstly, it is a versatile strategy that can be applied to various levels of education. Secondly, it is an efficient approach that promotes active student participation, leading to higher levels of engagement and motivation. Thirdly, the strategy encourages students to learn from one another, promoting collaboration and teamwork. Fourthly, the natural motivation that arises from the coaching and praise process can lead to increased student confidence and a positive learning experience. Fifthly, the strategy promotes effective discussion among students, leading to improved communication skills. Finally, the strategy helps students develop independence from the teacher and learn how to work cooperatively.

To effectively implement the Rally Coach Strategy, teachers should follow the above procedure outlined by Kagan (2017). Students work in pairs. Partner A solves the first problem, while Partner B watches, checks, coaches, and gives praise. The roles are then reversed, and partners continue to take turns solving successive problems. The strategy can be used with various types of problems, including worksheet problems, oral problems provided by the teacher, and manipulatives. Additionally, each team can check their answers with the other partner in their team after solving two problems, leading to further discussion and collaboration.

Thus, the Rally Coach Strategy offers a range of benefits for both teachers and students, making it a valuable teaching strategy that can enhance the teaching and learning process. Promoting active student participation, collaboration, and independent learning can lead to improved academic achievement, increased student motivation and engagement, and enhanced communication and teamwork skills.

Reading comprehension is a fundamental aspect of language acquisition and a critical skill for academic success. Experts in the field have offered various definitions of reading comprehension, which is generally understood as the ability to understand and interpret written material. Singer (2015) describes reading comprehension as interpreting written symbols, assimilating presented ideas, and critically thinking while deciphering the text. Klinger et al. (2016) assert that reading comprehension is a multicomponent, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and the text, including previous knowledge, strategy use, interest in the text, and understanding of text types.

Reading comprehension aims to gain a deep understanding of the text and extract important information that may be useful for the reader. Bukart (2018) notes that effective reading comprehension requires the reader to possess the appropriate skills and strategies for the type of text they are reading and understand how to apply them. Wallace (2012) outlines five different purposes of reading: getting a general idea, passing the time, knowing what is happening in the world, finding useful information, and gaining information about a particular topic or location. Overall, reading comprehension aims to gain a thorough understanding of the text and extract meaningful information.

Widdowson (2017) identifies five critical factors that influence comprehension skills. These factors include intelligence, the number of ideas a student can grasp, the depth of understanding, the extent of experience, and the mechanics of reading. Given that every student has a unique level of intelligence, it is reasonable to expect variations in the comprehension capacity of each individual (Samhudi, 2023). Additionally, the number of ideas that students can absorb, the depth of their understanding, and their experience can impact their ability to comprehend the written text (). Moreover, the mechanics of reading, including vocabulary, syntax, and grammar, may also influence the reader's understanding of the text.

Based on the observation and a preliminary study conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Lhokseumawe during pre-service training program, it was found that the average reading comprehension score of the eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Lhokseumawe was below the expected level. This indicates that the students' reading comprehension skills are not meeting the desired level. This could be a cause for concern for the school, as it may indicate a lack of effective teaching strategies or a lack of emphasis on reading comprehension in the curriculum.

Thus, it is possible that the students are not being exposed to a variety of reading materials, or they may not have been taught the necessary skills and strategies to comprehend what they read effectively. This could result in difficulties with understanding complex texts, answering questions related to the text, and making inferences based on the information presented.

This approach emphasizes active participation and collaboration among students, which may result in a better understanding of the reading materials. Working in pairs allows students to help each other clarify concepts, exchange ideas, and discuss textual interpretations. Such interactions may improve comprehension by assisting students in identifying main themes and making connections within the text. Therefore, the use of the Rally Coach strategy for teaching reading comprehension shows potential novelty in improving students' performance in this field of study.

From the aforementioned gap and research problems, we could generate a research question: Is there a significant difference in achievement between students who are taught reading comprehension on recount text using Rally Coach Strategy compared to those taught using a conventional one?

METHOD

The present study utilized a quasi-experimental design to examine the impact of the Rally Coach strategy on eighth-grade students' reading comprehension. According to the number of independent variables involved, quasi-experimental designs are classified as single-variable or factorial designs (Ary, 2013). In this study, the independent variable was the Rally Coach strategy, which paired students for a coaching process while the other student completed the test. The Rally Coach strategy was used to teach the 28 students in the experimental group throughout the six-week research period that spanned from April 23 to June 7, 2023. Simultaneously, the control group comprising 28 students was instructed using conventional teaching methodologies. There were sixteen female students and twelve male students in the control group. Meanwhile, nine male and nineteen female students made up the experimental group.

Data collection consisted of administering pre-tests with recount texts as the test material to both the experimental and control groups. The Rally Coach strategy was implemented in the experimental class over four days, while the control class continued using conventional teaching methods. On the study's final day, the experimental and control groups were given a post-test containing 20 questions about recount text. To analyze the data, statistical methods proposed by Ary (2013) were utilized, including homogeneity tests to assess pre-test results, normality tests to assess post-test results, and t-tests to determine the efficacy of the Rally Coach strategy in teaching reading comprehension.

The quasi-experimental design permitted a controlled comparison between the experimental and control groups, yielding valuable insights into the effectiveness of the Rally Coach strategy as an intervention for enhancing reading comprehension skills. Utilizing pre- and post-tests, the study assessed students' progress and provided a basis for evaluating the intervention's effectiveness. The rigorous statistical analysis employed in this study further ensured the reliability and validity of the findings, lending credence to the potential educational benefits of implementing the Rally Coach strategy. Through this investigation, the study provides valuable evidence to inform educational practices and interventions aimed at enhancing eighth-grade students' reading comprehension achievement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. RESULT

a. Homogeneity test

Below are the results of the data analysis for the mean, variance, and standard deviation of the pre-test scores in both the experimental and control classes.

Mean of Experimental Class

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum xi}{n} = \frac{1710}{28} = 61,07$$

According to the statistical analysis, the mean of the pre-test scores for the experimental class was found to be 61.07, which was derived from the scores of the 28 students who participated in the pre-test.

Variance and Standard Deviation of Experimental Class

$$S1^2 = 28,439$$
$$S1 = \sqrt{28,439} = 5,33$$

Based on the statistical analysis, it can be observed that the variance for the experimental class was $S1^2$, which yielded a value of 28.439. In addition, the standard deviation for the experimental class was $S1$, which yielded a value of 5.33. These results provide important insights into the distribution of scores within the experimental class, indicating the degree of variability in the scores around the mean.

Mean of Control Class

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum xi}{n} = \frac{1705}{28} = 60,89$$

Based on the statistical analysis, the mean score of the control class in the pre-test was found to be 60.89. This value was obtained from the pre-test scores of the 28 students in the control class.

Variance and Standard Deviation of Control Class

$$S2^2 = 22,321$$
$$S2 = \sqrt{22,321} = 4,72$$

From the statistical result, it can be seen that $S2^2$ represents the variance and $S2$ represents the standard deviation of the control class. The variance value was 22.321 and the standard deviation value was 4.72, based on the pre-test results of 28 students.

Homogeneity Test Result

To test for the homogeneity of data, the formula below was used in this study:

$$f = \frac{\text{the biggest variance}}{\text{the smallest variance}}$$
$$f = \frac{S1^2}{S2^2}$$
$$f = \frac{28,439}{22,321}$$
$$f = 1,27$$

In significant level ($\alpha = 0,05$), it showed that $F_{0,05 (28,28)} = 1,87$ because $F_{score} < F_{table}$ that is $1,27 < 1,87$. In other words, the result proved that both of the data was homogeneous.

b. Normality Test

A normality test was conducted to assess the normality of the data obtained in this research to determine if the data followed a normal distribution or not. This involved analysing the experimental and control class post-test results by calculating the mean, variance, and standard deviation. The purpose of this was to ascertain whether the data met the assumptions of normality, which is necessary for conducting parametric statistical tests.

Table 1. Mean, Variance, Standard Deviation of Experiment and Control

Class	Mean(\bar{x})	Variance(S^2)	Standard Deviation(S)
Experiment	78,39	53,802	7,33
Control	71,01	28,439	5,33

Table 2. Normality Result of Post-test Experimental Class

No.	X_i	Z_i	$F(z_i)$	$S(z_i)$	$ F(z_i)-S(z_i) $
1.	65	-1,82	0,03384	0,107143	0,0733027
2.	65	-1,82	0,03384	0,107143	0,0733027
3.	65	-1,82	0,03384	0,107143	0,0733027
4.	70	-1,15	0,126104	0,285714	0,1596099
5.	70	-1,15	0,126104	0,285714	0,1596099
6.	70	-1,15	0,126104	0,285714	0,1596099
7.	70	-1,15	0,126104	0,285714	0,1596099
8.	70	-1,15	0,126104	0,285714	0,1596099
9.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
10.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
11.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
12.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
13.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
14.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
15.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
16.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
17.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
18.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
19.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
20.	80	0,22	0,586774	0,714286	0,1275112
21.	85	0,90	0,816308	0,928571	0,1275112
22.	85	0,90	0,816308	0,928571	0,1275112
23.	85	0,90	0,816308	0,928571	0,1275112

No.	Xi	Zi	F(zi)	S(zi)	F(zi)-S(zi)
24.	85	0,90	0,816308	0,928571	0,1275112
25.	85	0,90	0,816308	0,928571	0,1275112
26.	85	0,90	0,816308	0,928571	0,1275112
27.	90	1,58	0,943348	1	0,0566524
28.	90	1,58	0,943348	1	0,0566524
Total	2195	-0,01	14,55787	17,89286	3,426464

In view of the table, it is obtained that $L_0 = 0,159$ which the highest score of $|F(zi)-S(zi)|$ with $n = 28$ and based on the significant standard $\alpha = 0,05$ of the liliefors table, it is obtained that $L_{table} = 0,164$. The data can be said normal if $L_0 < L_{table}$ while $L_0 < L_{table}$ that is $0,159 < 0,164$ can be concluded that data is normal.

Table 3. Normality Result of Post-test Control Class

No.	Xi	Zi	F(zi)	S(zi)	F(zi)-S(zi)
1.	60	-2,08	0,018891962	0,071428571	0,052537
2.	60	-2,08	0,018891962	0,071428571	0,052537
3.	65	-1,14	0,127329723	0,25	0,122670
4.	65	-1,14	0,127329723	0,25	0,122670
5.	65	-1,14	0,127329723	0,25	0,122670
6.	65	-1,14	0,127329723	0,25	0,122670
7.	65	-1,14	0,127329723	0,25	0,122670
8.	70	-0,20	0,420342057	0,535714286	0,115372
9.	70	-0,20	0,420342057	0,535714286	0,115372
10.	70	-0,20	0,420342057	0,535714286	0,115372
11.	70	-0,20	0,420342057	0,535714286	0,115372
12.	70	-0,20	0,420342057	0,535714286	0,115372
13.	70	-0,20	0,420342057	0,535714286	0,115372
14.	70	-0,20	0,420342057	0,535714286	0,115372
15.	70	-0,20	0,420342057	0,535714286	0,115372
16.	75	0,74	0,769459443	0,928571429	0,159112
17.	75	0,74	0,769459443	0,928571429	0,159112
18.	75	0,74	0,769459443	0,928571429	0,159112
19.	75	0,74	0,769459443	0,928571429	0,159112
20.	75	0,74	0,769459443	0,928571429	0,159112
21.	75	0,74	0,769459443	0,928571429	0,159112
22.	75	0,74	0,769459443	0,928571429	0,159112
23.	75	0,74	0,769459443	0,928571429	0,159112
24.	75	0,74	0,769459443	0,928571429	0,159112
25.	75	0,74	0,769459443	0,928571429	0,159112

26.	75	0,74	0,769459443	0,928571429	0,159112
27.	80	1,68	0,953048001	1	0,046952
28.	80	1,68	0,953048001	1	0,046952
Total	1845	0,00	14,40732	17,892857	3,485538

Based on the table, the value of L_0 was calculated to be 0,161, representing the highest absolute absolute difference score between $|F(z_i) - S(z_i)|$ for the sample size of $n = 28$. Using the significance standard $\alpha = 0,05$ from the Liliefors table, the obtained value of L_{table} was 0,164. In order to determine whether the data follows a normal distribution, the L_0 value must be compared to L_{table} . Since L_0 was found to be less than L_{table} , i.e., $0,159 < 0,164$, it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed.

c. T-test Result

From the earlier calculation, it had been an average value of the experimental class $\bar{x}_1 = 78,39$, variance (S_1^2) = 53,802 while the average value for the control class $\bar{x}_2 = 71,01$, variance (S_2^2) = 28,439.

$$t_{test} = \frac{x_1 - x_2}{S_{gab} \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}}$$

$$t_{test} = \frac{78,39 - 71,07}{6,41 \sqrt{\frac{1}{28} + \frac{1}{28}}}$$

$$t_{test} = \frac{7,32}{6,41 \sqrt{\frac{2}{56}}}$$

$$t_{test} = \frac{7,32}{(6,41)(0,189)}$$

$$t_{test} = \frac{7,32}{1,212}$$

$$t_{test} = 6,039$$

2. Discussion

The current research employed a t-test to examine possible variance in achievement between two groups of students: one group received instruction in reading comprehension on recount texts using the Rally Coach Strategy, while the other group received conventional instruction. The calculated t-test value of 6.039 was compared to the t-table critical value for a two-tailed test with a significance level of 0.05, which was 2.048. A t-test value that exceeded the critical value indicated a statistically significant difference. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) that there would be no difference in the effectiveness of the two instructional methods was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) that there would be a difference in effectiveness was accepted.

Using the t-test, the study's findings provide strong evidence that the Rally Coach Strategy has statistically significant advantages over traditional instruction for teaching reading comprehension of recount texts. This method enabled a rigorous comparison of the two instructional methods, thereby increasing the results' reliability. Researchers were able to quantify the degree of difference between the two groups using the t-test, confirming that the

Rally Coach Strategy significantly outperformed conventional instruction in terms of improving students' reading comprehension achievement. The statistical significance of this difference lends credence to the study's practical implications, suggesting that implementing the Rally Coach Strategy could significantly improve students' reading comprehension abilities.

In the present study, the t-test was a powerful tool that shed light on the effect of the Rally Coach Strategy on students' reading comprehension achievement. The results supported the alternative hypothesis, demonstrating a statistically significant and substantial distinction between the two instructional approaches. The study confirms the potential benefits of incorporating the Rally Coach Strategy into reading comprehension instruction by refuting the null hypothesis. These findings provide educators and policymakers with valuable insights, highlighting the efficacy of cooperative learning approaches such as the Rally Coach Strategy for enhancing students' reading comprehension skills. The study's rigorous statistical analysis bolsters confidence in the validity and reliability of the results, reinforcing the Rally Coach Strategy's viability as an instructional technique for enhancing students' reading comprehension.

The novel contribution of this study is the successful application of the Rally Coach Strategy, which is more commonly used in mathematics education research, to eighth-grade students' reading comprehension of recount texts. While the Rally Coach Strategy has been studied extensively in the context of mathematics instruction (see Pertiwi, Kartono & Wardono, 2019; Harianja, 2020), this is one of the seminal studies to adapt and implement it in the context of reading comprehension. This study explores the broader applicability and efficacy of the Rally Coach Strategy as an instructional tool for enhancing reading comprehension skills, going beyond its typical application in mathematics. The innovative approach of this study bridges the gap between subject-specific teaching strategies and highlights the potential transferability of cooperative learning techniques to a variety of academic disciplines.

The innovative nature of this study, which investigates the novel application of the Rally Coach Strategy in the context of reading comprehension, contributes significantly to the existing educational research landscape. It expands the understanding of effective instructional strategies and demonstrates the potential for cross-disciplinary insights, paving the way for future research to further investigate and optimize the use of cooperative learning approaches in a variety of academic settings.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to determine if there is a significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between students taught using the Rally Coach Strategy and those taught using traditional methods. The study utilized a quasi-experimental design, with a pre-test post-test control group design. The participants were randomly assigned into an experimental group, which received treatment by using Rally Coach Strategy, and a control group, which followed a conventional learning method. The research findings revealed that the average score of the pre-test in the experimental group was 61.07. After the treatment, the average score of the post-test in the experimental group increased to 78.39, whereas in the control group, it only reached 71.01.

In order to authenticate the hypothesis, the statistical analysis was conducted using the t-test. The t-test value was 6.039, while the t-table value at the significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ and a two-tailed test was 2.048. Consequently, it was concluded that the t-test value was higher than the t-table value, which indicated that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. In other words, it could be inferred that using Rally Coach Strategy was effective in enhancing the reading comprehension skills of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Lhokseumawe. These results have important implications for educators and

policymakers in improving the quality of education and promoting innovative teaching strategies in the classroom.

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