



## READING SELF-CONCEPT AND MOTIVATION: A PERSPECTIVE FROM STUDENTS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES

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### ABSTRACT

#### Article History

Received: 8 September 2022  
Revised: 26 October 2022  
Accepted: 10 November 2022  
Published: 21 November 2022

#### Keywords

Elementary schools  
Reading difficulties  
Reading motivation  
Questionnaire development  
Relationship  
Reading self-concept.

This study investigates the relationship between reading self-concept and motivation among a group of male and female students with reading difficulties, also exploring this according to gender variables. The paper also seeks to determine to what extent reading self-concept can predict reading motivation among these target students. The study sample comprised a group of 100 mixed male and female students studying at upper-primary schools in Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia, all of whom faced reading difficulties (RD). The researcher prepared and applied two tools in questionnaire form, the Reading Self-Concept Scale questionnaire (RSCSQ) and the Reading Motivation Scale questionnaire (RMSQ), both of which had acceptable validity and reliability. The study found a significant positive correlation between the total RSCSQ score and its reading ability domain and the total RMSQ score with each of its two domains. There is a significant positive correlation between the reading difficulties domain and the external reading motivation domain but no correlation between the reading difficulty domain and the total RMSQ score and its internal reading motivation domain. Second, the study found that for students with RD, while reading self-concept and its reading ability domain can predict reading motivation; the reading difficulty domain cannot predict reading motivation. These results were consistent both among the group and between gender variables.

**Contribution/Originality:** This study uniquely developed two validated questionnaires (RSCSQ and RMSQ) specific to students with RD in upper-primary schools. The research is one of few studies that have investigated the relationship between reading self-concept and motivation and determined if reading self-concept can predict reading motivation among students with RD in upper-primary schools.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading enables learners to acquire a wide range of knowledge and is thus regarded as the key to learning and success in school. Learners' linguistic development is also affected by reading, which facilitates understanding. However, many school-age learners experience learning difficulties and this adversely affects their educational attainment. Several disabilities can remain hidden before a child starts school and among the most prevalent at primary age are reading difficulties (RD). According to Hamadnah, Assi, and Al-Hamadnah (2017) learners with RD find it difficult to process information, which not only impedes reading itself but also the receiving and understanding of knowledge, making it far more challenging for them to achieve success at school. Gdoa (2007) highlights that reading difficulties impact learners from a psychological perspective, as well as affecting the cognitive and academic aspects of learning. Researchers and professionals who work with students with RD are

particularly interested in this psychological perspective since it can facilitate a better understanding of how to help these learners in future.

For eight out of ten students with RD, non-educational aspects are also affected, with [Hallahan and Kuffman \(2008\)](#) advising that reading level and accuracy affect the learner across behavioral, emotional and psychological dimensions. [Al-Ameriah \(2005\)](#) suggests that RD also impacts the reading self-concept of affected learners because they find it challenging to read and understand the text, as well as requiring additional time to accomplish reading tasks, which may not be completed to the same level as other learners. Learners with RD may therefore feel inadequate and inferior, resulting in a negative or far lower reading self-concept. Poor readers suffer from low reading self-concept, motivation and performance, while reading performance may show no notable improvement by the end of the school year ([Vaknin-Nusbaum, Nevo, Brande, & Gambrell, 2018](#)). In contrast, typical readers improve throughout the year because their motivation remains strong and steady. [Vaknin-Nusbaum et al. \(2018\)](#) study identified a relationship between reading motivation and both groups' reading performance.

[Tabassam and Grainger \(2002\)](#) put forward that people with reading difficulties experience academic challenges which, compared to typical learners, decrease their motivation and willingness to undertake academic tasks. Meanwhile, learners with high reading motivation engage with reading activities while those with low reading motivation tend to withdraw from these activities. Reading self-concept is influenced by learners' motivation to read, as well as impacting the quality of what they read. According to [Chapman and Tunmer \(1997\)](#) cultural, environmental, and domestic variables also influence the motivation towards reading, reading self-concept and school achievement.

[Hamadnah et al. \(2017\)](#) advise that children with RD make up between 2% and 8% of primary school students, adding that reading difficulties are more common among males than females. The majority of academic achievements rely on reading in the first instance, so children with RD face problems with academic achievement as a result of their difficulties with letter learning, spelling, quick reading and understanding ([Al-Bar, Rabah, & Al-Skiti, 2016](#)). RD exposes students to failure in a wide range of subjects, including sciences, as they lack the ability to acquire knowledge through reading. This leads to students with RD having less confidence in their cognitive abilities than their peers, which [Saleh \(2011\)](#) suggests leads to a negative self-concept for both reading and in terms of their broader academic capabilities. In turn, this creates a perception of school as a dull, claustrophobic place, further reducing their motivation to learn. [Zytoon \(2005\)](#) identifies that this reduces reading and learning motivation among students with RD, leading them to avoid reading-based academic tasks where possible.

Scholars including [Grum, Lebarič, and Kolenc \(2004\)](#); [Lawrence and Vimala \(2013\)](#); [Sikhwari \(2014\)](#) and [Burger and Naude \(2020\)](#) have found a statistically significant relationship between self-concept and motivation, but others have not found this relationship to be statistically significant ([Arefi & Naghebzadeh, 2014](#); [Chatri, 2014](#); [Izuchi & Onyekuru, 2017](#); [Othman & Leng, 2011](#); [Skaalvik & Valås, 1999](#)). Since scholars' views are polarized as described above, the present study aims to verify the relationship between self-concept and motivation for children with reading difficulties.

## 2. STUDY QUESTIONS

This study's research questions are as follows:

(1) Among male and female students with reading difficulties in upper primary schools; is there a statistically significant correlation between learners' ratings on items in the reading self-concept scale questionnaire (RSCSQ) and the reading motivation scale questionnaire (RMSQ) both as a group and according to the gender variable (only males or only females)?

(2) Among male and female students with reading difficulties in upper primary schools; can reading motivation be predicted by a reading self-concept scale questionnaire (RSCSQ), both as a group of mixed students and according to the gender variable (only males or only females)?

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although there is not a universally agreed definition of RD, researchers are united in their opinion that students with RD face challenges and delays with the acquisition, mastery and understanding of reading material (Hamadnah et al., 2017). Some researchers define reading difficulties as students who fail to reach the normal reading level for their age, despite not having sensory or mental handicaps. Learners with RD may have poor reading skills or be unable to read at all, as well as having difficulties with spelling and writing to the same level as their peers.

Students with reading difficulties often feel insecure as a result and may move frequently, almost obsessively, when reading, leading them to lose their pace in the text and thus fail to understand its meaning. Moreover, learners with RD find it difficult to distinguish the right word, sometimes adding, repeating or substituting words and letters in the text, while they may also read some words backwards and find it difficult to discern new and unfamiliar words. Some learners with RD read too quickly, failing to understand the meaning of the text as a result; while others read so slowly that the meaning is lost. Students with RD also lack fluency and may insert pauses or stops in an inappropriate place. Al-Batainah, Al-Rashdan, Al-Sabilah, and Al-Katatbah (2010) also highlight that assimilation errors such as an inability to recall the title or facts in the text are often found in children with RD, while they also lack the ability to tell a story sequentially.

Students may suffer from reading difficulties for several reasons, including delays with their language development and psychological difficulties. Inadequate language development means that the child will also have difficulties interpreting printed reading material. According to Logan, Medford, and Hughes (2011) for high ability readers, verbal intelligence quotient (IQ) explains the significant variance in reading comprehension; among poor readers, intrinsic and internal motivation and variance in decoding skills significantly explains reading comprehension.

A child with RD finds it difficult to focus their attention on the printed material, according to Al-Sartawi and Al-Sartawi (2012) who also advise that issues with audio functions adversely affect auditory discrimination and serial memory. Learners with RD experience difficulties with connecting and mixing audible sounds, which renders it difficult for them to sound and interpret word symbols in an auditory manner. Visual functions problems including issues with closure and visual memory can also cause reading difficulties; for example, students with RD are frequently unable to reproduce visual materials from memory and this poor visual closure capacity means that these children cannot offer an acceptable response when a part of a word is deleted.

The occurrence of reading difficulties is also influenced by genetic causes since neurodegenerative dysfunction in the processing of visual and auditory information is among the principal causes of reading difficulties (Al-Batainah et al., 2010). In addition to the family's genetic history, researchers have also highlighted that if a mother has poor nutrition or illness during pregnancy, this can disrupt the child's development and lead to reading difficulties. Meanwhile, if babies are born prematurely or experience hypoxia during birth, this can affect the brain and result in later reading difficulties. The environment that a child grows up in also has an indirect impact on their brain development and behavior, which can result in RD; while Molhem (2002) advises that inadequate conditions for learning and lack of education among parents may also cause reading difficulties.

The issue of self-concept is also critical, with researchers dividing this into specific dimensions including physical, social and academic self-concept and Byrne (1996) further dividing the academic self-concept into specialized dimensions such as mathematical self-concept and reading self-concept. The reading self-concept has varying definitions but researchers and scientists agree that it is the relationship between self-awareness and the environment. Boutros (2008) advises that the reading self-concept (RSC) means the individual's belief about their reading ability and reading more generally. Meanwhile, Obaid (2009) posits that several factors may affect an individual's reading self-concept, with a child's behavior and RSC being influenced by positive or negative interactions with their parents. When children feel supported by their parents, this enables them to meet reading

challenges and increase their self-concept from this perspective. For students with reading difficulties, researchers have identified a statistically-negative, direct correlation between their scores in the Learning Difficulties Test and those for the Academic Self-Esteem test; in terms of average scores in the latter test, there are no statistically-significant differences between the genders of students with learning difficulties. In [Ebrahim, Abdul Majed, and Al-Bhairi \(2009\)](#) study exploring the relationship of optimism to self-concept among students with reading difficulties aged 9 to 12 years; the researchers identified a positive relationship between optimism and self-concept.

Relationships with friends also help to shape a child's self-concept and [Guay, Boivin, and Hodges \(1999\)](#) identified that children tend to choose friends with similar levels of intelligence and socioeconomic status, finding that when children compare themselves to friends and find that the friends' reading level is similar or lower, they have an improved RSC. A number of researchers have found that the school environment has a significant impact on RSC. [Bracken \(1996\)](#) for example, highlighted the clear link between positive RSC and success at school, since students who are successful have higher levels of confidence and self-respect. In contrast, students with RD frequently have a lower overall academic self-concept and, specifically, a negative RCS. Both [Tagialdeen and Habebah \(2017\)](#) and [Majdoobi \(2018\)](#) investigated the relationship between reading difficulties and school adjustment or school compatibility, with the results indicating no statistical correlation between RD and scholastic compatibility, nor between pupils' scholastic compatibility and gender.

Reading motivation (RM) is defined as the desire and enjoyment of an individual to read continuously and this is affected by the individual's perseverance, challenge, love of exploration and self-efficacy. [Wigfield and Guthrie \(1997\)](#) indicate that students' RM varies as a result of their particular situation, including internal and external factors. With regard to attitudes towards reading, the individual's response varies according to their motivation; for example, if their motivation for reading is internal, this results in them participating in reading activities with enthusiasm and pleasure, as well as a high desire to begin reading independently and join a reading program. This internal motivation increases the speed, accuracy and understanding of the reading text. In contrast, [Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller, and Wigfield \(2012\)](#) advise that externally-motivated learners read with the aim of reward, success or obtaining marks.

According to [De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, and Rosseel \(2012\)](#) internal RM is associated with faster reading and understanding of the text than external reading motivation, which has other controlling factors, with [Wang and Guthrie \(2004\)](#) suggesting that high external motivation can lead to poor reading skills and unwanted reading performance. [McGeown, Norgate, and Warhurst \(2012\)](#) study investigated the relationship between the level of reading skill and the RM of both poor and excellent readers. This study found that while excellent readers' RM was correlated statistically with reading skill, there was no significant correlation between poor readers' RM and reading skill, while poor readers' internal and external reading motivation are much more closely correlated. [Becker, McElvany, and Kortenbruck \(2010\)](#) found that fourth-grade students' external reading motivation was positively linked to the reading and writing of the same students in the sixth grade, also finding that students with high external RM have poorer reading skills and are less well-read. [Morgan, Fuchs, Compton, Cordray, and Fuchs \(2008\)](#) study of primary school students identified a relationship between early reading failure, low motivation and the desire to read in later years.

## 4. METHOD

### 4.1. Instruments

The researcher prepared two questionnaires, the Reading Self-Concept Scale Questionnaire (RSCSQ) and Reading Motivation Scale Questionnaire (RMSQ), which were created because there were no suitable existing questionnaires to target students with RD at upper-primary school level in Saudi Arabia. The questionnaires were created after reviewing several scales related to each variable in this study; the RSCSQ reviewed [Marsh \(1990\)](#); [Chapman and Boersma \(1991\)](#); [Chapman and Tunmer \(1995\)](#) and [Allodi \(2000\)](#) the RMSQ reviewed [Mckenna and](#)

Kear (1990); Mckenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995); Baker and Wigfield (1999). From this review, the first version of the RSCSQ contained 17 items and the RMSQ had 14 items; after conducting a validity process, the final version of the RSCSQ had 14 questions with two domains (see Appendix A) and the RMSQ had 13 items with two domains (see Appendix B). The choice of domain reflected the most important domains relating to the two variables targeted in this study.

Since the questionnaires were designed to assess students with reading difficulties; the items were written to be short in length and worded with simple vocabulary to allow these students to better understand the questions. The RSCSQ assessed each target student's (a) reading ability and (b) reading difficulties and the RMSQ assessed their (a) internal and (b) external motivation toward reading. Both questionnaires used a five-point Likert scale (1-5), representing definitely true, true, not sure, not true, definitely not true. The students were also asked to provide demographic information such as grade level and gender.

## 4.2. Validity and reliability

### 4.2.1. Translation

First, the researcher developed an English version of the questionnaires before sending them to three translation experts (native speakers) to review them for accuracy. According to this feedback, some items were revised before the questionnaires were translated into Arabic and sent to an Arabic proofreader to determine that the questions were clear and relevant. To ensure that each item in the questionnaires had the same meaning in both English and Arabic, the questionnaire items were back-translated and resent to experts in both languages and changes were made based on these experts' comments.

### 4.2.2. Interrater Validity (Expert rate)

The first versions of the two questionnaires were sent to the Psychology and Special Education faculties at both King Saud University and Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University. A total of ten experts from these departments judged and evaluated the items in each questionnaire. The experts recommended that some items were excluded on the basis that they did not correlate with their domain. Taking these suggestions into consideration, any item that was considered to correlate to its domain to an 80% level was included, while the remainder were excluded, leading to the final version of the RSCSQ having 14 items and the RMSQ 13 items.

### 4.2.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Before the scales were implemented for the main study, the reliability and validity of the two scales were assessed through a pilot study with a group of target students with RD. The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the RSCSQ was carried out by using Principal Component Analysis with direct *oblimin* rotation, a process which revealed two distinct factors with eigenvalues  $>1.0$  and explained 58.958 per cent of the total variance. The screen plot verified the two factors at the point where the slope drops below 1.0 eigenvalue (the y-axis) between two and three factors. Reading ability, the first factor, included items 1,2,3,4,8,9,10,11 and 12 - which loaded between .640 and 0.832. The second factor, attitude towards reading, was incorporated in items 5,6,7,13 and 14 - which loaded between 0.642 and .828. In addition, EFA was also undertaken for the RMSQ questionnaire, once again using Principal Component Analysis with direct *oblimin* rotation. Two factors with eigenvalues  $>1.0$  became apparent and provided an explanation for 63.117 per cent of the total variance. The screen plot verified these two factors where the slope drops below 1.0 eigenvalue (the y-axis) between two and three factors. The first factor, internal motivation, included items 1,3,4,5,7,8,10,12 and 13 - which loaded between 0.671 and 0.863. The second factor (external motivation) was contained in 2, 6, 9 and 11, which loaded between 0.506 and 0.773.

#### 4.2.4. Internal Consistency and Validity

To examine the internal consistency among the questionnaires, the Pearson correlation coefficient was implemented to calculate the correlation coefficient between each item with the total score of its belonging domain. For the RSCSQ, the Pearson correlation coefficient ranged between 0.627 and 0.838; for the RMSQ, it ranged between 0.295 and 0.878. As seen in Table 1, this means that there was statistically significant value for all these coefficients, which was set at level  $<.01$ ; except for item 2, which belonged to external motivation and was set at level  $<0.05$ .

**Table 1.** Correlation coefficient of each item with the final score of the belonging domain.

Item	Correlation coefficient	Significance level	Item	Correlation coefficient	Significance level
<b>RSCSQ</b>			<b>RMSQ</b>		
<b>a) Reading ability</b>			<b>a) Internal motivation</b>		
1	0.773**	0.000	1	0.787**	0.000
2	0.838**	0.000	3	0.849**	0.000
3	0.814**	0.000	4	0.815**	0.000
4	0.754**	0.000	5	0.786**	0.000
8	0.655**	0.000	7	0.739**	0.000
9	0.766**	0.000	8	0.863**	0.000
10	0.805**	0.000	10	0.857**	0.000
11	0.627**	0.000	12	0.878**	0.000
12	0.748**	0.000	13	0.772**	0.000
<b>b) Reading difficulties</b>			<b>b) External motivation</b>		
5	0.789**	0.000	2	0.295*	0.013
6	0.821**	0.000	6	0.799**	0.000
7	0.777**	0.000	9	0.693**	0.000
13	0.691**	0.000	11	0.699**	0.000
14	0.685**	0.000			

Note: \*\*p < 0.01, \*p < 0.05. RSCSQ= Reading Self-Concept Scale questionnaire, RMSQ= Reading Motivation Scale questionnaire.

The researcher used the Pearson correlation coefficient to examine the internal consistency of the questionnaires and calculate the correlation coefficient between each domain and the total score of its questionnaire. For the RSCSQ and RMSQ questionnaires, the Pearson correlation coefficient ranged between 0.408 and 0.952 for the correlation among each domain. As can be seen in Table 2, all the coefficients have statistically significant value, which was set at level  $<0.01$ .

**Table 2.** Correlation coefficient of each domain with the final score of its questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Correlation coefficient	Significance level
<b>RSCSQ</b>		
a) reading ability	0.811**	0.000
b) reading difficulties	0.408**	0.000
<b>RMSQ</b>		
a) internal motivation	0.952**	0.000
b) external motivation	0.927**	0.000

Note: \*\*p < 0.01, RSCSQ= Reading Self-Concept Scale questionnaire, RMSQ= Reading Motivation Scale questionnaire.

#### 4.2.5. Reliability

To measure the reliability of each questionnaire, the researcher calculated the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the results showed that the alpha coefficient was 0.756 and 0.913 overall for the RSCSQ (14 items) and the RMSQ (13 items) respectively, indicating high reliability. For the RSCSQ, the alpha for (a) reading ability (9 items) was 0.904 and (b) reading difficulties (5 items) 0.804; for the RMSQ, the alpha for (a) internal motivation (9 items) was 0.933 and (b) external motivation (4 items) 0.713, representing high reliability for the domains of both questionnaires.

### 4.3. Sampling Procedure

In Al-Kharj city, there are 19 elementary schools with learning difficulties programs for female students (serving around 157 students) and 25 elementary schools with learning difficulties programs for males (serving around 196 students), according to the Saudi Ministry of Education (2018). This study contacted these schools to determine their desire to participate in this study, including the pilot and main study; ten female schools and 12 male schools agreed to participate. In these schools, students were diagnosed as having reading difficulties due to their scores in the Diagnostic Tests of the Saudi Ministry of Education (General Administration of Special Education & General Administration of Evaluation and Quality of Education, 2016). The poor reading abilities of these students were revealed to their Arabic language teachers through this diagnostic test.

### 4.4. Participants

For the pilot study, participants were drawn from four male schools and four female schools. After implementing the appropriate statistical methods to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaires to collect data in the pilot study, the questionnaires were then ready to distribute to the other schools for collecting the data for the main study. For the main study, six female schools and eight male schools participated and the RSCSQ and RMSQ questionnaires were distributed to all target students. The questionnaires were sent in paper form and included instructions to students about how to fill them in. In total, 50 female and 57 male students returned the questionnaires and of these, 46 female and 54 male participants returned their questionnaires complete, without duplicating or missing any answers, while the remainder were excluded from the analysis. Table 3 shows the demographic information of the complete sample of students with reading difficulties for the main study.

**Table 3.** Demographic information for the main study.

Category		Frequency and Percentage
Gender	Male	54
	Female	46
Grade level	4	36
	5	34
	6	30

## 5. RESULTS

It should be noted that the present study includes results based on the perspectives of students with reading difficulties. This section presents the results of the RSCSQ and RMSQ with the correlation among variables.

**Table 4.** The relationship between reading self-concept and motivation for students with reading difficulties.

Group	Questionnaire	RMSQ	1. Internal RM	2. External RM
Female and Male	RSCSQ	0.683**	0.634**	0.907**
	1. Reading ability	0.790**	0.807**	0.695**
	2. Reading difficulty	-0.074	-0.184	0.460**
Female	RSCSQ	0.646**	0.602**	0.921**
	1. Reading ability	0.764**	0.774**	0.730**
	2. Reading difficulty	-0.062	-0.153	0.464**
Male	RSCSQ	0.738**	0.681**	0.889**
	1. Reading ability	0.825**	0.849**	0.653**
	2. Reading difficulty	-0.086	-0.221	0.451**

Note: \*\*p < 0.01, Reading motivation = RM, RSCSQ= Reading Self-Concept Scale questionnaire, RMSQ= Reading Motivation Scale questionnaire, Internal RM= Internal Reading Motivation, External RM= External Reading Motivation.

Table 4 shows a significant positive correlation at 0.01 level between the total RSCSQ score and the total RMSQ score and each of its two domains; meaning that if students with RD have reading motivation then their reading self-concept will increase as well. There is also a significant positive correlation at 0.01 level between the

reading ability domain and the total RMSQ score and each of its two domains; indicating that if these students have reading motivation, their reading ability will increase. Moreover, there is a significant positive correlation between the reading difficulties domain and the external reading motivation domain; meaning that if these students have external reading motivation, their reading difficulty will increase. Finally, for students with reading difficulties, there is no correlation between the reading difficulty domain and the total RMSQ score and its internal reading motivation domain. These results are consistent among male and female students with RD in upper primary schools both as a group (males and females) and according to gender variable (only males or only females).

**Table 5.** Predicting reading motivation through reading self-concept domains for students with reading difficulties.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	B	T Value	T sig.
RMSQ for both genders	Constant	0.738	2.658	0.009
	Reading ability	0.785	12.752	0.000
	Reading difficulty	0.056	1.029	0.306
RMSQ for male	Constant	0.467	1.184	0.243
	Reading ability	0.816	9.764	0.000
	Reading difficulty	0.095	1.248	0.219
RMSQ for female	Constant	0.913	2.317	0.025
	Reading ability	0.766	8.456	0.000
	Reading difficulty	0.032	0.411	0.683

Note: RSCSQ= Reading Self-Concept Scale questionnaire, RMSQ= Reading Motivation Scale questionnaire, B = Coefficient regression, T Value= the size of the difference, T sig= statistical significance.

Table 5 presents that the regression analysis for both genders indicated the correlation coefficient value R-square is 0.793, suggesting a positive relationship between RMSQ and both domains of RSCSQ. Meanwhile, the F-value is 82.025, which is significant at 0.000 level and R<sup>2</sup> at 0.628; showing that the RSCSQ domains explain around 62.8% of the change that happened to the dependent variable, reading motivation. The T-value is 12.752 for reading ability and 1.029 for reading difficulty with statistical significance of 0.000 and 0.306 respectively; meaning that reading motivation can be predicted through the reading ability domain for both genders. However, the effect of the reading difficulty domain is weak because it is not statistically significant and thus cannot predict reading motivation.

The regression analysis for female students shows that the correlation coefficient value R-square is 0.765; indicating that there is a positive relationship between RMSQ and both domains of RSCSQ. The F-value at 35.990 is significant at 0.000 level and R<sup>2</sup> at 0.585; meaning that the RSCSQ domains explain around 58.5% of the change that happened to the dependent variable, reading motivation. The T-value is 8.456 for reading ability and 0.411 for reading difficulty, with statistical significance of 0.000 and 0.683 respectively; indicating that reading motivation can be predicted through the reading ability domain for female students. However, the effect of the reading difficulty domain is weak because it is not statistically significant and thus cannot predict reading motivation.

In the regression analysis for male students, the correlation coefficient value R-square is 0.832; indicating that there is a positive relationship between RMSQ and both domains of RSCSQ. The F-value 48.185 is significant at 0.000 level and R<sup>2</sup> at 0.691; meaning that the RSCSQ domains explain around 69.1% of the change that happened to the dependent variable, reading motivation. The T-value is 9.764 for reading ability and 1.248 for reading difficulty, with statistical significance of 0.000 and 0.219 respectively; indicating that reading motivation can be predicted through the reading ability domain for male students. However, the effect of the reading difficulty domain is weak because it is not statistically significant and thus cannot predict reading motivation.

Table 6 shows that the regression analysis for students of both genders. This analysis indicates that the correlation coefficient value R-square is 0.683; meaning that there is a positive relationship between RMSQ and RSCSQ. The F-value is 85.920 and significant at 0.000 level and R<sup>2</sup> at 0.467; which suggests that the RSCSQ explains around 46.7% of the change that happened to the dependent variable, reading motivation (RM). The T-

value is 9.269 with statistical significance of 0.000; meaning that reading motivation can be predicted through reading self-concept for both genders with RD.

**Table 6.** Predicting reading motivation through reading self-concept for students with reading difficulties.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	B	T Value	T sig.
RMSQ for both genders	Constant	0.510	1.554	0.123
	RSCSQ	0.958	9.269	0.000
RMSQ for female	Constant	0.765	1.6660	0.103
	RSCSQ	0.893	6.098	0.000
RMSQ for male	Constant	0.143	0.307	0.761
	RSCSQ	1.054	7.251	0.000

Note: RSCSQ= Reading Self-Concept Scale questionnaire, RMSQ= Reading Motivation Scale questionnaire, B = Coefficient regression, T Value= the size of the difference, T sig= statistical significance.

Second, the regression analysis calculated for female students shows that the correlation coefficient value R-square is 0.646; indicating a positive relationship between RMSQ and RSCSQ. At 37.188, the F-value is significant at 0.000 level and R<sup>2</sup> at 0.417; meaning that the RSCSQ explains around 41.7% of the change that happened to the dependent variable, reading motivation (RM). The T-value is 6.098 with statistical significance of 0.000; which means reading motivation can be predicted through reading self-concept for female students with RD.

Finally, the regression analysis calculated for male students shows that the correlation coefficient value R-square is 0.738; indicating a positive relationship between RMSQ and RSCSQ. At 52.582, the F-value is significant at 0.000 level and R<sup>2</sup> at 0.544; showing that the RSCSQ explains around 54.4% of the change that happened to the dependent variable, reading motivation (RM). The T value is 7.251 with statistical significance of 0.000; which means reading motivation can be predicted through reading self-concept for male students with RD.

## 6. DISCUSSION

This study found a significant positive correlation between the total RSCSQ score and its reading ability domain and the total RMSQ score for each of its two domains; meaning that when RSC decreases, RM decreases as well. This result is aligned with Vaknin-Nusbaum et al. (2018) findings, which have the same results as this study for poor readers. Some studies, including those of Anmarkrud and Bråten (2009) and Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield, and Guthrie (2009) have found that reading motivation is correlated to reading ability and reading understanding.

According to Lau and Chan (2003), students with RD are more affected by their reading ability, also finding a relationship between motivation and the learner's ability to read, while students with reading difficulties have a negative image of their reading abilities, meaning that they are often characterized by a low motivation to read. Furthermore, the present study also found that the reading difficulty domain was correlated with external reading motivation, which is consistent with Becker et al. (2010) who suggested a bidirectional relationship between external reading motivation and reading literacy.

The present study also found no correlation between reading difficulties and the total RMSQ and its internal reading motivation domain. This result is consistent with McGeown et al. (2012). Meanwhile, Logan et al. (2011) noted that for students with RD, the slow spelling of words and lack of reading ability was a source of frustration, making them unwilling to participate in reading activities. However, when students with RD have high reading motivation; they are more likely to persevere with difficult reading materials because of their interest and desire to develop their reading ability. This motivates them to spend greater efforts and more time when faced with difficult reading tasks, meaning that their reading skills improve over time. In contrast, when students with RD have low motivation, they tend not to participate and become quickly frustrated with reading tasks, meaning that their reading performance continues to be at a low level, reducing their RSC as a consequence.

To raise academic and reading self-concepts among learners, both parents and teachers seek to increase students' motivation towards reading. This is frequently done by recommending that students participate in

intervention programs to increase their reading motivation, which Melekoglu (2011) and Guthrie et al. (2004) advise can upgrade both reading performance and RSC.

This study's results indicate that the total RSCSQ score and its reading ability domain can predict reading motivation; this is aligned with Becker et al.'s (2010) findings, which suggest that reading performance predicts reading motivation. However, the results show that reading difficulty cannot predict RM. Students' reading difficulties lead to poor educational achievement and, in turn, this causes them to develop a low reading ability and a negative attitude towards reading. Chapman and Tunmer (1997) highlight that this is the result of these students' successive failure in study assignments, both in general terms and for those that require reading, in particular. According to Al-Qemesh (2006) study, the low RSC increases as the level of difficulty in reading decreases. It can thus be concluded that there is a reciprocal relationship between RD and RSC since when children fail to read under any circumstances; they describe reading as difficult; they have weak reading abilities; their reading trends are low.

Blgomadi (2011) therefore concludes that students with RD have low expectations of academic success, which diminishes their RSC; leading to reduced motivation and creating negative feelings towards academic tasks, especially reading tasks. Vaknin-Nusbaum et al. (2018) put forward that there is a relationship between young children's reading skills and reading motivation. Similarly, Morgan et al. (2008) suggest that children with poor reading skills have a low RSC, while their teachers assess them as less inclined to practice reading independently, with low motivation and a greater reluctance to read. Children with early negative academic self-concept have consistently poor achievement in reading tasks, with a more negative reading self-concept than those children with early positive academic self-concept (Chapman, Tunmer, & Prochnow, 2000).

## 7. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study has some limitations that should be addressed, the first of which is that the study sample of students with RD all came from one specific country and context. In addition, because the Saudi education system has separate schools for male and female students, female teachers and researchers cannot enter male schools, which makes distributing the questionnaires more time-consuming and difficult. Therefore, a future study with more funding might therefore consider different countries and context. Another limitation of this study is that although all these students had been diagnosed with RD and thus received special education services under the Saudi Arabian education system, their responses to the questionnaire items may vary according to their experience with these special education services. The study's third limitation is that it focuses on students with RD at upper-primary level and does not consider lower-grade levels or middle and high school students. Therefore, more research is needed to address the relationship between the two chosen variables among lower grades at primary school level and pupils in middle and high schools.

## 8. IMPLICATIONS

This study's findings concerning the direct relationship between RSC and RM has implications for both practice and research. These two psychological concepts are closely related and thus increasing one should also increase the other, while the opposite is also true. This study agrees with Gdoa (2007) assertion that parents, teachers and others who work with students with RD should understand these psychological domains in reading in order to treat and manage these students more effectively.

To strengthen these students RM and RSC, efforts should be made to improve their reading and understanding abilities. Schools should provide programs that teachers should implement to help students with RD; focusing on developing abilities in reading frequency, comprehension and rate of reading, according to Morgan et al. (2008) and Melekoglu (2011). Obaid (2009) holds that if the reading ability of students with RD is improved, their RSC and RAM will increase as a consequence. For the parents of students with RD, they should be encouraged to provide

psychological, emotional and academic support, which Gdoa (2007) advises creates a positive connection that improves children's ability to face difficult reading challenges.

## 9. CONCLUSION

To conclude, Gans, Kenny, and Ghany (2003) highlight that students with poor reading skills usually have a poor academic performance in at least one subject, leading them to experience low academic self-concept. Students with poor reading skills have lower academic and reading self-concepts, as well as a poorer self-perception than students with average or higher-rate levels of reading (Homewood, 2013). The present study has investigated the relationship between reading self-concept and motivation among students with reading difficulties in Saudi public schools, as well as exploring whether reading self-concept can predict reading motivation in these students. This study's target population comprised 46 female and 54 male students with reading difficulties.

The results found a positive correlation between the total RSCSQ score and its reading ability domain with the total RMSQ score and each of its two domains. This paper found a significant positive correlation between the reading difficulties domain and the external reading motivation domain but not with the total RMSQ score and its internal reading motivation domain. While reading self-concept can predict reading motivation and its reading ability domain; the reading difficulty domain cannot predict reading motivation. These results were consistent among male and female students with reading difficulties in upper primary schools, both as a group and according to gender. Moreover, reading self-concept can predict reading motivation.

The discussion section suggests that the results of this study should be used to encourage parents and teachers who work with students with reading difficulties to provide programs that will increase these students' reading skills since this will have a positive impact on their psychological and personal performance (Guthrie et al., 2004). If children who experience reading difficulties in the early years of education do not get the appropriate support; they will continue to suffer from low reading self-concept and a decreased motivation to read and learn.

**Funding:** This study received no specific financial support.

**Competing Interests:** The author declares that there are no conflicts of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix (A)

#### Reading Self-Concept Scale Questionnaire

Age:

Grade:

#### Instructions

The next page contains 14 statements about reading. After reading each statement, you are asked to choose between five options and indicate whether: it is definitely true about you; it is true about you; you are unsure whether it is true about you; it is not true about you; or it is definitely not true about you.

#### Example:

I am a fast runner.

- If you think that this is definitely true, circle the letter a.
- If you think this is true, circle the letter b.
- If you are not sure, or if you think that the statement is sometimes true and sometimes not true, then circle the letter c.
- If you think the statement is not true, circle the letter d.
- If you think the statement is definitely not true, circle the letter e.

There are no right or wrong answers, and this is not a test, so just think carefully and answer honestly.

## Appendix A. Reading self-concept scale questionnaire.

Statements	Definitely true	True	Not sure	Not true	Definitely not true
1. I read fast.	a	b	c	d	e
2. I can tell the story that I have read.	a	b	c	d	e
3. I pull the important ideas in the text.	a	b	c	d	e
4. I can read a page without a mistake.	a	b	c	d	e
5. Reading is difficult.	a	b	c	d	e
6. I hate reading.	a	b	c	d	e
7. I refuse to read hard text.	a	b	c	d	e
8. I know the meaning of the words in the text.	a	b	c	d	e
9. I pay attention to my teachers.	a	b	c	d	e
10. Reading is my favourite subject.	a	b	c	d	e
11. I read many times to understand.	a	b	c	d	e
12. I read better than most of my classmates	a	b	c	d	e
13. Reading is boring.	a	b	c	d	e
14. I need help to complete my reading homework.	a	b	c	d	e

## Appendix (B)

## Reading Motivation Scale Questionnaire

Age:

Grade:

## Instructions

The next page contains 13 statements about reading. After reading each statement, you are asked to choose between five options and indicate whether: it is definitely true about you; it is true about you; you are unsure whether it is true about you; it is not true about you; or it is definitely not true about you.

Example:

I am a fast runner.

- If you think that this is definitely true, circle the letter a.
- If you think this is true, circle the letter b.
- If you are not sure, or if you think that the statement is sometimes true and sometimes not true, then circle the letter c.
- If you think the statement is not true, circle the letter d.
- If you think the statement is definitely not true, circle the letter e.

There are no right or wrong answers, and this is not a test, so just think carefully and answer honestly.

## Appendix B. Reading motivation scale questionnaire.

Statements	Definitely true	True	Not sure	Not true	Definitely not true
1. I talk about what I read.	a	b	c	d	e
2. I like to read to get praise from others.	a	b	c	d	e
3. I help my classmates in reading.	a	b	c	d	e
4. I read to gain new information.	a	b	c	d	e
5. I continue reading without stopping.	a	b	c	d	e
6. I read to gain the highest scores.	a	b	c	d	e
7. I like to be the best reader in my class.	a	b	c	d	e
8. I like my teacher to choose me to read.	a	b	c	d	e
9. I read because I must read.	a	b	c	d	e
10. I enjoy reading.	a	b	c	d	e
11. I wait for my parents to ask me about my scores in reading.	a	b	c	d	e
12. I love reading.	a	b	c	d	e
13. I would be happy if I got a book as a gift.	a	b	c	d	e

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