

Interest in short stories and creative performance of intermediate learners

Rodolfo F. Olapane Jr.

Filamer Christian University, Inc.
Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines
Email: rodolfoolapanejr@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study utilized the survey-correlational research design to investigate the relationship between Interest in short stories and creative performance of intermediate learners at a private school in Roxas City for the school year 2024 – 2025. Ninety-one (91) pupils were taken as respondents. They comprised the 3 levels of intermediate population of the school. The instruments used were the 30-item researcher-made Interest in Short Stories questionnaire and the researcher-made Creative performance exercises the most essential competencies Content Standard Performance in K-12 education is a project-based learning task where students are tasked to do a role play performance. Frequency count, percentage, mean, and standard deviation as descriptive statistical tools were utilized for data analyses. Moreover, Pearson r. set at 0.05 alpha level of significance was used to determine the relationship between the two variables. The findings of the study revealed the following: The level of interest in short stories of the intermediate learners is “Very High”; their level of creative performance is “high”. There is no significant relationship between interest in short stories and creative performance.

Keywords: interest in short stories, creative performance, intermediate learners, survey-correlational research design, Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines

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INTRODUCTION

Short stories are considered a powerful tool in fostering creativity and engagement among young learners. They allow teachers to capture the attention of children and foster a deep love for reading. Primary and intermediate students are particularly receptive to storytelling activities, as these stories introduce them to the essential elements of literature such as plot,

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character, and theme in ways that are both accessible and enjoyable. Through interactive learning experiences such as acting, drawing, or role-playing, learners not only enjoy the material but also have opportunities to express their thoughts, emotions, and creativity. Reading short stories enables children to view life from perspectives different from their own, broadening their worldview, fostering cultural appreciation, and building respect and empathy for others. By exposing students to works of various writers and traditions, short stories contribute to the development of tolerance and compassion while inspiring creativity in personal expression.

The concept of interest in short stories is multifaceted. It refers to the ability of a narrative to captivate and engage readers through intriguing characters, compelling plots, rich themes, and the effective use of literary devices such as symbolism, foreshadowing, and irony. This interest can arise from suspense, emotional evocation, or intellectual stimulation that keeps the reader engaged throughout the story. For elementary and intermediate learners, developing interest in short stories brings multiple benefits, including the enrichment of vocabulary and comprehension, the stimulation of imagination, the strengthening of critical thinking and concentration, and the cultivation of empathy and social awareness. Short stories also serve as effective mediums for teaching moral lessons and values in enjoyable and memorable ways. Ultimately, nurturing interest in short stories creates a strong foundation for lifelong reading, intellectual development, and emotional growth.

Creative performance, on the other hand, involves the demonstration of originality, imagination, and innovation across various domains such as art, music, drama, dance, writing, and even technology. It is characterized by the fusion of technical proficiency with expressive and novel approaches that inspire, provoke thought, and evoke emotion from audiences. Students who exhibit creative performance possess skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, imagination, and originality. These learners are often capable of pushing boundaries, experimenting with new forms, and challenging conventional norms to produce original and impactful works. Creative performance contributes to cultural enrichment and provides students with essential qualities such as confidence, teamwork, communication, empathy, and resilience. Involvement in creative activities strengthens cognitive abilities, enhances emotional intelligence, and supports holistic personal growth. For young learners, creative performance opportunities in school allow them to showcase their talents, develop essential life skills, and inspire others, thereby positioning them as potential contributors to arts, culture, and society.

The theoretical foundation of this study is supported by established learning theories. Bruner's Constructivist Theory (1986) emphasizes the active role of learners in constructing knowledge through their experiences and interactions with the world. This framework highlights the importance of engaging students in meaningful and challenging tasks that foster problem-solving, critical thinking, and originality, aligning with how short stories can encourage creativity in learners. Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory (1954) further enriches the framework by explaining how students build knowledge through assimilation and accommodation. When learners engage with short stories, they must interpret plot, characters, and themes, thereby exercising their cognitive abilities, stimulating imagination, and fostering creativity. These theoretical perspectives highlight that interest in short stories is not only valuable for literacy development but also instrumental in enhancing learners' creative performance. Thus, the relationship between the two variables is both pedagogically and theoretically significant, forming the rationale for the present investigation.

Statement of the problem

This study generally aimed to determine the interest in short stories and creative performance of intermediate Learners of a private school in Roxas City for the school year 2024-2025.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of interest in short stories of intermediate learners
2. What is the level of creative performance of intermediate learners
3. Is there a significant relationship between interest in short stories and creative performance of intermediate learners?

METHODOLOGY

The present study investigated the relationship between interest in short stories and the creative performance of intermediate learners at Filamer Christian University Inc. during the school year 2024–2025. To address this objective, a survey–correlational research design was employed. This approach was deemed appropriate as it allowed for the systematic collection of data through questionnaires, which facilitated the identification of patterns, trends, and relationships between the independent variable—interest in short stories—and the dependent variable—creative performance. Correlational research, being quantitative in nature, is designed to determine associations among variables, and in this study, it provided a means to assess whether learners’ level of interest in short stories was related to their ability to perform creatively. To further support the analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used. Descriptive statistics included frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations to describe the learners’ responses. Inferential statistics involved the use of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson’s *r*, with all tests set at a 5% alpha level of significance.

The study was a population inquiry involving all ninety-one (91) intermediate pupils of Filamer Christian University enrolled in Grades IV, V, and VI during the school year 2024–2025. The participants consisted of 16 Grade IV pupils, 38 Grade V pupils, and 37 Grade VI pupils. Because the entire intermediate population was included, the study avoided sampling error and ensured full representation of the group under investigation.

Two primary instruments were employed to collect data: a researcher-made Interest in Short Stories questionnaire and a Creative Performance task. The interest questionnaire consisted of 30 items designed to measure pupils’ engagement with short story reading. Pupils were asked to rate their level of participation in activities related to short stories using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “Always” to “Never.” For the interpretation of mean scores, descriptive categories were employed, with values from 3.21 to 4.00 classified as “Very High,” 2.41 to 3.20 as “High,” 1.61 to 2.40 as “Moderate,” 0.81 to 1.60 as “Low,” and 0.0 to 0.80 as “Very Low.”

Creative performance was assessed through a performance-based task aligned with the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) in the K–12 curriculum. Pupils were asked to choose one story from five options and present a role-play performance based on their chosen narrative. Allowing them to select their own story promoted greater engagement and interest in the activity. The role plays were evaluated by the researcher together with two English teachers using an analytic rubric. The criteria included content, roles, and character presentation, with scores corresponding to descriptive interpretations: 12.01–16.00 as “High,” 8.01–12.00 as “Average,” 4.01–8.00 as “Low,” and 0.0–4.0 as “Very Low.” To ensure validity, the performance task underwent content validation by two English teachers from the elementary department and a panel of experts from the university. Pilot testing was subsequently conducted, and the results were subjected to factor analysis, construct validation, and reliability testing through SPSS software. Cronbach’s Alpha yielded a value of 0.950, indicating a high level of internal consistency across test items. All items were considered reliable and were retained for the final version of the instruments.

Before administering the instruments, the researcher sought permission from the elementary principal to conduct the study. Upon approval, informed consent letters were distributed to the pupil respondents. Once consent was secured, the questionnaires and performance tasks were administered to the participants. Pupils were provided with sufficient time to complete their responses, after which the instruments were retrieved for processing. All responses were coded, encoded, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

In analyzing the data, the mean was used to determine the overall level of interest in short stories and creative performance among the pupils, while the standard deviation provided information about the homogeneity or heterogeneity of responses. Pearson’s r was applied to determine the relationship between interest in short stories and creative performance. By employing these statistical techniques, the study was able to systematically evaluate the hypothesized relationship, ensuring both rigor and reliability in its findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of this study are based on the responses of ninety-one (91) intermediate pupils of Filamer Christian University Inc., comprising 16 Grade IV, 38 Grade V, and 37 Grade VI learners enrolled in the school year 2024–2025. As outlined in the methodology, data were collected using two primary instruments: a 30-item researcher-made questionnaire to assess the learners’ interest in short stories and a role-play performance task validated by teachers and experts to measure creative performance. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, and inferential statistics including one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson’s r . All tests were set at a 5% alpha level of significance to ensure statistical rigor.

The descriptive data on the learners’ interest in short stories revealed a mean score of 4.10 with a standard deviation of 0.54. Based on the scale employed in this study, where a score of 3.21 to 4.00 indicates a “Very High” level, the findings suggest that the pupils demonstrated a very high level of interest in short stories. This implies that the learners were highly engaged in activities related to short story reading and consistently showed enthusiasm for literary

participation. The descriptors provided in the instrument indicated that pupils found short stories easy to share with friends, fun to read, simple but impactful, easy to understand, and enjoyable enough to read multiple times. These results highlight the active participation of learners in literature and suggest that they are cultivating a genuine love for reading. Their strong interest enhances not only comprehension and vocabulary acquisition but also imagination, creativity, and empathy by exposing them to diverse themes, characters, and cultural perspectives.

The high level of interest observed in this study is supported by related research. Ghoorchaei (2016) found that students with greater interest in short stories were more motivated to read and participate in class discussions, developed better comprehension, and acquired new vocabulary more efficiently by encountering words in meaningful contexts. Engagement with short stories also deepened cultural understanding and fostered empathy. Additionally, Leable (2017) emphasized that interest in short stories significantly improves participation, comprehension, and reading skills, while also encouraging students to engage in creative writing. Both studies underscore that the enthusiasm learners derive from short stories contributes positively to their academic growth and literary development.

With regard to creative performance, findings showed a mean score of 15.60 with a standard deviation of 0.62. According to the scale utilized in the study, a score between 12.01 and 16.00 corresponds to a “High” level of performance. This indicates that the intermediate pupils were able to demonstrate creativity through role play, where they chose one story among five options and presented it in front of evaluators. Their performances reflected their ability to interpret content, embody roles, and present characters effectively. This high performance suggests that learners possessed strong imaginative skills, critical thinking, and confidence in communication. The role plays activities also facilitated collaboration and empathy, as pupils worked together in groups, explored multiple perspectives, and experimented with dynamic scenarios.

These findings are consistent with existing literature on creative performance. Khan and Abbas (2022) identified that innovative teaching approaches such as project-based learning and collaborative activities significantly enhance creativity, while traditional methods often limit opportunities for creative expression. Keleş (2022) also highlighted the importance of supportive classroom environments and teacher encouragement in fostering creativity, noting that hands-on and collaborative learning experiences nurture a growth mindset and lead to improved performance. Similarly, Ren et al. (2017) demonstrated that creativity thrives in supportive contexts that encourage experimentation and risk-taking, and they emphasized the role of cognitive flexibility and positive emotional states in improving creative output. Collectively, these studies reinforce the importance of integrating innovative pedagogical strategies and supportive environments to cultivate creativity in learners.

When examining the inferential results, the computed Pearson r between interest in short stories and creative performance was -0.100 , with a significance value of 0.348 . Since the significance value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 , the result indicates that there is no significant relationship between the two variables. This means that while the pupils had a very high level of interest in short stories and a high level of creative performance independently, their enthusiasm for reading did not directly correlate with improvements in their creative

performance. The negative but negligible correlation further implies that the effect of interest in short stories on creative performance is not strong enough to bring about significant change.

This finding aligns with the study of Siregar (2022), which concluded that there was no significant correlation between students' interest in short stories and their creative writing performance. Siregar emphasized that while students may enjoy reading stories, this does not automatically enhance their creative output, as creativity is shaped by a range of factors such as personal experiences, educational background, and practice. This perspective highlights the need for a more holistic approach in fostering creativity, one that goes beyond literary interest and incorporates varied activities, exposure, and opportunities for innovation.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that the intermediate learners of Filamer Christian University Inc. demonstrated a very high level of interest in short stories ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.54$) and a high level of creative performance ($M = 15.60$, $SD = 0.62$). However, the relationship between the two variables was not significant ($r = -0.100$, $p = 0.348$). This suggests that while both factors are valuable to learners' development, they operate independently and are influenced by other elements in the educational process. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between interest in short stories and creative performance is accepted. The results highlight the importance of adopting diverse strategies to foster creativity in learners, recognizing that literary interest alone is not sufficient to account for variations in creative performance.

CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the level of interest in short stories and the creative performance of intermediate learners in a private school in Roxas City for the school year 2024–2025. Specifically, it aimed to answer three research questions: (1) What is the level of interest in short stories of intermediate learners? (2) What is the level of creative performance of the intermediate learners? and (3) Is there a significant relationship between the interest in short stories and the creative performance of intermediate learners? To address these objectives, two instruments were used: a 30-item researcher-made questionnaire on interest in short stories and a Creative Process Scale rubric applied to role-play exercises to measure creative performance. Both instruments were anchored on the Department of Education's curriculum guide and learning competencies. They were validated by two English teachers and a panel of experts from Filamer Christian University Inc. and pilot-tested on 30 intermediate pupils from the same school who were not included in the study sample. The independent variable was interest in short stories, while the dependent variable was creative performance. Statistical tools employed included frequency count, percentage, mean, and standard deviation for descriptive analysis, and Pearson's r for inferential analysis. The significance level was set at an alpha of 5%.

The study involved ninety-one (91) intermediate pupils, composed of 16 Grade IV, 38 Grade V, and 37 Grade VI learners. Results showed that the mean level of interest in short stories was 4.10 with a standard deviation of 0.54, which falls within the "Very High" category on the scale used (3.21–4.00). This finding indicates that the pupils were actively engaged in reading short stories, which they described as fun, easy to share with friends, simple but impactful, and enjoyable enough to read multiple times. Their high level of enthusiasm

demonstrates that they were not only motivated to read but were also building vocabulary, comprehension, imagination, and empathy by exploring diverse characters, themes, and cultural perspectives. These results are consistent with the findings of Ghoorchaei (2016) and Leable (2017), who reported that students with strong interest in short stories became more motivated to read, engaged better in class discussions, acquired new vocabulary more effectively, and developed deeper cultural understanding and empathy.

The findings on creative performance revealed a mean score of 15.60 with a standard deviation of 0.62, which is categorized as “High” on the scale used (12.01–16.00). This indicates that the pupils were able to think critically, express their ideas effectively, and demonstrate imagination through role play. Their performances showed an ability to interpret content, embody roles, and present characters convincingly. Such outcomes suggest that they were developing skills in collaboration, empathy, and communication, while also displaying confidence in experimenting with various scenarios. These findings align with Khan and Abbas (2022), who found that project-based learning and collaborative activities enhance students’ creativity, and with Keleş (2022), who stressed the importance of supportive classroom environments and growth mindsets in nurturing creativity. Ren et al. (2017) also reinforced the view that creativity thrives in contexts where risk-taking and experimentation are encouraged, where cognitive flexibility is practiced, and where positive emotions support innovative thinking.

Despite the very high level of interest in short stories ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.54$) and the high level of creative performance ($M = 15.60$, $SD = 0.62$), the analysis revealed no significant correlation between the two variables. The computed Pearson r was -0.100 with a significance value of 0.348 , which is greater than the 0.05 alpha level. This result indicates that there is no significant relationship between interest in short stories and creative performance. In other words, while pupils enjoy reading and show strong literary engagement, this does not directly predict or translate into higher creative performance. The negative but negligible correlation suggests that creativity is influenced by a wider range of factors beyond literary interest. This finding is consistent with Siregar (2022), who also found no significant relationship between interest in short stories and creative performance in writing, highlighting that creativity is shaped by diverse elements such as personal experiences, educational background, and varied practice.

In conclusion, the study found that the intermediate learners of Filamer Christian University Inc. displayed a very high level of interest in short stories ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.54$) and a high level of creative performance ($M = 15.60$, $SD = 0.62$). However, no significant relationship was established between these two variables ($r = -0.100$, $p = 0.348$). These results suggest that while literary interest enhances vocabulary, comprehension, and appreciation for storytelling, it does not alone determine creative performance. Creativity is multifaceted and must be nurtured through diverse experiences, instructional strategies, and opportunities for self-expression. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between interest in short stories and creative performance is accepted.

The findings also point to several recommendations for different stakeholders. For pupils, it is suggested that they expand their reading to a variety of genres and styles beyond short stories to enrich their understanding of literature and inspire creativity in multiple forms. They should also participate in diverse creative activities, reflect on personal experiences, and seek feedback from peers and teachers to refine their work. Teachers are encouraged to design lessons

that integrate a variety of reading materials and creative tasks, while fostering a supportive classroom environment where students can take risks and express themselves without fear of criticism. Activities such as creative writing workshops, storytelling competitions, group projects, and art-related tasks can further enhance pupils' skills. School administrators can contribute by integrating arts into the curriculum, establishing programs in visual arts, music, drama, and dance, and creating spaces for creative expression such as talent shows, exhibitions, and fairs. Parents are encouraged to nurture their children's interests by providing a wide selection of reading materials, engaging in discussions about stories, and creating opportunities for storytelling and writing at home. Finally, the Department of Education can strengthen policies that emphasize creativity across subjects, allocate resources for arts programs, and promote community engagement through events that showcase student creativity. Future researchers are encouraged to replicate this study with different variables, larger samples, or broader contexts to further explore the complex factors that contribute to creative performance.

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