

Study Habits and Text Comprehension in University Students: A Bibliometric Analysis

Hábitos de estudio y la comprensión de textos en universitarios: Análisis bibliométrico

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Abstract

The article addresses the complex cognitive task of understanding reading and developing effective study habits, highlighting the influence of the reader's creativity, the intertextual connection and the action of reading as an interpretative process. It highlights the problems in university teaching, with students coming from basic educational levels, which impacts on their academic performance. Factors such as motivation and academic procrastination are mentioned, as well as worrying results in PISA evaluations regarding reading comprehension in Peru. The methodology employed includes the search and analysis of scientific articles on study habits and text comprehension, using Scopus and VOSviewer. The results and discussions reveal the relationship between study habits and academic performance, highlighting the importance of favorable attitudes towards study. In addition, a bibliometric analysis is presented showing the academic production in these topics, with emphasis on Spain. In the conclusions, it is suggested to implement specific strategies to improve the comprehension of critical texts, despite the fact that the evidence on study habits is already considerable. Further studies with more representative samples are recommended to better understand the relationship between study habits and comprehension of critical texts.

Keywords: Text comprehension; Academic performance; Motivation; Motivation; University students; Bibliometric analysis; Academic performance; Bibliometric analysis.

Resumen

El artículo aborda la compleja tarea cognitiva de comprender la lectura y desarrollar hábitos de estudio efectivos, destacando la influencia de la creatividad del lector, la conexión intertextual y la acción de leer como un proceso interpretativo. Se resalta la problemática en la enseñanza universitaria, con estudiantes provenientes de niveles educativos básicos, lo que impacta en su desempeño académico. Se mencionan factores como la motivación y la procrastinación académica, así como resultados preocupantes en las evaluaciones PISA respecto a la comprensión lectora en Perú. La metodología empleada incluye la búsqueda y análisis de artículos científicos sobre hábitos de estudio y comprensión de textos, utilizando Scopus y VOSviewer. Los resultados y discusiones revelan la relación entre hábitos de estudio y rendimiento académico, destacando la importancia de actitudes favorables hacia el estudio. Además, se presenta un análisis bibliométrico que muestra la producción académica en estos temas, con énfasis en España. En las conclusiones, se sugiere implementar estrategias específicas para mejorar la comprensión de textos críticos, a pesar de que la evidencia sobre hábitos de estudio ya es considerable. Se recomienda realizar estudios adicionales con muestras más representativas para comprender mejor la relación entre hábitos de estudio y comprensión de textos críticos.

Palabras clave: Hábitos de estudio; Comprensión de textos; Rendimiento académico; Estudiantes universitarios; Motivación; Análisis bibliométrico.

INTRODUCTION

The task of understanding what is read and establishing a routine to retain the information and give it meaning represents a cognitive process that is both daily and complex, given that the messages presented by the issuers may be ambiguous and raise questions depending on the language used.

Santos (1991) stated that reading is perceived as a process in which the interpretation of content depends on the creativity of the reader, who formulates assumptions based on his or her previous knowledge and on intertextual connections established when understanding the information.

For their part, Oliveira and Santos (2005) pointed out that reading comprehension is not a simple process since it involves a series of elements that interact together, requiring mental organization to decipher them. Although, in recent years, there has been a growing interest in text comprehension among researchers of information processing theory, which refers to the construction and retrieval of long-term knowledge in memory, this area still requires further strengthening.

The current situation is characterized by the fact that university subjects continue to receive students coming from a primary education with fundamental quality foundations, often resulting in various learning difficulties that are reflected in their low academic performance. This is in addition to factors such as motivation and academic procrastination, which are elements that influence self-regulated learning (García-Serrano et al., 2023).

Paradoxically, the study conditions point out that the problems of the university education system are related to the learning processes and to the way students themselves structure their study environment.

National and international studies have identified some problems in teaching approaches, especially in reading and comprehension, which an emphasis on memorization has generated. This has led to deficiencies in students, who are unable to make critical judgmental analyses and are often unable to refute ideas without solidly

interpreting their thoughts. Instead, they tend to reflect superficially based on minimal memories and without valid arguments.

At the local level, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2015 revealed percentages that reflect the difficulties of Peruvian students in relation to reading and their ability to achieve a basic level of reading comprehension. Only 15% of students managed to perform explanations, analysis, and comparisons of texts, indicating a low rate (Government of Peru, 2022). However, the results of PISA 2022 show that Peru's reading performance has risen to an average level, matching the Latin American average, suggesting an improvement in this aspect.

In addition, it is important to consider other factors that persist or influence study habits, as pointed out by various authors. Tapia (1998) argued that students should carefully select the most appropriate study space and ensure that it is well-conditioned in terms of lighting, temperature, and other aspects to favor optimal dynamics. For their part, Martínez, Pérez, and Torres (1999) emphasized the importance of physical and psychological relationships, as well as intellectual and emotional maturity, in order to cultivate a positive mental attitude that contributes to the development of effective study habits. Likewise, Soto (2004) pointed out that environmental elements play a fundamental role in the formation of study habits, highlighting the importance of having an exclusive study space free of auditory distractions in order to maintain concentration and order. Finally, Acevedo, Torres, and Tirado (2015) conducted a study on study habits and motivation for learning in engineering students at a university in Cartagena, Colombia, where they observed that more than 80% of students did not develop a motivating study technique nor did they have adequate spaces to carry out their academic activities.

Cruz, Flores, and Quintanilla (2016), in their final report on the incidence of study habits in the teaching process of first-year students in a faculty of human sciences, sports, and education at a university in El Salvador, highlighted that 68.6% of respondents stated that personal motivation and environmental conditions are influential factors in their study habits. These results underscore the lack of precise guidelines among university students to maintain optimal

study habits, which affects their continuity and regularity in learning routines, which in turn affects text comprehension and its application in future professional activities. The comprehension of critical texts is crucial for the academic development of university students since it allows them to analyze information critically and construct well-founded arguments. This skill is closely linked to students' study habits since a student with positive beliefs about learning, good study habits, and awareness about improving language complexity, accuracy, and fluency, as well as self-study, tends to handle text comprehension better (Li, 2024).

In Lima, the capital of Peru, there is a growing concern about the quality of university education and the need to better understand how study habits affect critical text comprehension. In this article, the existing literature on this topic will be reviewed to explore how the presence of study habits may contribute to text comprehension, as well as the incidence of studies on these variables.

METHOD

Initially, an exhaustive review of the scientific literature was carried out, followed by a search in the Scopus database, where bibliometric indicator analyses were performed. Based on the documents obtained, networks were created using VOSviewer by means of co-citation analysis, with the purpose of investigating the geographical areas where the greatest number of studies related to the variables of interest were centered. The search criteria included the period from 1951 to 2024, considering any publication (books, book chapters, articles, and conference proceedings) and covering all journal categories. The search terms used were "Study habits," "Text comprehension," and "University students," which were traced in the titles, abstracts, and keywords of the retrieved documents. For the visualization of the network, graph theory was applied, which allows for graphically representing the interrelationships between documents and their connections (Wallis, 2007; Wasserman & Faust, 1994; Yang et al., 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The correlation between study habits and critical text comprehension has been the subject of extensive research, as evidenced by studies conducted by Mondragón Albarrán et al. (2017), who investigated this relationship in Mexican students. Their findings revealed a significant association between the adoption of effective study habits and stronger academic performance. Students who followed regular study schedules and employed organizational techniques such as underlining and summarizing tended to obtain higher grades compared to their peers who did not. On the other hand, González (2019) found that comprehension levels of academic and scientific texts among university students are low, attributable to the lack of development of critical thinking skills. Added to this is the absence of reading habits and insufficient knowledge of university subjects, which hinders genuine and meaningful learning.

In a research on the impact of study habits on the performance of adolescent students, it was found that those with favorable socioeconomic and family conditions did not always take advantage of these circumstances to improve their academic performance. This is due to the lack of study tools and techniques to effectively manage their time, which in the long term generates difficulties in understanding what they are reading (Magaña & Martínez, 2017).

In the proposal by Valles et al. (2018), it is noted that young people with positive attitudes towards studying tend to have satisfactory academic performance. This implies that attitudes influence the establishment of adequate study habits, generating a positive correlation between attitudes and study habits, which in turn leads to better academic performance.

In relation to the factors that influence the formation of study habits, Ibarra (2023) mentions the importance of the physical environment, organization, and planning of time and resources, as well as motivation and positive attitude, which can influence academic performance. The implementation of effective strategies to address these factors can contribute to the improvement of university students' study skills. The availability of a conducive environment, efficient organization of time and resources, choice of appropriate study techniques, motivation, self-efficacy, and

attitude toward learning are key elements that can affect the academic performance of college students. In addition, educational institutions, such as universities and colleges, can play a key role in providing a favorable study environment and encouraging students to develop effective study habits.

There is a direct relationship between study habits, text comprehension, and academic performance, especially when learning is approached with a proactive attitude. However, it is crucial to understand how these variables are explored in different contexts and what their

predominant tendency is. Specific data on this aspect are presented below.

Research on Study Habits (1951-2024)

Figures 1 and 2 visually show the countries that generate the greatest amount of research on the topic of study habits. Spain leads this aspect with a total of 73 years of academic production, followed by Argentina, Chile, and Mexico, all Spanish-speaking countries. This information comes from a report prepared by Scopus and is visualized using the VOSviewer software. Remarkably, Peru is in eighth place in this analysis.

Figure 1

Density of research on study habits by country.

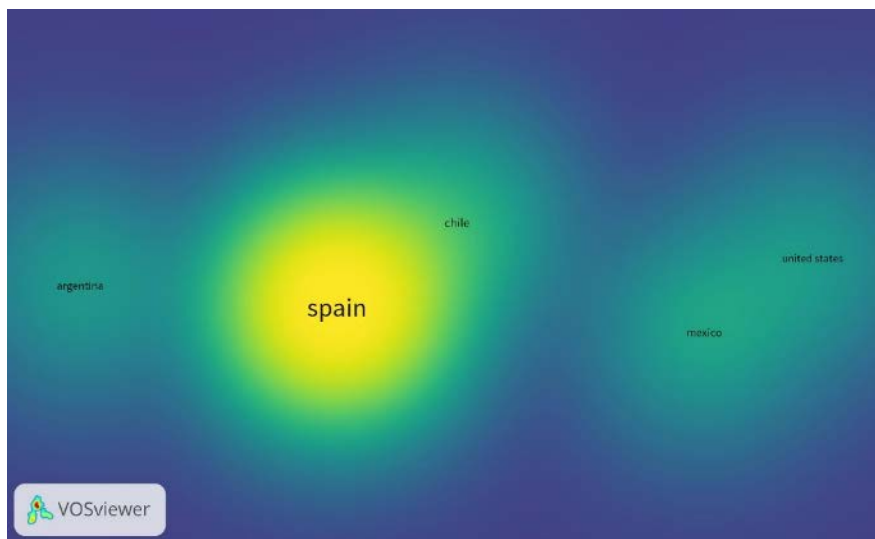


Figure 2

Density of research on study habits by country and number of documents.

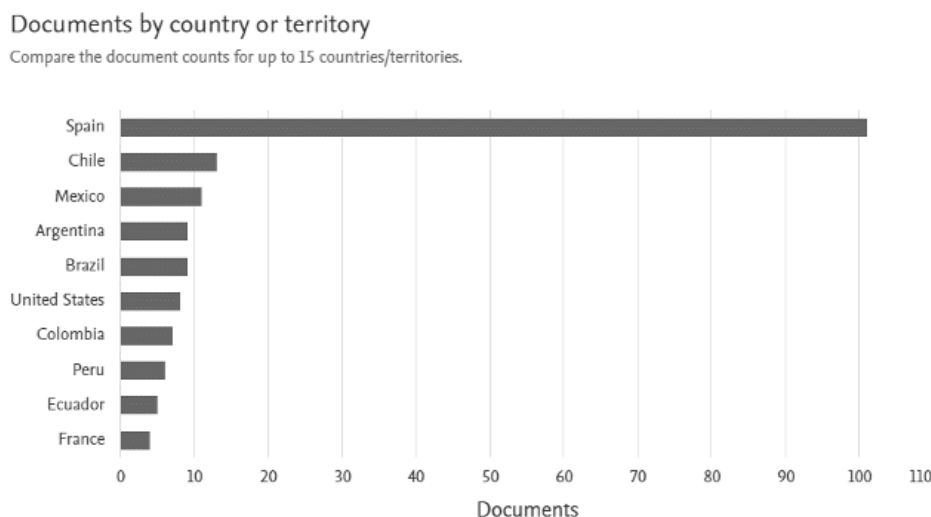


Figure 3

Density of research on study habits by affiliation to universities.

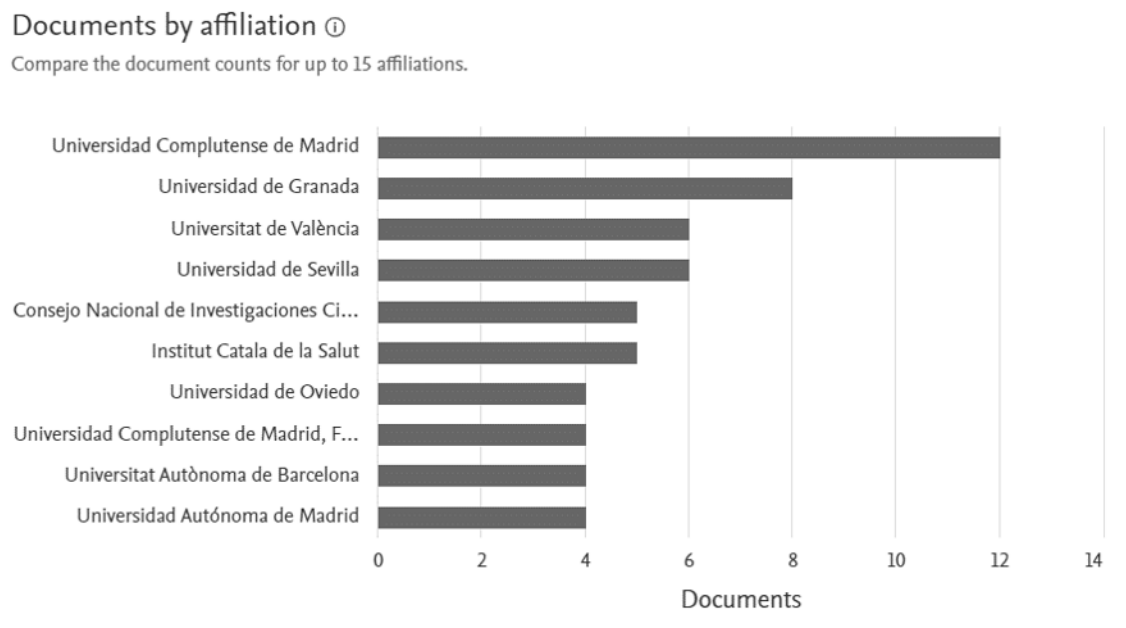
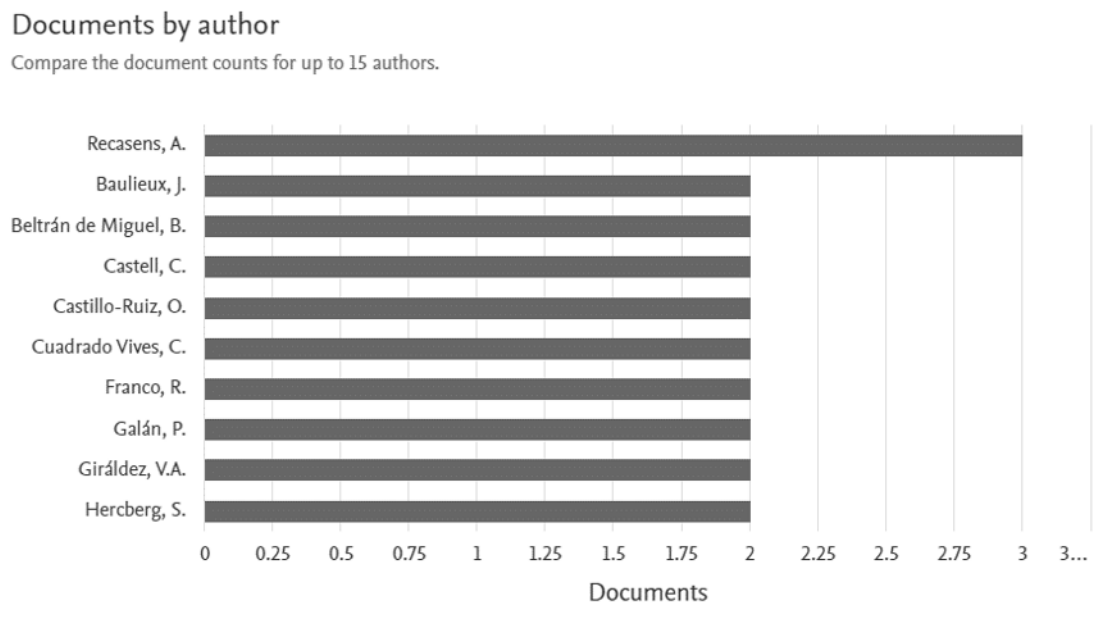


Figure 4

Density of research on study habits by authors.



Figures 3 and 4 show that the institution that produced the most empirical evidence on study habits was the Complutense University of Madrid, followed by the University of Granada, with Recasens A. being the most prolific author.

Figure 5

Density of research on study habits in the period 1951-2024.

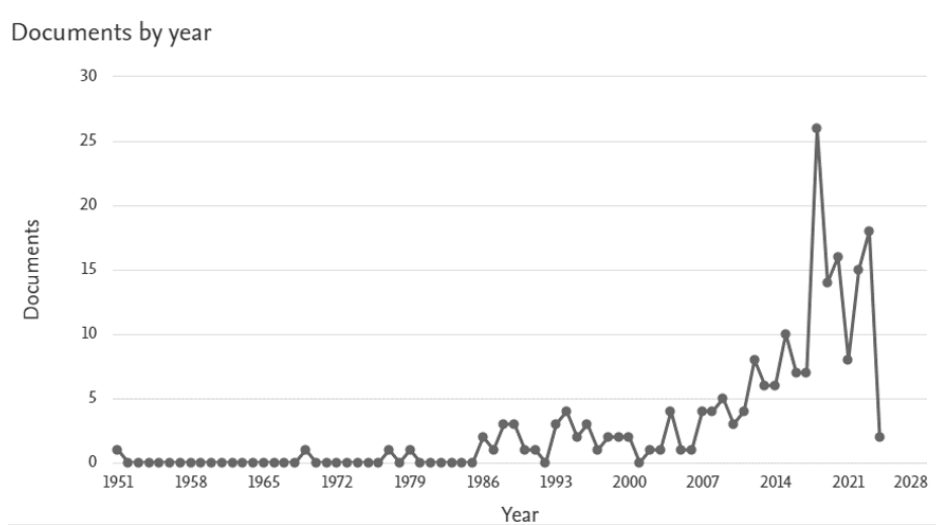


Figure 5 shows that in recent years, there is no longer a tendency to carry out studies with the study habits variable since it seems clear the impact it has on cognitive processes such as comprehension and academic performance in general.

Research on text comprehension (1977-2024)

Figure 6

Density of research on text comprehension by country and number of documents.

Documents by country or territory

Compare the document counts for up to 15 countries/territories.

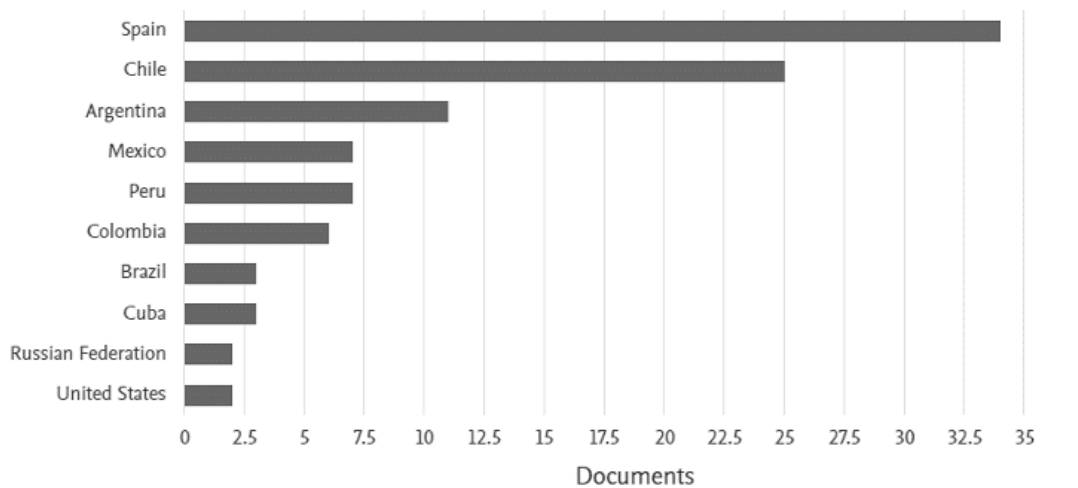


Figure 6 shows that it is also Spain that produces the most empirical evidence on the text comprehension variable, with Peru in fifth place.

Figure 7

Density of research on text comprehension by university affiliation.

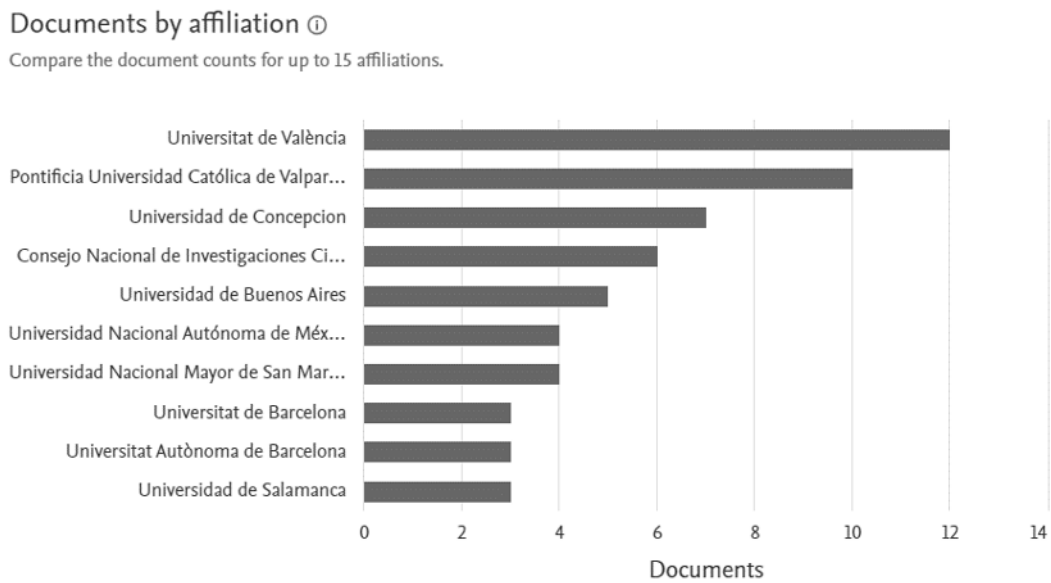
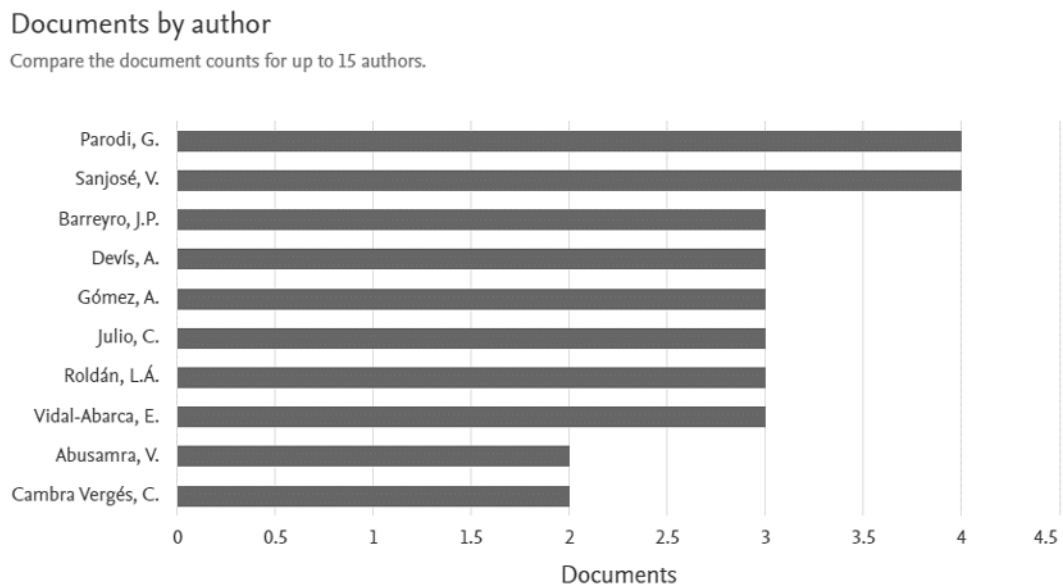


Figure 8

Density of research on text comprehension by authors.



Figures 7 and 8 show that the institution that produced the most empirical evidence on text comprehension was the University of Valencia, followed by the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, with Parodi G. being the most prolific author.

Figure 9

Density of research on text comprehension in the period 1977-2024.

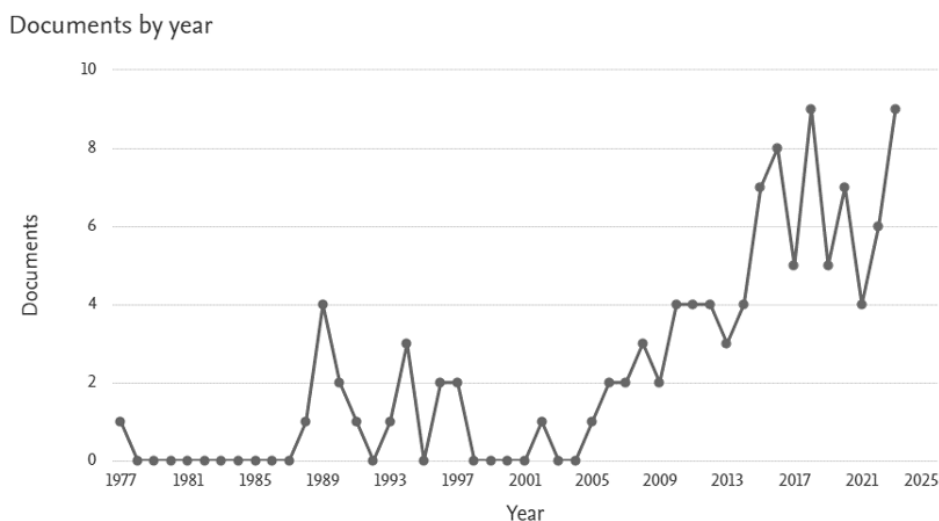


Figure 9 shows a recent trend toward studies focused on the text comprehension variable, which contrasts with the trend observed in relation to study habits. This divergence could be explained by the current interest in fostering students' analytical and critical thinking skills, which are fundamental competencies at the university level.

However, this article has certain limitations as it is an exploratory proposal. These limitations include the following considerations: The study may have employed a limited sample of scientific articles or focused on certain countries, which may not fully reflect the global situation of study habits and text comprehension. In addition, there could be a linguistic bias due to the prioritization of the analysis of academic articles, which could restrict the generalizability of the findings to specific linguistic contexts. Also, consideration of additional important variables that could influence study habits and text comprehension, such as cultural or socioeconomic differences, could have been overlooked. The exclusive reliance on the Scopus database for the collection of scientific articles could have excluded relevant papers present in other databases or non-indexed sources. Finally, the lack of a deeper qualitative analysis limited the understanding of the underlying dynamics and specific contexts related to study habits and text comprehension.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the majority of students indicated having effective study habits, there is still room for improvement in terms of critical text comprehension. To address this issue, students may benefit from implementing specific strategies aimed at improving their ability to comprehend critical texts, such as developing critical reading skills and practicing information synthesis.

Factors that influence the formation of study habits include both the physical and psychological environment, the organization of time and available resources, as well as motivation and attitude toward learning. It is of utmost importance that educational institutions provide a favorable environment for study and promote effective study habits among their students.

There is a decreasing trend in studies on study habits and techniques, possibly due to the abundant evidence that already exists on their influence on the academic performance of university students. However, there is also evidence of a growing interest in exploring the variable of text comprehension, given that it is closely related to the student's ability to analyze and understand the material presented to him/her, which can significantly enrich the university experience.

Further studies with larger and more representative samples are recommended in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between study habits and critical text comprehension in this particular context.

ETHICAL ASPECTS

The authors claim to have rigorously followed the guidelines established by the ethical standards governing professional practice, such as the Code of Ethics of the Peruvian College of Teachers.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare under oath not to have incurred interest in carrying out this article, results and interpreted them.

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