

Learners' Proficiency in Reading

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Abstract:

The present study conducted during the School Year 2024-2025 in a medium-sized division of Central Visayas aimed to assess Grade 1 learners' reading proficiency using the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). Employing a descriptive research design, the study focused on learners from District 7 during the School Year 2022-2023, validating the instrument according to Carter V. Good and Douglas E. Scates' criteria. Analytical methods included descriptive statistics, comparative analysis, and Mann-Whitney U tests. Results indicated age significantly influenced reading proficiency, with older learners generally performing better in foundational areas like letter name knowledge but struggling with initial sound identification. Female learners outperformed males in familiar word reading and dictation, while males excelled in invented word reading and dictation. Family size impacted proficiency, with fewer siblings correlating with better dictation skills and larger families posing challenges in listening comprehension. Despite demographic influences, targeted instruction focusing on letter name knowledge, phonological awareness, and listening comprehension is crucial for overall reading success, suggesting tailored reading programs to address individual and group needs effectively.

Keywords: Reading Proficiency, Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), Foundational Literacy Skills, Demographic Factors, Targeted Instruction.

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

Reading proficiency among early grade learners remains a persistent challenge in the Philippine educational system. Despite initiatives by the Department of Education (DepEd), such as the implementation of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP), many pupils—particularly in Grade 1—still struggle with basic literacy skills. These include orientation to print, letter-sound relationships, word recognition, and reading comprehension. The problem is especially evident in public schools in medium-sized divisions, where the lack of resources, large class sizes, and varying levels of home literacy environments contribute to reading difficulties among learners.

The researcher, a Grade 1 adviser, observed firsthand that a significant number of pupils in her class remain non-readers or have very low levels of reading proficiency. Despite efforts to teach foundational reading skills, many students still exhibit difficulty in decoding words, understanding text, and applying reading strategies. These observations suggest that existing interventions may not be fully addressing the reading needs of young learners. The situation calls for a more targeted and evidence-based intervention plan that considers the actual proficiency levels and profiles of the learners involved.

Understanding the learners' demographic profiles—such as age, sex, and number of siblings—is also essential in addressing the problem. These variables may influence a child's reading development due to cognitive maturity, gender-based learning differences, or the level of support available at home. This study, therefore, seeks to assess the level of reading proficiency among Grade 1 learners and analyze the influence of these factors. The ultimate goal is to formulate a comprehensive reading remediation and enrichment program tailored to the learners' needs.

Current State of Knowledge

A systematic review on Leadership Skills and School Outcomes (2024) and various studies underscore the vital role of early reading skills in shaping academic success. Gunning (1996) links reading development to cognitive theories such as schema and mental models, while Ouellette and Haley (2014) emphasize the interconnectedness of

phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics in fostering reading proficiency. In the Philippine context, the Department of Education implemented the EGRA tool (DepEd Order No. 57, s. 2015) to assess foundational reading skills from Grades 1 to 3; however, comprehensive evaluations of its effectiveness—particularly when considering demographic variables—remain limited. This gap is especially evident in localized areas like Central Visayas, where limited literature addresses how factors such as age, sex, and family background influence reading outcomes. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to assess current reading levels of Grade 1 learners and develop a contextualized intervention plan to enhance early-grade literacy.

Internationally, Williams (2019) highlights that reading proficiency varies widely among countries, influenced by educational policies, socio-economic conditions, and cultural attitudes toward education. Countries that invest in early literacy, teacher training, and equitable resource distribution generally report stronger reading outcomes. Supporting this, Calantas (2020) found that many learners demonstrate weak phonemic awareness and need greater exposure to letter sounds and rhyming words, while Akoglu and Kiziloğlu (2018) observed a lack of emphasis on foundational literacy skills at both home and school. These findings reinforce the idea that both systemic and familial factors shape early literacy development.

Gender-related disparities in reading have also been noted. Miñoza and Montero (2019) reported that female learners consistently outperform males in reading proficiency, possibly due to stronger emotional engagement, attentiveness, and motivation. However, Lagarto (2021) observed that males slightly outperformed females in oral reading in both English and Filipino, indicating that gender influences may vary depending on the specific literacy skill assessed. Family dynamics further influence literacy outcomes, as Chung et al. (2019) found that learners who engage in frequent dialogue with family members demonstrate stronger oral reading skills, emphasizing the role of a supportive home environment.

Moreover, early literacy skills such as letter-sound recognition and phonological awareness are critical. Light and McNaughton (2019) assert that the ability to isolate and identify initial sounds serves as a fundamental building block for learning to read. Lynch (2020) adds that letter name knowledge—encompassing the ability to recognize, name, and distinguish between letter shapes—is essential for developing sound recognition and word decoding skills. Without mastery of these foundational skills, learners are likely to struggle with reading acquisition.

Finally, socio-demographic factors also significantly shape early literacy development. Cañete (2017) found that age, sex, family income, parental education, and family size all affect reading readiness among Grade 1 learners. Avendaño (2021) highlights listening comprehension as a vital yet often overlooked skill, integral to understanding spoken language, retaining information, and developing communication abilities. Collectively, these studies emphasize that early reading proficiency is shaped by a complex interaction of cognitive abilities, socio-economic conditions, gender dynamics, family engagement, and educational practices—underscoring the need for targeted, context-sensitive interventions.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is anchored on the following theories of reading by Gunning (1996), namely Schema Theory, Mental Models, and Proposition Theory. Schema theory explains that comprehension emerges from the interaction between a reader's prior knowledge and the text. A schema acts as a "file" stored in a specific mental compartment. When students engage with reading materials, they connect new information to the knowledge already organized in their minds, integrating it into these "files" for future reference. According to this theory, the breadth and richness of these "files" influence a student's reading comprehension level.

Mental model theory refers to the "mind movie" individuals create based on their reading content. Gunning explains that this process often occurs when students engage with fiction, focusing on the protagonist and forming a mental representation of the character's circumstances. As the story progresses, the cognitive model is adjusted or updated to reflect new developments while keeping essential elements related to the main character in focus, as noted by Gunning.

Sometimes, misconceptions about critical ideas stem from flawed mental models of the subject or topic. Teachers, however, can intervene to guide students in building more accurate representations. One approach is for educators to encourage students to share their mental models through discussions, analogies, visualizations, and similar methods. This practice helps teachers identify gaps in students' understanding and correct any misconceptions, enabling them to support the creation of a more precise and more accurate understanding of the topic.

Lastly, proposition theory involves the reader constructing main ideas or macrostructure as they process the text. These central ideas are organized hierarchically, with the most important things given the highest priority of being memorized.

Objectives

This study assessed learners' level of reading proficiency in a medium-sized division of Central Visayas during the School Year 2024-2025 as a basis for an intervention plan. Furthermore, this study sought to answer the following: 1) the profile of the respondents in terms age, sex, and number of siblings; 2) learners' level of reading proficiency according to orientation to print, letter name knowledge, letter sound knowledge, initial sound identification, familiar word reading, invented word reading, oral passage reading, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and dictation; 3) the level of learners' proficiency in reading when grouped according to the abovementioned variables; and 4) the significant difference in learners' level of reading proficiency when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variables.

Methodology:

This section discusses the research design, the study's locale, the survey's respondents, the data-gathering instrument, which includes the test of its validity and reliability, the data-gathering procedure, the analytical schemes, and the statistical tools.

Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive research design to examine learners' reading proficiency based on various variables. Descriptive research focuses on portraying an accurate profile of the subject matter, which in this case involves understanding Grade 1 learners' performance in reading as reflected through the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) results. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive design is often employed to summarize characteristics of a phenomenon without altering the variables under study. In this research, the EGRA tool was used to collect data on various reading subskills, including letter knowledge, letter-sound awareness, oral passage reading, and comprehension. The collected data were systematically sorted, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical treatments to identify patterns and relationships among factors such as age, sex, and number of siblings. This method provided an objective foundation for interpreting results and formulating recommendations to improve reading proficiency. The use of descriptive design was appropriate, as it allowed for a comprehensive, unbiased analysis of existing reading conditions and helped identify areas for targeted intervention.

Study Respondents

The study's respondents were 128 Grade One in Districts 7 and 8 in a medium-sized Division of Central Visayas; since the respondents were quite manageable, total enumeration will be employed.

Instruments

This study utilized the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), a standardized tool designed to evaluate early literacy skills among young learners. Administered during the first quarter of the school year, EGRA assesses a broad range of reading subskills, including orientation to print, letter name and sound knowledge, initial sound identification, familiar and invented word reading, oral passage reading, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and dictation. Each component targets a specific aspect of literacy, offering a comprehensive view of the learners' reading proficiency. Prior to its administration, the school head secured the necessary permissions to ensure ethical compliance and confidentiality. EGRA was chosen for its proven reliability, as supported by repeated applications and studies showing strong internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and high inter-rater reliability (Tambo & Neely, 2014; RTI International, 2018; Gertsen & McKinley, 2015). These characteristics make EGRA a credible and effective instrument for identifying learners' reading strengths and areas for improvement, aligning with best practices in educational assessment.

Data Gathering Procedure

The validity of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) was confirmed through its alignment with the essential constructs of early literacy, ensuring it effectively measures key components such as letter knowledge, phonological awareness, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension. Gertsen and McKinley (2015) emphasize that validity pertains to how well an instrument measure what it intends to measure, and EGRA has been rigorously evaluated to affirm its construct validity. Each subskill assessed, including letter-sound knowledge and reading fluency, directly relates to the developmental stages of early readers. Furthermore, its content validity was strengthened through expert reviews and field testing across various educational contexts (Perry, 2016), making EGRA a valid tool for assessing reading proficiency among early-grade learners. For the data gathering procedure, a formal letter of request was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent for approval, followed by another letter directed to the school head once approval was granted. Upon obtaining the necessary permissions, questionnaires were personally administered to ensure high retrieval rates and data accuracy. To minimize disruptions, the researcher scheduled the administration of the instrument accordingly and used both email and instant messaging

to facilitate communication. The collected responses were then coded, tallied, and processed statistically using a coding manual, enabling efficient computer processing, derivation of statistical results, and tabular presentation.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No. 1 used the descriptive analytical scheme and descriptive analytical scheme to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and number of siblings.

Objective No. 2 utilized a descriptive-analytical scheme and weighted mean formula to determine the level of learners' proficiency in reading in terms of orientation to print, letter name knowledge, letter-sound knowledge, initial sound identification, familiar word reading, invented word reading, oral passage reading, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and dictation.

Objective No. 3 used the descriptive analytical weighted mean to determine the level of difficulties teachers encounter in teaching mathematics when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Objective No. 4 utilized a comparative analytical scheme and Z the test to determine the significant difference in the level of reading proficiency of Grade 1 pupils when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

Ethical Consideration

Significant ethical considerations were carefully adopted during the research study to promote, protect, and respect the fundamental personal and constitutional rights of all respondent-participants to this undertaking, including the two basic protocols, thus: (a) informed consent. Respondents were aware of the purpose of the study, making sure that the research work did not harm nor have any potential impact on them and that they could make an informed decision whether to participate or not because it is voluntary, hence free from any form of coercion; and (b) respondents must have thorough knowledge that the information/responses given should be treated with the utmost confidentiality and in any manner, exercise anonymity by strictly securing any information under the protection of data privacy such that the identity of the respondents will remain unknown and that the responses and data gathered are used solely according to the purpose and intent of the research study.

Results and Discussion

In this chapter, the data gathered were further treated, presented, analyzed, and interpreted to focus on the specific problems of the study. It presents the study's findings through statistical tools and descriptive and inferential data treatment.

Profile of the respondents in terms of Age, Sex, and Number of Siblings

Table 1
Profile of Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Younger (below 7 years old)	32	25.00
	Older (7 years old and above)	96	75.00
	Total	128	100
Sex	Male	59	46.10
	Female	69	53.90
	Total	128	100
Number of Siblings	Few (less than five siblings)	61	47.70
	More (5 siblings and more)	67	52.30
	Total	128	100

Table 1 shows the profile of 128 learners regarding age, sex, and number of siblings. Most respondents, 96 or 75 percent, are 7 years old and above, while 32 or 25 percent are below 7. Regarding sex, 59 or 46.10 percent are male, while 69 or 53.90 percent are female. Regarding the number of siblings, 61 or 47.70 percent of the respondents have fewer than five siblings, while 67 or 52.30 percent have five or more siblings. This implies that most respondents are relatively young, male, and have many siblings.

The result aligns with Agabon's (2020) study, which indicated that a majority of learner participants were older, females, and had many siblings, suggesting that family dynamics and age could play a role in influencing reading proficiency.

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Orientation to Print, Letter Name Knowledge, Letter Sound Knowledge, Initial Sound Identification, Familiar Word Reading, Invented Word Reading, Oral Passage Reading, Reading Comprehension, Listening Comprehension, and Dictation

Table 2

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Orientation to Print, Letter Name Knowledge, Letter Sound Knowledge, Initial Sound Identification, Familiar Word Reading, Invented Word Reading, Oral Passage Reading, Reading Comprehension, Listening Comprehension, and Dictation

Items	Mean	Interpretation
a. Orientation to Print	56.09	Instructional
b. Letter Name Knowledge	49.54	Frustration
c. Letter Sound Knowledge	53.67	Instructional
d. Initial Sound Identification	49.17	Frustration
e. Familiar Word Reading	52.58	Instructional
f. Invented Word Reading	54.19	Instructional
g. Oral Passage Reading	50.52	Instructional
h. Reading Comprehension	50.08	Instructional
i. Listening Comprehension	50.78	Instructional
j. Dictation	54.10	Instructional

Table 2 reveals the result on the level of learners' proficiency in orientation to print, letter name knowledge, letter-sound knowledge, initial sound identification, familiar word reading, invented word reading, oral passage reading, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and dictation after the administration of the tests.

In orientation to print, the obtained mean score was 56.09, followed by invented word reading of 54.19, dictation of 54.10, letter-sound knowledge of 53.67, familiar word meaning reading of 52.58, listening comprehension of 50-78, oral passage reading of 50.52, and reading comprehension of 50.08 which are all interpreted as instructional level.

This implies that most of the learners need direct instruction in reading. They cannot respond immediately to the reading materials/tests without the assistance of the teachers. Some still have difficulty identifying printed words, sounds, and meanings. It suggests that reading teachers continue providing them with reading materials suitable for their grade level and then move to more complex reading texts and those that cater to their areas of interest. Some learners also have poor listening comprehension, oral passage reading, and reading comprehension. After hearing the passage or selection that the teacher had read out and dictated, the learners had a precision of 50 percent to respond to the question correctly. This suggests that teachers should allow learners the chance to practice listening to native speech before anything else so they can improve their listening skills. On the other hand, letter name knowledge and initial sound identification obtained a mean score of 49.54 and 49.17, which was interpreted as a frustration level.

The result is supported by the study of Calantas (2020), wherein the learners' reading proficiency was on letter knowledge, and phonic awareness was poor. The learners must be more exposed to letter sounds to the given objects and identify the rhyming words. The result of this study was also validated by Akoglu and Kiziloz (2018). Their analysis showed that the teachers allocated less time to phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge and instead gave precedence to line-drawing exercises. Likewise, the results of their study revealed that early literacy skills were not adequately supported at home or school.

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Orientation to Print, Letter Name Knowledge, Letter Sound Knowledge, Initial Sound Identification, Familiar Word Reading, Invented Word Reading, Oral Passage Reading, Reading Comprehension, Listening Comprehension, and Dictation when grouped according to Age, Sex, and Number of Siblings

Table 3

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Orientation to Print, Letter Name Knowledge, Letter Sound Knowledge, Initial Sound Identification, Familiar Word Reading, Invented Word Reading, Oral Passage Reading, Reading Comprehension, Listening Comprehension, and Dictation when grouped according to Age

Items	Younger		Older	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
a. Orientation to Print	50.63	Instructional	57.92	Instructional
b. Letter Name Knowledge	40.38	Frustration	52.59	Instructional
c. Letter Sound Knowledge	54.06	Instructional	53.54	Instructional
d. Initial Sound Identification	42.28	Frustration	51.47	Instructional
e. Familiar Word Reading	51.25	Frustration	53.02	Instructional
f. Invented Word Reading	47.44	Frustration	56.44	Instructional
g. Oral Passage Reading	41.00	Frustration	53.69	Instructional

h. Reading Comprehension	45.50	Frustration	51.60	Instructional
i. Listening Comprehension	46.88	Frustration	52.08	Instructional
j. Dictation	42.97	Frustration	57.81	Instructional

Table 3 reveals the results on the level of learners' proficiency in reading when grouped according to age. Younger respondents obtained the highest mean scores of 54.06 on letter sound knowledge interpreted as instructional, and the lowest mean of 40.38 was on letter name knowledge interpreted as frustration. This implies that younger learners still have difficulty recognizing the uppercase and lowercase letters, their symbols in print, and the sound associated with the letter. Letter naming knowledge requires children to master recognizing each alphabet's upper- and lowercase shapes and is a landmark accomplishment for successful reading acquisition. Thus, learners lacking competent alphabet knowledge need explicit instruction focused on letter identity, letter naming, and writing of letters.

Foorman et al. (2016) have found that success in early literacy subskills such as letter naming knowledge and phonological awareness requires explicit instruction. That may be essential to closing the early literacy development gap. The ability to retrieve both upper and lowercase letters from long-term memory is less likely to make letter identification errors and misread fewer words, making letter name knowledge an essential predictor of a child's success with various literacy tasks.

On the other hand, older respondents obtained the highest mean score of 57.92 on orientation to print, interpreted as instructional, while the lowest mean score of 51.47 was on initial sound identification, interpreted as instructional. This implies that some older respondents have difficulty recognizing the initial sound of some alphabets and words. They still need their teacher's instructional assistance to recognize and identify the initial sounds of the word/s and the letters of the alphabet.

The result relates to that of Marwah (2017), wherein the ability to identify and manipulate speech sounds mentally is an essential literacy skill that children have to acquire in their early years. It is a good predictor of later reading outcomes. Similarly, children who lag in developing phonological awareness skills are likely at risk for reading difficulties.

Table 4

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Orientation to Print, Letter Name Knowledge, Letter Sound Knowledge, Initial Sound Identification, Familiar Word Reading, Invented Word Reading, Oral Passage Reading, Reading Comprehension, Listening Comprehension, and Dictation when grouped according to Sex

Items	Male		Female	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
a. Orientation to Print	58.31	Instructional	54.20	Instructional
b. Letter Name Knowledge	54.07	Instructional	45.67	Frustration
c. Letter Sound Knowledge	55.25	Instructional	52.32	Instructional
d. Initial Sound Identification	51.27	Instructional	47.38	Frustration
e. Familiar Word Reading	57.80	Instructional	48.12	Frustration
f. Invented Word Reading	58.51	Instructional	50.49	Instructional
g. Oral Passage Reading	54.17	Instructional	47.39	Frustration
h. Reading Comprehension	53.02	Instructional	47.57	Frustration
i. Listening Comprehension	51.86	Instructional	49.86	Frustration
j. Dictation	53.39	Instructional	54.71	Instructional

Table 4 shows the results on the level of learners' proficiency in reading when grouped according to sex. Male respondents obtained the highest mean scores of 58.51 on invented word reading interpreted as instructional, and the lowest mean of 51.27 was on initial sound identification interpreted as instructional. This implies that most male learners can respond, recognize, or read the initial sound of the given texts or words. Many of them are familiar with the initial sound of the letters of the alphabet.

The result relates to that of Light and McNaughton (2019), who concluded that identifying initial sounds in words is important because children can isolate individual sounds. Knowledge of letter-sound correspondence and phonological awareness skills are the basic building blocks of literacy learning. These skills are strong predictors of how well students learn to read. On the other hand, female respondents obtained the highest mean score of 54.71 on dictation, interpreted as instructional. In contrast, the lowest mean score of 45.67 was on letter name knowledge, interpreted as frustration. The result implies that some female learners could not name the correct letters of the alphabet, including uppercase and lowercase letters. Alphabet activities that teach letter recognition skills are crucial for a learner's education. They lay the foundation for a child's reading and writing abilities in the future. This suggests that the learners need much exposure to the alphabet. They need explicit instruction as well as plenty of indirect alphabet instruction.

According to Lynch (2020), letter name knowledge is the ability to name letters, find characteristics specific to the letter, and form letters of all 26 uppercase and lowercase symbols used in English. Letter identification includes distinguishing between distinct letters and their shapes, which should be taught before, or at the very least, in conjunction with letter sounds. Recognition of letters is a foundational part of learning how to read. Without it, kids struggle to learn letter sounds and recognize words. Children who cannot identify and name letters with their sounds have difficulty learning to read.

Table 5

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Orientation to Print, Letter Name Knowledge, Letter Sound Knowledge, Initial Sound Identification, Familiar Word Reading, Invented Word Reading, Oral Passage Reading, Reading Comprehension, Listening Comprehension, and Dictation when grouped according to Number of Siblings

Items	Few		Many	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
a. Orientation to Print	58.03	Instructional	54.33	Instructional
b. Letter Name Knowledge	51.11	Instructional	48.10	Frustration
c. Letter Sound Knowledge	54.10	Instructional	53.28	Instructional
d. Initial Sound Identification	50.30	Instructional	48.15	Frustration
e. Familiar Word Reading	54.10	Instructional	51.19	Instructional
f. Invented Word Reading	54.20	Instructional	54.18	Instructional
g. Oral Passage Reading	46.52	Frustration	54.15	Instructional
h. Reading Comprehension	47.74	Frustration	52.21	Instructional
i. Listening Comprehension	56.07	Instructional	45.97	Frustration
j. Dictation	58.20	Instructional	50.37	Instructional

Table 5 reveals the results on the level of learners' proficiency in reading when grouped according to the number of siblings. Respondents with few siblings obtained the highest mean score of 58.20 on dictation interpreted as an instructional, and the lowest mean score of 46.52 was on oral passage reading interpreted as frustration. This shows that most learners did not pass the oral passage reading test. The learners find the reading materials so tricky that they cannot recognize and read the given texts or words. The text was very challenging for them to read. Many stop reading out of confusion about how to read the words correctly.

The finding relates to that of DiSalle and Rasinski (2017), who found that 90% of comprehension problems are due to a deficiency in oral reading. Thus, learners with poor oral reading abilities in their early academic life are most likely to encounter reading problems in later academic stages. For this reason, building and developing literacy skills in the early learning stage is essential. On the contrary, respondents with many siblings obtained the highest mean score of 54.33 on orientation to print, interpreted as instructional, while the lowest mean score of 45.97 was on listening comprehension, interpreted as frustration. This indicates that the learners' listening comprehension abilities are poor. The learners cannot respond to the question asked by the teacher after they have listened to a passage that was read to them. They have difficulty recalling important events and characters in the story/selection they listened to.

According to Gilakjani (2016), listening comprehension is essential to language learning. Listening comprehension is an interactive process in which listeners construct meaning. Developing listening comprehension skills helps learners succeed in language learning and enhances comprehensible input. Since learners' self-reliance in listening comprehension will be increased, they will be motivated to have access to spoken English, such as conversations with native speakers.

Comparative Analysis on the Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Orientation to Print, Letter Name Knowledge, Letter Sound Knowledge, Initial Sound Identification, Familiar Word Reading, Invented Word Reading, Oral Passage Reading, Reading Comprehension, Listening Comprehension, and Dictation when grouped and compared according to Age, Sex, and Number of Siblings

Table 6

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Orientation to Print when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	32	57.25	1304.000	0.190	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	96	66.92				
Sex	Male	59	67.47	1860.500	0.391	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	69	61.96				
Number of Siblings	Few	61	67.94	1833.500	0.304		Not Significant
	Many	67	61.37				

Table 6 reveals the inferential statistics on the level of learners' proficiency in reading in orientation to print when grouped and compared according to variables. As revealed in the table, the computed p-values on variable age, sex, and number of siblings are 0.190, 0.391, and 0.304, respectively, which are all greater than 0.05 significance level, thus, interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' proficiency in reading in orientation to print when grouped and compared according to age, sex, and number of siblings was accepted.

The result implies that the level of learners' proficiency in reading in orientation to print does not vary regardless of their ages, sex, or number of siblings. Most learners exhibit the same level of proficiency in terms of orientation to print. Print awareness is a component of reading and writing. Teachers must know why some children have difficulty in orientation to print so that appropriate instructional assistance can be provided to learners.

The result contradicts that of Calantas (2020), who found out that learners' reading skills on print awareness vary according to age, sex, and average family monthly income. In addition, the study by Akoglu and Kiziloz (2018) found that demographic variables, such as age, sex, and parents' education, correlated at varying strengths identified as predictors of home literacy skills and print awareness.

Table 7

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Letter Name Knowledge when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	32	50.44	1086.000	0.013		Significant
	Older	96	69.19				
Sex	Male	59	71.18	1641.500	0.059	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	69	58.79				
Number of Siblings	Few	61	66.43	1925.500	0.573		Not Significant
	Many	67	62.74				

Table 7 shows the statistics on learners' reading proficiency level in letter name knowledge when grouped and compared according to variables. On variable age, the computed p-value is 0.013, less than 0.05, and, thus, is interpreted as significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' proficiency in reading in letter name knowledge when grouped and compared according to age was rejected. However, on variable sex and number of siblings, the computed p-values are 0.059 and 0.573, which are more significant than the 0.05 significance level and thus interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' reading proficiency in letter name knowledge when grouped and compared according to sex and number of siblings was accepted.

The result implies that the level of learners' proficiency in reading in letter name knowledge varies when they are compared according to age. In contrast, it does not vary according to sex and number of siblings. This means that older learners may be more proficient in letter name knowledge than younger learners as they grow older; they are more likely to be exposed to naming letters frequently.

The finding is supported by Vlachos (2015), who found a significant effect of age on reading performance, with older children having better scores than younger ones for letter naming, reading comprehension, and total reading performance.

Table 8

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Letter Sound Knowledge when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	32	65.33	1509.500	0.883		Not Significant
	Older	96	64.22				
Sex	Male	59	67.25	1873.500	0.434	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	69	62.15				
Number of Siblings	Few	61	64.48	2042.000	0.994		Not Significant
	Many	67	64.52				

Table 8 divulged the inferential statistics on the level of learners' proficiency in reading in letter-sound knowledge when grouped and compared according to variables. The computed p-values on variable age, sex, and number of siblings are 0.883, 0.434, and 0.994, respectively, which are all greater than 0.05 level of significance, thus, interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' proficiency in reading in letter-sound knowledge when grouped and compared according to age, sex, and the number of siblings was accepted.

This implies that the level of learners' proficiency in reading in letter-sound knowledge does not differ regardless of their age, sex, and number of siblings. Most of the learners performed the same skill on letter sound identification. Learning the sounds of letters is a crucial step in learning to read in an alphabetic orthography and is problematic for some children. Treiman (2019) found that children find it easier to understand the sounds of letters that correspond to earlier acquired speech sounds than letters that correspond to later acquired speech sounds. It has been suggested that the order of teaching letter-sound correspondences, especially for younger children, should consider the age at which children acquire speech sounds.

Table 9

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Initial Sound Identification when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	32	55.39	1244.500	0.108	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	96	67.54				
Sex	Male	59	67.58	1854.000	0.385	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	69	61.87				
Number of Siblings	Few	61	65.73	1968.500	0.720	0.05	Not Significant
	Many	67	63.38				

Table 9 discloses the inferential statistics on the level of learners' reading proficiency in letter sound identification when grouped and compared according to variables. The computed p-values on variable age, sex, and number of siblings are 0.108, 0.385, and 0.720, respectively, which are all greater than 0.05 level of significance, thus, interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' reading proficiency in letter sound identification when grouped and compared according to age, sex, and number of siblings was accepted.

The result implies that learners' proficiency in letter sound identification does not vary according to age, sex, and number of siblings. The learners have the same level of proficiency in identifying the sounds of the letters.

The result affirmed by Huang et al. (2015) revealed no differences in letter-sound learning even within the same language. Depending on whether letter sounds are taught, an advantage in the sound task for letters is that children already have a strong knowledge of letter names. The result also aligns with that of Agabon (2021), who revealed no significant difference in the level of reading skills of learners when compared according to their profile variables.

Table 10

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Familiar Word Reading when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	32	63.14	1492.500	0.809	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	96	64.95				
Sex	Male	59	71.74	1608.500	0.040	0.05	Significant
	Female	69	58.31				
Number of Siblings	Few	61	66.49	1922.000	0.559	0.05	Not Significant
	Many	67	62.69				

Table 10 reveals the inferential statistics on the level of learners' proficiency in reading familiar words when grouped and compared according to variables. For variable age and number of siblings, the computed p-values are 0.808 and 0.559, which are all greater than 0.05 significance levels and are thus interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted that no significant difference exists in learners' proficiency in reading familiar words when grouped and compared according to age and number of siblings.

The result implies that learners' proficiency in familiar word reading does not differ according to age and number of siblings. The learners performed the same proficiency in reading familiar words. However, the computed p-value for variable age is 0.040, less than 0.05, thus interpreted as significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' proficiency in reading familiar words when grouped and compared according to sex was rejected.

This implies that learners' proficiency in reading familiar words varies compared to sex. Female learners were more proficient in reading familiar words than male learners. The result aligns with Miñoza and Montero (2019), who revealed that female learners outperformed males in reading proficiency.

Table 11

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Invented Word Reading when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	32	56.44	1278.000	0.155	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	96	67.19				
Sex	Male	59	69.92	1716.000	0.126		Not Significant
	Female	69	59.87				
Number of Siblings	Few	61	65.18	2002.000	0.843		Not Significant
	Many	67	63.88				

Table 11 discloses the inferential statistics on learners' proficiency level in invented word reading when grouped and compared according to variables. The computed p-values on variable age, sex, and number of siblings are 0.155, 0.126, and 0.843, respectively, which are all greater than 0.05 significance level, thus, interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' proficiency in reading in invented word reading when grouped and compared according to age, sex, and number of siblings was accepted.

The result implies that regardless of age, sex, and number of siblings of the learners, their proficiency in invented word reading was the same. They showed the same reading performance during the administration of the tests.

The result contradicts that of Amagan (2018), wherein her study revealed a significant variation in pupils' reading skills when compared according to age, sex, parents' educational attainment, and number of siblings.

Table 12

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Oral Passage Reading when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	32	52.47	1151.000	0.034	0.05	Significant
	Older	96	68.51				
Sex	Male	59	69.30	1752.500	0.176		Not Significant
	Female	69	60.40				
Number of Siblings	Few	61	59.43	1734.500	0.140		Not Significant
	Many	67	69.11				

Table 12 shows the inferential statistics on the level of learners' proficiency in reading in oral passage reading when grouped and compared according to variables. For variable age, the computed p-value is 0.034, less than 0.05, and is thus interpreted as significant. Therefore, when grouped and compared according to age, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' proficiency in reading in oral passage reading was rejected.

The result implies that learners' age can influence their proficiency in oral passage reading. Older learners performed better on oral passage reading than younger learners. However, for variable sex and number of siblings, the computed p-values are 0.176 and 0.140, more significant than the 0.05 significance level and thus interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in learners' proficiency level in reading oral passages when grouped and compared according to sex and number of siblings was accepted.

This means the learners' proficiency in oral passage reading does not differ from sex and the number of siblings. Both groups of learners have the same proficiency level while administering oral passage reading. The results contradict that of Lagarto (2021). Male learners are slightly ahead in oral reading proficiency in English and Filipino. In addition, in the study conducted by Chung et al. (2019), adolescent learners who get together with siblings and have dialogue with family members obtained the best results in oral reading.

Table 13

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Reading Comprehension when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
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Age	Younger	32	59.02	1360.500	0.334	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	96	66.33				
Sex	Male	59	67.88	1836.000	0.340	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	69	61.61				
Number of Siblings	Few	61	61.89	1884.000	0.446		Not Significant
	Many	67	66.88				

Table 13 divulges the inferential statistics on the level of learners' reading proficiency in reading comprehension when grouped and compared according to variables. The computed p-values on variable age, sex, and number of siblings are 0.334, 0.340, and 0.446, respectively, which are all greater than 0.05 level of significance, thus, interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' reading comprehension proficiency when grouped and compared according to age, sex, and number of siblings was accepted.

The result implies that no variation was found in the learners' level of reading comprehension proficiency when compared to age, sex, and number of siblings. Most of the learners performed the same reading proficiency. The result contradicts that of Cañete (2017). Her study revealed that the level of reading readiness of grade one learners differs significantly when compared according to age, sex, average family monthly income, parents' educational attainment, and size of the family.

Table 15

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading and Listening Comprehension when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	32	58.44	1342.000	0.275	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	96	66.52				
Sex	Male	59	65.79	1959.500	0.710	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	69	63.40				
Number of Siblings	Few	61	71.94	1589.500	0.027		Significant
	Many	67	57.72				

Table 14 reveals the inferential statistics on the level of learners' proficiency in reading and listening comprehension when grouped and compared according to variables. For variable age and sex, the computed p-values are 0.275 and 0.710, all greater than 0.05 levels of significance and thus interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' reading proficiency in listening comprehension when grouped and compared according to age and sex was accepted.

The result implies that learners' proficiency in listening comprehension does not differ when they are compared according to age and sex. This suggests that regardless of learners' age and sex, they performed at the same level of proficiency in listening comprehension. However, for the variable number of siblings, the computed p-value is 0.027, less than 0.05, thus interpreted as significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' reading proficiency in listening comprehension when grouped and compared according to the number of siblings was rejected.

The result implies that most learners with few siblings have better listening comprehension than learners with many siblings. Parental attention of parents declines as the number of children increases in the family; hence, some learners and many siblings learn to read independently so they do not be left behind by peers.

According to Avendano (2021), listening is the interpretation of spoken language, including recognizing discourses of sounds, understanding the meaning of individual words, or understanding the syntax of sentences that may arise in a dialogue or discourse. Listening comprehension can generate skills for retention, relationship, and understanding of a message, as well as to get the most important things out and interpret them in the best possible way to develop knowledge. It is also important to emphasize that the relevance of listening comprehension is to channel and understand a message in the best way and know how listening can improve social skills.

Table 15

Level of Learners' Proficiency in Reading in Dictation when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	32	51.52	1120.500	0.019	0.05	Significant
	Older	96	68.83				
Sex	Male	59	63.46	1974.000	0.763		Not Significant

	Female	69	65.39			
Number of Siblings	Few	61	69.91	1713.500	0.106	Not Significant
	Many	67	59.57			

Table 15 discloses the inferential statistics on the level of learners' proficiency in reading in dictation when grouped and compared according to variables. For variable age, the computed p-value is 0.019, less than 0.05, and thus, is interpreted as significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' proficiency in reading in dictation when grouped and compared according to age was rejected. The result implies that learners' proficiency in dictation varies according to age. Older learners may have better proficiency in dictation than younger learners. However, for variable sex and number of siblings, the computed p-values are 0.763 and 0.106, more significant than the 0.05 significance level and thus interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of learners' proficiency in reading in dictation when grouped and compared according to sex and number of siblings was accepted.

This means that the learners' proficiency in dictation does not differ compared to sex and the number of siblings—both groups performed at the same level of proficiency in dictation. The result is supported by Cohen (2015), wherein there was no significant difference in learners' scores in the dictation test compared to their profile background. However, a significant difference was found in dictation scores on the pre-test and posttest results.

Conclusions:

The study, involving 128 learners, revealed that most respondents were aged 7 and above, with a slight female majority and over half having five or more siblings. Reading proficiency varied across multiple skill areas, with most learners performing at the instructional level, though foundational components like letter name knowledge and initial sound identification were at the frustration level. Age, sex, and number of siblings influenced specific areas of proficiency: older learners showed stronger foundational skills, females excelled in familiar word reading and dictation, and learners with fewer siblings performed better in dictation, while those with more struggled with listening comprehension. However, most reading skills did not significantly differ across demographic groups. The findings highlight the need for targeted instruction in phonological awareness, letter recognition, and listening comprehension, supported by gender-sensitive strategies, home-based literacy activities, early interventions, differentiated instruction, ongoing assessment, and teacher training to enhance overall reading proficiency and address learners' diverse needs.

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