

READING PROFICIENCY OF GRADE SIX LEARNERS IN RELATION TO THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract:

The National Reading Panel (2020) states that phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are the five key areas that must be covered in any good reading program. Among these, phonics is essential for the development of early literacy because it helps pupils decode new words and gain confidence in their ability to read. Furthermore, Adora (2024) stated that Students with great comprehension abilities typically score better on standardized tests and subject-specific evaluations. This study aimed to determine the level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in relation to their academic performance in a private school in a first-class province in Central Philippines during the school year 2023-2024. The level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners was measured based on Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. The results revealed that the majority of the respondents were male, and most of them belong to the higher income group with more siblings. The level of Grade 6 learners' proficiency in terms of phonics, fluency, and vocabulary were all on high level; while their comprehension was on moderate level. There was no significant difference in the area of phonics across all variables, however, in terms of fluency and vocabulary, there was a significant difference when grouped according to average family monthly income; no significant difference in the level of comprehension. There was a significant difference in the level of learners' academic performance when grouped according to average family monthly income. The relational analysis revealed that there was a significant relationship between the level of reading proficiency of Grade 6 learners and their academic performance. The study recommends the implementation of the following: Enhanced Parental Engagement in Literacy Development, Peer-Assisted Learning and Small-Group Instruction, Develop Structured Fluency Programs, and Develop Structured Fluency Programs.

Keywords: Reading proficiency, Grade Six Learners, learners' academic performance, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

It has long been acknowledged that a learner's academic trajectory is shaped by their level of reading proficiency. The National Reading Panel (2020) states that phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are the five key areas that must be covered in any good reading program. Among these, phonics is essential for the development of early literacy because it helps pupils decode new words and gain confidence in their ability to read.

According to Jackson (2018), comprehension requires fluency, which is the capacity to read material accurately and at the right pace. According to studies, fluent pupils frequently have trouble reading complicated texts, which might impair their academic achievement. Gaining vocabulary helps students understand new ideas and concepts in a variety of areas, which enhances comprehension.

However, comprehension—which is regarded as the ultimate goal of reading—integrates vocabulary, fluency, and phonics to help students deduce meaning from texts. Students with great comprehension abilities typically score better on standardized tests and subject-specific evaluations, according to research studies like the one done by Adora (2024). Given the significance of these elements, evidence-based solutions for improving reading proficiency and promoting academic achievement must be put into practice by educators and policymakers.

Due to their inability to understand what they read sixth-grade students' poor reading skills have a cascading effect on all of their disciplines. Second, a large number of sixth-graders do not have proper reading habits at home or in school, which results in subpar literacy results at the school where the researcher teaches. Nearly 95% of grade six students in the school did not have phonemic awareness or phonics, which are necessary for word decoding and fluency development, according to an informal survey.

In order to provide empirical insights that can guide literacy teaching and curriculum development, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between academic success and reading competency. The study intends to add to the larger conversation on student performance and educational efficacy by identifying important factors influencing reading outcomes.

Current State of Knowledge

One essential ability that has a big influence on academic achievement is reading competence. Leipzig (2001) asserts that reading is a complex process that includes motivation, word recognition, comprehension, and fluency. The National Reading Panel (2000) determined that phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are the five fundamental elements of reading. Together, these elements support a learner's efficient processing and comprehension of texts. Strong reading proficiency has been linked to improved performance on standardized tests and subject-specific evaluations, according to research (Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro, 2015).

A fundamental reading ability, phonics aids sixth-grade students in decoding words by helping them comprehend the correspondence between letters and sounds. It helps children sound out new words and increase their reading accuracy, making it an essential part of reading success. The relationship between spoken language sounds (phonemes) and the letters (graphemes) that represent them is the main emphasis of the phonics teaching approach. In order to read and spell, it aids kids in hearing, recognizing, and using these sound-letter correspondences (Literacy Trust Organization of UK, 2020).

Early literacy skills in young children in western nations have been demonstrated to benefit from phonological-based education, namely phonological awareness instruction (PA) and phonics training. Children in English-dominant societies learn to read English differently from children learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Less research has been done on the effectiveness of instruction in an EFL context (Huo & Wang, 2017).

Both academic accomplishment and English language competency are crucial for students' success in the modern world, both for their academic and professional futures. Thus, research that looks at whether these two variables have meaningful relationships or whether they predict one another can be helpful to educators, curriculum developers, and educational policymakers. Unquestionably, a number of factors, including socioeconomic position, social support, and mental health, can influence a student's academic performance; nevertheless, it has also been proposed that competency in a foreign language might also predict academic success (Sothan, 2019).

Reading fluency is a significant problem for many pupils in the United States, especially in later elementary and middle school. A significant portion of pupils are not reading at proficient levels, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Because it enables pupils to concentrate on comprehending the text rather than battling with particular words, fluency is crucial for reading comprehension. Since reading is a fundamental learning skill, low fluency can impede academic progress in a variety of subjects (NAEP, 2018).

As stated by Coyne et al. (2022), classroom instruction and further vocabulary intervention can help kids who struggle with language and learning. Students in the control group performed worse than those in the supplemental vocabulary intervention. Additionally, the intervention reduced the vocabulary acquisition gaps between the intervention group and generally performing kids who just received classroom vocabulary teaching on the targeted words. Results indicate that at-risk students' learning can be accelerated by extra vocabulary interventions that reinforce material covered in class.

Based on concerns about the academic performance of international students studying in English-speaking nations, Waluyo's (2021) study in Thailand examined the relationship between academic achievement and English proficiency. It also asked whether this relationship also exists for domestic EFL learners attending a university in their home country. Data from 2,150 students enrolled in six distinct English classes across a range of academic majors was used in the analysis. These findings showed that students' GPAs over the course of a year of study and proficiency were strongly predicted by their grades in English courses, with substantial connections found. The results support the claim that, despite the fact that a number of factors influence students' academic performance, English competence appears to have predictive potential. Universities in nations where English is not the primary language have recently shown a great deal of interest in English-medium instruction (EMI). As a result, the results of this study indicate that raising students' level of English proficiency will boost their academic performance.

The Bermudez (2025) study assessed the Filipino reading proficiency of Grade 2 students in Masinloc District, Schools Division of Zambales, during the 2024–2025 school year, as well as the use of the phonics technique by home reading facilitators. According to the findings, most home reading facilitators were female, between the ages of 30 and 39, college graduates, and had family incomes between P20,000 and P39,999. They also spent 1.0 to 1.9 hours teaching reading at home. Their mean ratings across aspects ranged from 3.03 to 3.07, and they regularly used the phonics technique. Students in grade two showed that they could read Filipino well. Based on their demographic profile, a notable variation was found in the way facilitators used the phonics technique.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study was anchored on two (2) theories, namely, The Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) by John Sweller (1988) and the Theory of Performance (ToP) by Don Elger (2007). According to the Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), which highlights

the limitations of working memory, the human brain processes and stores information. The notion was first presented by Sweller (1988), who distinguished three categories of cognitive load. The first is the Intrinsic Load, which characterizes the intricacy of the subject matter. The Germane Load, which emphasizes the mental effort required to construct meaningful learning structures, comes in third. The second is Extraneous Load, which is all about the needless cognitive effort brought on by subpar instructional design.

According to CLT, in order to improve learning efficiency, instructional practices should optimize germane load while minimizing extraneous load. Because too much cognitive load has been shown to impair understanding and memory, learning resources that are organized and well-designed are crucial for academic achievement. According to CLT, in order to improve learning efficiency, instructional practices should optimize germane load while minimizing extraneous load. Because too much cognitive load has been shown to impair understanding and memory, learning resources that are organized and well-designed are crucial for academic achievement.

The first is context, or the setting in which performance takes place; the second is knowledge, or the depth of understanding needed for a task; the third is skills, or the ability to apply knowledge effectively; the fourth is identity, or the personal and professional self-concept; the fifth is personal factors, which includes psychological influences, motivation, and emotions; and the sixth is fixed factors, which refers to the external constraints that affect performance, according to Elger's 2007 Theory of Performance (ToP).

Elger argues that improving performance requires structured learning environments, continuous skill development, and reflective practice. Elger's 2007 Theory of Performance (ToP) divides performance into six categories: context, or the environment in which performance occurs; knowledge, or the depth of understanding required for a task; skills, or the capacity to apply knowledge effectively; identity, or the personal and professional self-concept; personal factors, including psychological influences, motivation, and emotions; and fixed factors, or the external constraints that impact performance.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in relation to their academic performance in a private school in a first-class province in Central Philippines during the school year 2023-2024. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following: 1) determine the profile of the respondents in terms of Sex, Average Family Monthly Income, and Number of Siblings; 2) determine the level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners according to Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension; 3) determine the level of learner's academic performance when grouped according to aforementioned variables; 4) determine the level of learner's academic performance during the First Quarter when grouped according to the aforementioned variables; 5) determine if there was a significant difference between the level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners when grouped and compared according to aforementioned variables, and 6) determine if there was a significant relationship between the level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners and the level of learner's academic performance.

Methodology:

This section presents the discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedure for data analysis.

Research Design

The study utilized descriptive research design to determine the level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in relation to their academic performance in a private school, in a first-class province, in Central Philippines during the school year 2023-2024. The study utilized descriptive research design to determine the level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in relation to their academic performance in a private school, in a first-class province, in Central Philippines during the school year 2023-2024.

Study Respondents

The respondents of the study were the 60 Grade 6 Learners and since the number of respondents is quite manageable, purposive sampling will be utilized. Purposive Sampling technique refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected. It relies on the researcher's judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives. (Kassiani Nikolopoupou, 2022).

Instruments

To determine the level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in relation to their academic performance this study made use of a self-made data gathering instrument which was subjected to Validity (4.93 – interpreted as excellent) and Reliability testing (0.963 – interpreted as excellent). The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part I included the profile of respondents in terms of sex, average family monthly income, and number of siblings. Part II consisted of 10 items- Phonics; 10 for Fluency, 10 for Vocabulary and 10 for Comprehension to measure the level of reading proficiency of grade 6 learners in relation to their academic performance.

Data Gathering Procedure

In order to collect the data, the study started with a formal letter addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent asking permission to conduct the study. The purpose of the letter was to provide the SDS proper heads-up on the purpose, mechanics and duration of the study. The data gathering instrument was administered after the approval of the request and the copies of the instrument were retrieved after 3 days. After the collection of data, they were organized for statistical interpretation.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No. 1 used descriptive analytical scheme and the statistical tools used were Frequency Count and Percentage Count to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of Sex, Average Family Monthly Income, and Number of Siblings.

Objective No. 2 used descriptive analytical scheme and the statistical tools used was Mean to determine the level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in terms of Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension.

Objective No. 3 also used descriptive analytical scheme and the statistical tools used was Mean to determine the level of learner's academic performance;

Objective No. 4 will still use descriptive analytical scheme and the statistical tools used was Mean to determine the level of learner's academic performance during the First Quarter when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Objective No. 5 used comparative analytical scheme and the statistical tool used was Mann Whitney U test to determine if there was a significant difference between the Reading Proficiency levels of Grade 6 Learners when grouped according to aforementioned variables.

Objective No. 6 used relational analytical scheme and the statistical tool used as Spearman Rho to determine if there was a significant relationship between the level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners and the level of learner's academic performance.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured that key ethical considerations were strictly followed and adhered to in the study particularly in the use of minors as participants to the study. Parents were fully informed of their rights whether or not to allow their children to participate and as a result, they were asked to sign a consent form stating their approval for the participation of their children. The researcher also provided teachers, parents, and students with the necessary information to make a determination as to whether they want (the students) to be part of the study. The signing of the consent form, which is actually a process rather than an event was not used as coercive tool to compel participants to complete the study. They were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any point when they became uncomfortable with the study. The identity of the children as well as their responses was kept confidential such that neither the responses nor their identity was revealed to any other person outside the research team.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the data gathered in connection with the objectives of the study, analyzes these data facilitated by the identified appropriate statistical tools, and interprets the results derived from the analyses.

Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents is identified in terms of sex, average family monthly income, and number of siblings.

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	34	56.70
	Female	26	43.30

Average Family Monthly Income	Lower (less than Php 20 000)	16	26.70
	Higher (Php 20 000 and above)	44	73.30
Number of Siblings	Shorter (below 3 years)	26	43.30
	Longer (3 years and above)	34	56.70
Total		60	100.00

The demographic profile of respondents reflects key socio-economic factors that influence their access to resources and opportunities. With 56.70% male and 43.30% female representation, gender dynamics play a role in educational attainment, career prospects, and financial independence. Additionally, household income distribution indicates that 73.30% of families earn Php 20,000 and above, while 26.70% earn below this threshold. Family structure also plays a crucial role, with 56.70% of respondents having three or more siblings, while 43.30% have fewer than three. These demographic variables collectively highlight patterns of social mobility and access to opportunities, underscoring the importance of targeted policies and interventions to bridge existing disparities.

Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners

Table 2

Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in the Area of Phonics

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a pupil, I ...		
1. can blend sounds to form a word.	4.03	High Level
2. can read high-frequency words that do not conform to regular phonic patterns.	3.32	Moderate Level
3. can read texts and words that are within my phonic capabilities as much as possible.	3.62	High Level
4. can decode texts effortlessly so that all my resources can be used to comprehend what I read.	3.30	Moderate Level
5. can spell effortlessly so that all my resources can be directed toward composing my writing.	3.75	High Level
6. can identify common phonics patterns.	3.50	High Level
7. can link the sequence of phonics instruction to word study techniques.	3.27	Moderate Level
8. can identify the short and long vowel sounds and generate keywords to help recall the sounds.	3.65	High Level
9. can define consonant blends and consonant digraphs and give several examples of each.	3.33	Moderate Level
10. can introduce how each vowel makes both a short and long sound.	3.55	High Level
Overall Mean	3.53	High Level

The overall mean score of 3.53 serves as a general indicator of the respondents' collective perception or performance in terms of phonics. The highest mean score of 4.03 for the line item "As a student, I can blend sounds to form a word", interpreted as high level. This implies that the majority of participants excel in or strongly support this particular aspect. The lowest mean score in the assessment, 3.27, corresponds to the ability to link the sequence of phonics instruction to word study techniques. This implies that some students may struggle with applying phonics knowledge systematically to broader word recognition and literacy development. A lower score in this area may imply gaps in instructional strategies or insufficient reinforcement of phonics sequencing, which can hinder students' ability to decode unfamiliar words efficiently. Without a strong foundation in linking phonics instruction to word study, students may face difficulties in spelling, vocabulary expansion, and overall reading proficiency. Shanahan (2022) presents a meta-analysis indicating that phonics instruction has a smaller effect size compared to other reading strategies, such as fluency and inferencing. This suggests that while phonics is important, it should be complemented with other literacy skills. However, there is a dissenting opinion on phonics from the National Literacy Trust of UK (2023). - National Literacy Trust (2023) reports that excessive focus on phonics may reduce children's enjoyment of reading, which can negatively impact long-term literacy development. The study emphasizes the importance of fostering a love for stories alongside phonics instruction.

Table 3

Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in the Area of Fluency

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a pupil, I...		

1. can recognize different words fluently.	4.02	High Level
2. can recognize whole words instantly by sight without sounding them out.	3.90	High Level
3. can read accurately, smoothly, and with expression.	3.87	High Level
4. can recognize words automatically when reading silently.	4.10	High Level
5. can recognize words automatically when reading loudly.	3.73	High Level
6. can recognize words automatically without struggling over decoding issues.	3.63	High Level
7. can demonstrate fluency during oral reading by showing expression and acknowledging punctuation.	3.70	High Level
8. can read independently from a variety of genres.	3.58	High Level
9. can read and understand what new words mean and sound alike.	3.77	High Level
10. can identify important information easily.	3.67	High Level
Overall Mean	3.80	High Level

The overall mean score of 3.80, classified as a High Level, suggests that Grade 6 learners in the study exhibit strong reading fluency skills. Fluency, which encompasses accuracy, automaticity, and prosody, plays a crucial role in comprehension and literacy development. The highest mean score (4.10) for recognizing words automatically during silent reading indicates that learners are more efficient in processing text internally. The lowest mean score (3.58) for reading independently from a variety of genres suggests that Grade 6 learners may struggle with exposure to diverse texts, which can impact their ability to develop broader literacy skills. Limited engagement with different genres may hinder comprehension, vocabulary expansion, and critical thinking. Research indicates that students who primarily read familiar or preferred genres may have difficulty adapting to complex texts required in higher academic levels (Abrantes & Romero, 2025).

Table 4

Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in the Area of Vocabulary

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a pupil, I...		
1. can learn vocabulary better when it is presented in multiple ways. (Pictures, sound, definition, examples, etc.)	3.78	High Level
2. can have a wider range of vocabulary activities using an English mobile app.	3.25	Moderate Level
3. can have a wider range of vocabulary activities using English textbook material.	3.38	Moderate Level
4. can guess meaning by pictures in text.	3.72	High Level
5. can write new words several times.	3.55	High Level
6. can guess the meaning of a new word using background knowledge, general world knowledge, and the immediate and the wider context.	3.45	Moderate Level
7. can link the word to its synonyms (words with similar meanings) and antonyms (words with opposite meanings).	3.57	High Level
8. can repeat and spell the new word several times.	3.87	High Level
9. can make a phrase or a sentence containing a word.	3.52	High Level
10. can place the word in a context (e.g., a sentence or a conversation).	3.25	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.53	High Level

The overall mean score of 3.53, classified as a High Level, suggests that Grade 6 learners demonstrate strong vocabulary proficiency. The highest mean score (3.87) for repeating and spelling new words multiple times indicates that learners benefit from reinforcement techniques. The lowest mean score (3.25) for placing words in a context (e.g., a sentence or conversation) suggests that Grade 6 learners may struggle with applying vocabulary in meaningful discourse. A study by Yubal et al. (2025) examined the effectiveness of game-based learning in improving vocabulary proficiency among Grade 6 learners. The research found that interactive vocabulary instruction, such as the Fliptoword Gameword approach, significantly enhanced students' ability to use words in context. The intervention led to a statistically significant improvement ($p < 0.001$) in vocabulary skills, with 41.18% of students reaching a Highly Proficient level, compared to only 5.88% remaining Not Proficient. This suggests that incorporating engaging, learner-centered strategies can address deficiencies in contextual vocabulary application.

Table 5

Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in the Area of Comprehension

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a pupil, I...		
1. can understand complicated sentences by analyzing their structure.	3.68	High Level
2. can grasp the gist of the reading material by quickly reading the first and last paragraphs.	3.60	High Level
3. can show how language, structure, and presentation contribute to the meaning of the texts I read.	3.38	Moderate Level

4. can predict the main idea of the whole passage from its title or subtitles.	3.32	Moderate Level
5. can quickly analyze the structure of sentences when reading a text.	3.62	High Level
6. can guess the main idea of the text based on pictures, charts, or figures.	3.53	High Level
7. can identify key details and ideas in texts by summarizing a given number of paragraphs I have read.	3.23	Moderate Level
8. can grasp the general idea of a sentence before going to read the next sentence.	3.47	Moderate Level
9. can predict the main idea of the whole passage from keywords.	3.52	High Level
10. can recognize main ideas in paragraphs and short selections.	3.12	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.45	Moderate Level

The overall mean score of 3.45, classified as a Moderate Level, suggests that Grade 6 learners exhibit a fair level of reading comprehension proficiency. The highest mean score (3.68) for understanding complicated sentences by analyzing their structure indicates that learners are relatively adept at breaking down sentence components to derive meaning. However, the lowest mean score (3.12) for recognizing main ideas in paragraphs and short selections suggests that learners may struggle with identifying central themes and key points within texts. The study of Cadiong (2019) indicated that students who face difficulties in recognizing main ideas often experience challenges in higher-order comprehension skills, such as inferencing and synthesizing information. This suggests that instructional strategies should emphasize explicit teaching of main idea identification, such as guided reading exercises, summarization techniques, and graphic organizers.

Table 6

Level of Learners' Academic Performance When Grouped According to Sex, Average Family Monthly Income and Number of Siblings

Variables	Categories	Mean	Interpretation
Sex	Male	85.12	Satisfactory
	Female	84.69	Satisfactory
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	82.63	Satisfactory
	Higher	85.77	Very Satisfactory
Number of Siblings	Few	84.88	Satisfactory
	Many	84.97	Satisfactory

The findings indicate that Grade 6 learners generally exhibit Satisfactory academic performance across all categories, with some variations based on sex, family income, and number of siblings. In terms of Sex, academic performance showed that Male got 85.12, and for Female it is 84.69, both satisfactory. When grouped according to Average Family Monthly Income the academic performance showed that those in lower income is 82.63, interpreted as Satisfactory, while for higher income, it is 85.77, interpreted as Very Satisfactory. As to the Number of Siblings it was 84.88 for the "fewer" group, and 84.97 for "many", both interpreted as Satisfactory. The results show minimal differences in academic performance based on the number of siblings, suggesting that family size does not significantly impact learning outcomes. While some studies suggest that children in larger families may receive less individualized attention, this study indicates no major disadvantage for learners with more siblings. The lowest mean score (82.63) for learners from lower-income families suggests a significant disparity in academic performance compared to their higher-income counterparts (85.77, Very Satisfactory). This implies further those students from lower-income households may lack essential academic materials, such as textbooks, digital tools, and supplemental learning activities. This disadvantage can hinder their ability to engage in self-directed learning and academic enrichment outside of school hours.

Comparative Analysis in the Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in the Areas of Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Table 7

Difference in the Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in the Area of Phonics When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	34	29.06	393.00	0.464		Not Significant
	Female	26	32.38				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	16	23.31	237.00	0.054	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	44	33.11				
Number of Siblings	Few	26	30.12	432.00	0.881		Not Significant
	Many	34	30.79				

When grouped according to Sex, Average Family Monthly Income, and Number of Siblings, p -values were all higher than the 0.05 significant level and this suggests that there is no significant difference in phonics proficiency between male and female learners. Since the result is not significant, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference in phonics proficiency between male and female learners" is accepted. This implies that gender does not substantially impact phonics skills. A study by Panaligan, Garcia, & Ortiz (2021) examined the reading ability of Grade 6 students and found that phonics proficiency was not significantly influenced by gender, socioeconomic status, or family size. The study utilized the Diagnostic Placement Tests & Phonics Survey Assessment and revealed that while private school students performed better in phonics and vocabulary, public school students demonstrated stronger comprehension skills. This aligns with the current study's findings, where no significant differences were observed in phonics proficiency across sex, income level, and number of siblings.

Table 8

Difference in the Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in the Area of Fluency When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	34	28.21	364.00	0.244		Not Significant
	Female	26	33.50				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	16	23.16	234.50	0.049	0.05	Significant
	Higher	44	33.17				
Number of Siblings	Few	26	29.77	423.00	0.777		Not Significant
	Many	34	31.06				

When grouped according to sex and the number of siblings, the p -values were all higher than the 0.05 significant level and this suggests that there is no significant difference in fluency proficiency between male and female learners and those with fewer or many siblings. Since the result is not significant, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference in fluency proficiency between male and female learners" is **accepted**. This implies that gender and number of siblings does not substantially impact fluency skills. However, when grouped according to average family monthly income, the p -value (0.049) suggests that there is a significant difference in fluency proficiency between these two groups. Since the result is significant, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference in fluency proficiency between learners from lower- and higher-income families" is **rejected**. This implies that socioeconomic status significantly impacts fluency skills, with higher-income learners performing better. A study by Cellar (2024) examined the effectiveness of fluency-oriented reading instruction and found that structured fluency programs significantly improve reading performance, regardless of demographic factors. The study emphasized that repeated reading strategies, guided oral reading, and exposure to diverse texts are more influential in fluency development than gender or family size.

Table 9

Difference in the Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in the Area of Vocabulary When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	34	29.18	397.00	0.502		Not Significant
	Female	26	32.23				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	16	20.19	187.00	0.006	0.05	Significant
	Higher	44	34.25				
Number of Siblings	Few	26	30.83	433.50	0.899		Not Significant
	Many	34	30.25				

When grouped according to sex and number of siblings, the p-values suggests that there is no significant difference in vocabulary proficiency between male and female learners. Since the result is not significant, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference in vocabulary proficiency between male and female learners" is **accepted**. This implies that gender does not substantially impact vocabulary skills. When grouped according to average family monthly income, the mean rank for lower-income learners is 20.19, and 34.25 for higher-income learners. The p-value (0.006) suggests that there is a significant difference in vocabulary proficiency between these two groups. Since the result is significant, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference in vocabulary proficiency between learners from lower- and higher-income families" is **rejected**. This implies that socioeconomic status significantly impacts vocabulary skills, with higher-income learners performing better. A study by Maleon (2022) examined the relationship between reading proficiency and various demographic factors, including gender, socioeconomic status, and home environment. The study found that home factors, particularly access to literacy resources and parental involvement, had a significant impact on vocabulary development, aligning with the current study's finding that socioeconomic status plays a crucial role in vocabulary proficiency.

Table 10

Difference in the Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners in the Area of Comprehension When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	34	29.29	401.00	0.540		Not Significant
	Female	26	32.08				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	16	23.31	237.00	0.054	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	44	33.11				
Number of Siblings	Few	26	29.44	414.50	0.681		Not Significant
	Many	34	31.31				

When grouped according to Sex, Average Family Monthly Income, and Number of Siblings, the p-values suggested that there is no significant difference in comprehension proficiency between male and female, lower versus higher income and those with few or many siblings. Since the result is not significant, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference in comprehension proficiency between male and female learners" is **accepted**. This implies that gender does not substantially impact comprehension skills. A study by Manaois (2022) examined factors affecting reading comprehension among Grade VI pupils and found that comprehension proficiency is influenced more by instructional strategies and literacy exposure rather than demographic factors. The study emphasized that structured reading interventions, guided discussions, and exposure to diverse texts play a more significant role in comprehension development than gender, socioeconomic status, or family size.

Learner's Academic Performance When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Table 11

Difference in the Learner's Academic Performance When Grouped and Compared According to the Aforementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean	t-value	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	34	85.1176	.347	.730		Not Significant
	Female	26	84.6923				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	16	82.6250	-2.405	.019	0.05	Significant
	Higher	44	85.7727				
Number of Siblings	Few	26	84.8846	-.069	.945		Not Significant
	Many	34	84.9706				

When grouped according to sex and number of siblings, the computed p -values suggested that there is no significant difference in academic performance between male and female learners and those with few versus many siblings. Since the result is not significant, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference in academic performance between male and female learners" is **accepted**. This implies that gender and the number of siblings does not substantially impact academic performance. A study by Tejones (2020) examined the association between personal, family, and environmental factors and their impact on Grade 6 learners' academic performance. The study found that socioeconomic status had a direct and significant effect on student achievement, reinforcing the current study's finding that higher-income learners perform better academically.

Relational Analysis between the Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners and the Level of Learner's Academic Performance

Table 12

Relationship Between the Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners and the Level of Learner's Academic Performance

Correlates	N	r	p-value	Level of Sig	Interpretation
Level of Reading Proficiency of Grade 6 Learners	60	0.865	0.000	0.05	Significant
Level of Learner's Academic Performance					

The results indicate a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.865$, p -value = 0.000) between reading proficiency and academic performance among Grade 6 learners. Since the p -value is below the 0.05 significance level, the relationship is statistically significant, meaning that higher reading proficiency is strongly associated with better academic performance. This implies that reading proficiency is a predictor of academic success. The high correlation suggests that students with stronger reading skills tend to perform better academically across subjects. Furthermore, the result affirms the importance of early literacy intervention. A study by Bagcat (2025) examined the relationship between reading proficiency and academic performance among Filipino learners and found that students with higher reading comprehension scores consistently outperformed their peers in standardized assessments. The study emphasized the need for comprehensive literacy programs to improve academic outcomes.

Conclusions:

The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents were male and belonged to higher-income families, with most learners coming from larger families. Regarding reading proficiency, Grade 6 learners demonstrated a high level in phonics, fluency, and vocabulary, but only a moderate level in comprehension. When grouped by key demographic factors, female learners exhibited higher proficiency than males, higher-income learners outperformed lower-income learners, and family size did not create significant differences, with both small and large families showing high levels of reading proficiency. In terms of academic performance, higher-income learners exhibited very satisfactory results, while male and female learners, as well as those with few or many siblings, showed satisfactory performance.

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