

Learners' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract:

Research on reading comprehension promises to provide valuable data that can drive improvements in teaching strategies, curriculum design, and policy-making, ultimately leading to enhanced academic success. In this premise, this study aimed to determine the reading comprehension levels of Grade 5 learners in a District under a medium-sized Division in Central Philippines during the Academic Year 2023-2024. Data needed for this descriptive study was taken from 236 respondents using a self-made instrument that has passed the stringent validity and reliability tests. Overall, the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners was moderate. The ensuing analysis likewise showed a moderate reading comprehension level when respondents were grouped by sex at birth, residence, parents' educational attainment, number of siblings, and combined family income. Subsequent analysis showed no significant difference in literal and inferential reading comprehension levels when Grade 5 learners were grouped according to sex at birth, residence, number of siblings, and combined family income, except when parents' educational backgrounds grouped respondents. Additionally, no significant difference was found in the evaluative level when respondents were grouped according to sex at birth and number of siblings. A significant difference was found when grouped according to residence, parents' educational attainment, and combined family income. The study result suggests the need for implementing targeted reading programs focused on learners' critical reading skills while utilizing formative assessment tools in reading and to help promote a culture of reading.

Keywords: Evaluative, inferential, learners' reading comprehension, literal

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

Significant challenges in reading comprehension have been identified in Filipino education, as evidenced by the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results. In the results, the Philippines recorded the lowest reading comprehension score among the participating countries, scoring 340 points, and faced similarly low rankings in science and mathematics. These results convey a clear message: Filipino students struggle with reading comprehension, adversely impacting their science and mathematics performance.

The Department of Education (DepEd) introduced the Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) under DO 14 s to address these concerns. 2018, aimed at enhancing reading and writing skills across grade levels. The Phil-IRI assessment tool evaluates students' abilities in oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension in both English and Filipino, providing crucial insights into students' reading proficiency and areas needing improvement. Prior to Phil-IRI, DepEd Order No. 45, s. 2002, the ECARP, a.k.a. Every Child a Reader Program, was also launched to ensure that every child becomes a good reader after the third grade.

Despite these interventions, however, recent studies suggest that reading comprehension challenges persist, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted traditional learning environments and may have further impeded reading development. Additionally, integrating new tools like the Reading Progress Tool in Microsoft Teams has aimed to support emerging readers and those with learning difficulties. Still, its effectiveness in the post-pandemic context needs to be explored.

The research locale represents a small-scale version of these broader challenges. Focusing on Grade 5 students, this study addressed a localized gap in understanding how recent educational disruptions and interventions impact reading comprehension. It aims to provide data-driven insights into the specific needs and effectiveness of current reading programs in this district, thus contributing valuable information that could inform localized strategies for improving reading comprehension and overall educational outcomes.

The preceding challenges motivated this researcher to evaluate and adapt the effectiveness of the prevailing reading programs in the research locale. Consequently, this study attempts to refine approaches to developing learners' reading skills essential for academic success across all subjects.

Current State of Knowledge

For Grade 5 students, reading comprehension encompasses their ability to understand, interpret, and engage with the texts they encounter. At this stage, learners are expected to transition from simply learning to read to using reading as a tool for learning. This means they should read fluently and understand the deeper meanings, themes, and concepts in various texts. Apolinar and Gago (2021) support this view, noting that Grade 5 students generally have a stronger grasp of literal comprehension than evaluative comprehension. Literal comprehension refers to understanding the explicit content of a text. McKeown, Crosson, and Beck (2019) argue that improving children's literal comprehension involves teaching specific reading strategies, expanding vocabulary, and building background knowledge. Their research shows that a solid understanding of word meanings and context can greatly enhance a child's ability to identify key details and main ideas in a text, laying the foundation for more complex comprehension.

Also, the book of Oakhill, Cain, and Elbro (2019) provides a comprehensive overview of literal comprehension and its role in the reading process. It emphasizes that teaching literal comprehension requires strategies like asking direct questions, identifying facts and details, and summarizing information. These skills are essential for younger readers to build a foundation for more advanced comprehension tasks. Inferential comprehension goes beyond the surface, requiring students to draw connections and make inferences based on implicit information in the text. Anderson (2018) emphasizes that fostering students' inferential comprehension skills involves encouraging critical thinking, explicitly teaching inference-making techniques, and facilitating discussions that challenge students to go beyond the text. These practices help students engage more deeply with the material.

Evaluative comprehension, on the other hand, involves analyzing, critiquing, and forming judgments about the content of a text. Baker and Turner (2020) emphasize the importance of teaching students to question the author's perspective, assess the accuracy of information, and develop evidence-based arguments. This level of comprehension fosters deeper, more critical engagement with texts. Meanwhile, Navarro and Marpa (2020) explore strategies for improving literal comprehension, particularly through interactive reading techniques and the use of local stories. They highlight the value of culturally relevant materials, which help students connect more meaningfully to the content, thereby enhancing their literal comprehension skills.

A study by Garcia and Mariano (2021) explores how text-based discussion strategies enhance inferential comprehension in Grade 7 students, emphasizing the use of local contexts and values to help students relate their experiences to the text. Antonio's (2019) research also highlights that collaborative strategic reading, through group discussions and peer learning, boosts inferential comprehension by promoting critical thinking and deeper connections with the text. Additionally, Reyes and Alonzo (2021) stress the importance of encouraging Filipino students to develop critical thinking skills when evaluating texts. Their research suggests that materials addressing sociocultural issues and teaching students to assess different viewpoints can strengthen their evaluative comprehension abilities.

Moreover, Cartwright et al. (2020), emphasize in their study that teaching methods that prioritize basic decoding skills, sentence-level comprehension, and vocabulary building can significantly solidify students' understanding at the literal level, serving as a foundation for more complex comprehension skills. They argue that direct and structured approaches to teaching reading help learners build confidence and fluency in reading. Moving beyond literal comprehension, inferential comprehension involves drawing conclusions and making predictions based on implicit information in the text. Smith and Jones's (2020) research indicates that students frequently need help with inferential comprehension, mainly when it involves synthesizing information that is not directly stated. This challenge is further emphasized by Lee and Kim (2022), who found that inferential comprehension relies heavily on a reader's ability to merge textual information with their background knowledge. Moreover, Cain and Oakhill (2018) stress the importance of targeted instruction to enhance students' inferential reasoning and cognitive flexibility, which is essential for grasping more complex texts.

Lastly, the research highlighted the need for targeted interventions and instructional strategies to improve comprehension skills among learners. The learners can read text on a literal level but need help understanding vocabulary in context and noting details. Understanding the context is severely impacted by poor reading comprehension—one of the most prevalent issues among teaching staff and pupils in elementary school. The basis for future learning and perception in reading was laid by comprehension of every subject. With this foundation, kids would be able to thrive in the classroom, especially in reading and writing (Requiso-Jimenez & Bascos-Ocampo, 2022).

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is grounded in Schema Theory, initially proposed by Bartlett in 1932 and further developed in the field of reading comprehension by Rumelhart (1980), Carrell (1981), and Hudson (1982). Schema Theory asserts that readers use their prior knowledge and experiences (schemata) to interpret and understand new information presented in texts (Rumelhart, 1980). Bartlett initially introduced the concept of "schema" as an active organization

of past experiences, emphasizing that understanding is not solely derived from the text but from the interaction between the text and the reader's prior knowledge (Bartlett, 1932).

It is particularly relevant to this study as it highlights the crucial role of pre-existing knowledge in reading comprehension. Anderson (1977) states that adequate comprehension involves integrating one's world knowledge with textual information. This interaction occurs through bottom-up processing, where specific textual details are interpreted using top-down processing that relies on general knowledge (Carrell & Eiserhold, 1983). Thus, understanding a text requires interpreting the explicit content (literal comprehension) and synthesizing it with prior knowledge to make inferences and evaluations (inferential and evaluative comprehension).

Additionally, this theory is crucial in examining the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners in the research locale because it underscores the necessity of aligning instructional strategies with students' existing knowledge structures. It suggests that comprehension can be enhanced by developing students' schemata, thus bridging the gap between new information and their prior experiences. Given the district's unique educational challenges, Schema Theory provides a framework for understanding how well students' prior knowledge integrates with current reading materials and how interventions can be tailored to support this process. By focusing on these dynamics, the study aims to improve instructional methods and comprehension outcomes for Grade 5 students in the district.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the reading comprehension level of Grade 5 learners in a District under a medium-sized Division in Central Philippines for School Year 2023-2024 as a basis for an intervention plan. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions: 1) the reading comprehension level of Grade 5 learners in the area of literal, inferential and evaluative; 2) the level of reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners when grouped by the abovementioned variables; and 3) the significant difference in the reading comprehension level of Grade 5 learners when grouped by the abovementioned areas.

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

This study used the descriptive research design to determine the level of reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners in a District under a medium-sized Division in Central Philippines for School Year 2023-2024 as a basis for an intervention plan. According to Siedlecki (2020), this design describes the characteristics of a population being studied by accurately depicting or describing situations, events, and people without manipulating the variables. Hasan (2022) likewise wrote that this design gives a thorough and accurate representation of the information gathered, which helps develop hypotheses, examine trends, and find patterns in the data. This method is appropriate for this study because it concerns the level of learners' reading comprehension viewed from their demographic profile.

Study Respondents

The study focused on 608 Grade 5 pupils distributed across ten schools. To achieve a representative sample, stratified sampling was utilized. This technique involved dividing the population into strata based on individual schools and then selecting a sample proportionate to the size of each stratum. As a result, 236 pupils were selected, with the number of respondents from each school being proportionate to the school's population within the overall sample. Stratified sampling ensured that each school was adequately represented in the sample according to its size, allowing for a comprehensive and balanced representation of the pupil population across the ten schools. This approach was used to enhance the accuracy and generalizability of the study's findings by maintaining the proportionality of respondents relative to the total population.

Instruments

A self-made questionnaire was used to achieve the research aim, which consisted of questions regarding the respondents' English reading selection. This questionnaire is composed of two (2) parts. Part I of the instrument includes the respondents' demographic profile regarding sex and age. Part II is about the extent of the respondents' reading comprehension level, namely literal, inferential, and critical. This was achieved through an English reading selection with ten questions on each reading comprehension level. The average rating of the three jurors was used as basis for the validity of the instrument. Validation average is 4.29, interpreted as "excellent". This showed that the research instrument was "Valid". And the reliability result was 0.713, interpreted as "acceptable".

Data Gathering Procedure

This section outlines the systematic approach to collecting and recording the data necessary for addressing the research objectives. The following steps were observed during the data-gathering procedures. At the onset, the researcher sent a letter to the Division Superintendent asking permission to conduct the reliability testing and the study. Another request letter was sent to the District Supervisor and School Heads of a District in Negros Oriental. The researcher also secured parental and respondents' consent before the data collection phase. After the approval, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the respondents, gave them clear instructions for filling out the questionnaire, and gave them ample time to complete the questionnaires. After that, the filled questionnaires were collected in preparation for the next step of the research work: Data analysis and interpretation.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No.1 used a descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the reading comprehension of the respondents based on literal, interpretive, critical, and creative levels.

Objective No.2 used a comparative analytical scheme and mean determined whether there was a significant difference in the reading comprehension levels of Grade 5 learners based on the abovementioned variables.

Objective No. 3 used a comparative analytical scheme and independent sample *t*-test to determine the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners according to literal, inferential, and evaluative levels when grouped according to the variables.

Ethical Consideration

This paper strived to minimize the risk of harm to its target respondents by assuring them of the confidentiality of their responses and ensuring their anonymity throughout the research process. At the outset, the researcher secured the parents' consent and the respondents' permission and assured the latter of their right to withdraw from their research participation if deemed necessary. No personal data compromising the respondents' identity were collected in adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012, specifically on accessing the data both by the researcher and the analyst. The respondents were assured that no information that discloses their identity was released or published without their consent, except when extremely necessary. All collected materials were appropriately disposed of by machine shredding or dissolved in water after the submission of the study. At the same time, soft copies of the data were deleted, leaving no chance of future retrieval. Confidentiality of the responses was assured, too. In other words, this research adhered to ethical guidelines to protect the rights and well-being of the participants.

Results and Discussion

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered to carry out the objectives of this study. All these were made possible by following certain appropriate procedures so as to give the exact data and solution to each specific problem.

Table 1
Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Learners

Areas	Mean	Interpretation
Literal	6.91	High Level
Inferential	5.71	Moderate Level
Evaluative	3.77	Low Level
Overall Mean Score	16.39	Moderate Level

Table 1 shows the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners according to literal, inferential, and evaluative levels. The table presented that the Grade 5 learners obtained an overall mean score of 16.39, interpreted to mean moderate level.

Expectedly, the highest mean goes to literal comprehension at 6.91 (high), followed by inferential comprehension at 5.71 (moderate) and evaluative comprehension at 3.77 (low). This result pattern is repeated in the succeeding tables.

Literal comprehension involves understanding explicitly stated information, while inferential comprehension requires deriving implicit messages. Studies show that literal comprehension is relatively more straightforward, but inferential

comprehension demands deeper analysis and interpretation. A study involved an analysis of reading comprehension in elementary students, identifying cognitive factors associated with factual, inferential, and evaluative comprehension. It was observed that approximately 30% of the students encountered reading difficulties. Apolinar and Gago (2021) supported this study's results in their report that the comprehension of the Grade 5 learners is more significant in a literal manner rather than evaluative.

Up next are Tables 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, providing condensed summaries of the analyses on the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners based on literal, inferential, and evaluative Levels when grouped by sex at birth, parents' highest educational attainment, number of siblings, combined family income, and place of residence.

Table 2

Level of Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Learners when grouped by Sex at Birth

Areas	Male		Female	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
Literal	6.94	High Level	6.92	High Level
Inferential	5.58	Moderate Level	5.83	Moderate Level
Evaluative	3.74	Low Level	3.81	Low Level
Overall Mean	16.26	Moderate Level	16.56	Moderate Level

Table 2 presents the mean score and verbal description of the reading comprehension level of male and female learners in the Grade 5 level according to sex at birth. The overall mean for literal, inferential, and evaluative reading comprehension levels is 16.26 for males and 16.56 for females. This shows a moderate level of reading comprehension based on sex groupings.

As shown in the table above, both male and female learners obtained a high level of literal comprehension at 6.94 and 6.92, respectively. In contrast, both groups got a moderate level of inferential comprehension at 5.58 and 5.83, respectively. In contrast, both groups got identical low evaluative comprehension at 3.74 and 3.81, respectively.

This result falls short of bolstering Penner's (2018) study, which reported that while girls generally outperformed boys in reading, the gender gap could be attributed more to external factors like peer influence and teaching methods than innate abilities. As presented in Table 4, the sex of the learners does not significantly influence their reading comprehension because both learners showed a high level of understanding based on the results collected from the study. In addition, the study's result corroborates Kollmayer et al.'s (2018) study, which highlighted that differences in reading development could be shaped by how boys and girls are raised. Parents tend to engage girls more in verbal communication, which helps develop early reading skills. However, the study also noted that such differences have been exaggerated, and when boys are given similar linguistic stimuli, they perform on par with girls. This means that regardless of the sex of the learners, they both can attain a high level of reading comprehension in specific texts given to them. These results show that students are given enough time and effort to be more proficient in reading and attain good reading comprehension.

Table 3

Level of Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Learners when grouped by Places of Residence

Areas	Urban		Rural	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
Literal	7.12	High Level	6.78	High Level
Inferential	5.90	Moderate Level	5.59	Moderate Level
Evaluative	4.13	Low Level	3.54	Low Level
Overall Mean	17.15	Moderate Level	15.91	Moderate Level

Table 3 reveals the result of the analysis of the reading comprehension level of Grade 5 learners in terms of literal, inferential, and evaluative levels based on their places of residence. Data shows that the overall mean for the respondents from the rural areas is 17.15, verbally interpreted as a moderate level. In contrast, respondents from the urban areas had an overall mean of 15.91, interpreted as a moderate level.

Specifically, the scores obtained by urban and rural groups were identical in their verbal interpretations. Learners from both urban and rural groups obtained scores interpreted as high in literal comprehension, moderate in inferential comprehension, and low in evaluative comprehension. A pattern seems evident as the scores go down measured from literal, inferential, and evaluative levels of comprehension.

This study's result implies that students from the urban areas performed slightly better than those in the rural areas in terms of reading comprehension. Though falling within the same verbal interpretation in all three levels, the result might highlight the importance of considering factors beyond geographic location, such as community support systems or cultural influences, in understanding student achievement.

This was supported by Smith and Johnson (2019), who conducted a comprehensive study examining reading performance among students from diverse geographic backgrounds. Their findings indicated that urban students outperformed their rural counterparts in reading proficiency. They attributed this gap to differences in access to educational resources, such as libraries and extracurricular programs, which are more prevalent in urban settings. Compared to urban settings, rural areas exhibited lower education levels, fewer employment opportunities, and jobs that typically paid less and were less likely to necessitate a university degree.

Table 4
Level of Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Learners when grouped by Parents' Highest Educational Attainment

Areas	Lower		Higher	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
Literal	6.21	Moderate Level	7.24	High Level
Inferential	4.99	Moderate Level	6.05	Moderate Level
Evaluative	3.13	Low Level	4.07	Low Level
Overall Mean	14.33	Moderate Level	17.36	Moderate Level

Table 4 summarizes the analysis of Grade 5 learners' reading comprehension levels based on their parents' highest educational attainment. The overall mean scores reflect identical moderate verbal interpretations for both lower and higher groups.

When scores were examined more thoroughly, the learners whose parents have lower educational attainment got 6.21, which was interpreted to mean a moderate level of literal comprehension. In contrast, learners whose parents have higher educational attainment obtained a mean of 7.24, interpreted as a high level of literal comprehension. Nonetheless, both groups got identical verbal interpretations and moderate inferential and low evaluative comprehension.

For their part, Adams and Brown (2019) discovered a significant positive correlation between parental involvement in literacy activities and children's reading comprehension skills, indicating that parental engagement may contribute to the strong literal and inferential comprehension demonstrated by both groups of learners. Additionally, Smith and Jones (2020) highlighted the impact of socio-economic factors on reading comprehension, aligning with our study's observation of a moderate level of evaluative comprehension across both groups, suggesting potential socio-economic influences.

However, these findings suggest that parents' highest educational attainment may significantly influence grade 5 learners' reading comprehension levels. While there are slight variations in specific areas of comprehension, such as inferential comprehension, where students with parents of higher educational attainment demonstrate slightly lower proficiency, overall reading comprehension remains relatively consistent across both groups.

Table 5
Level of Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Learners when grouped by the Number of Siblings

Areas	Few		Many	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
Literal	6.94	High Level	6.81	High Level
Inferential	5.81	Moderate Level	5.41	Moderate Level
Evaluative	3.81	Low Level	3.63	Low Level
Overall Mean	16.56	Moderate Level	15.85	Moderate Level

Table 5 examines the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners based on their number of siblings, obtaining overall mean scores of 16.56 for those with few siblings and 15.85 for those with many siblings. Overall, these two groups received an identical, moderate reading comprehension level.

When analyzed more carefully, both groups got a high level of literal comprehension, with 6.94 for those with few siblings and 6.81 for those with many siblings. In addition, both groups got moderate inferential comprehension, with 5.81 for those with few siblings and 5.41 for those with many. Finally, both groups got moderate reading comprehension levels, with the group with few siblings getting a mean of 3.81 and the group with many siblings getting a mean of 3.63.

Martinez and Garcia (2023) revealed a positive correlation between family size and children's cognitive development, particularly in language skills. Their study suggests increased interactions within larger families may enhance children's reading comprehension abilities. This study has failed to support Martinez and Garcia's (2023) research findings.

Meanwhile, Lee and Kim (2022) found no significant difference in reading comprehension levels between students with few and many siblings. Their research in a similar educational context suggests that the number of siblings may not directly influence reading comprehension outcomes.

Table 6

Level of Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Learners when grouped by Combined Family Income

Areas	Lower		Higher	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
Literal	6.87	High Level	7.05	High Level
Inferential	5.60	Moderate Level	6.05	Moderate Level
Evaluative	3.59	Low Level	4.34	Low Level
Overall Mean	16.06	Moderate Level	17.44	Moderate Level

Table 6 examines the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners based on combined family income, obtaining an overall mean score of 16.06 for the lower income and 17.44 for the higher income. Overall, these two groups received an identical, moderate reading comprehension level.

When further examined more thoroughly, all literal, inferential, and evaluative reading comprehension areas obtained identical verbal interpretations of high, moderate, and low levels for both lower and higher family income.

This result must be included in the knowledge supporting Rodriguez and Gomez (2023). These two researchers found that students from lower-income families often develop strong critical thinking skills because they face socio-economic challenges. Their research suggests that these experiences may contribute to the higher evaluative comprehension levels observed among grade 5 learners from families with lower incomes. This underscores the importance of recognizing and valuing the diverse experiences and strengths of students from different socio-economic backgrounds in educational settings.

Table 7

Difference in the Level of Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Learners in the Literal Domain by the Abovementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean	F	t-test	P-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex at Birth	Male	99	6.94	1.964	0.093	0.926		Not Significant
	Female	134	6.92					
Place of Residence	Urban	91	7.12	0.152	1.478	0.141		Not Significant
	Rural	145	6.78					
Parents' Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	76	6.21	0.002	-4.450	0.001	0.05	Significant
	Higher	160	7.24					
Number of Siblings	Few	177	6.94	1.075	0.498	0.619		Not Significant
	Many	59	6.81					
	Lower	180	6.87	0.071	-0.704	0.482		Not Significant

Combined Income	Family	Higher	56	7.05
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Table 7 summarizes the comparative analysis of the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners based on the literal level based on five demographic variables. The p -values of 0.926 for sex at birth, 0.141 for place of residence, 0.619 for number of siblings, and 0.482 for combined family income were all found to be greater than the significance level of 0.05 and are subsequently interpreted as insignificant. Thus, the hypothesis states that there is no considerable difference in the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners according to literal levels and that based on the respondents' sex at birth, parents' highest educational attainment, number of siblings, and combined family income are accepted. On the contrary, the p -value of 0.001 for the respondents' residence was lower than 0.05 and is subsequently interpreted as significant. The null hypothesis was subsequently rejected.

Lazarus (2020) contradicts the findings of this study because he claims that demographic and profile variables have little influence on individuals' reading comprehension abilities. Yet, the study underscores educators' need to adopt a more refined approach to understanding reading comprehension. This apparent contradiction is resolved by highlighting the significance of personalized instructional strategies tailored to the unique needs of learners. Only one in five demographic variables produced a significant result in this study. An important difference exists in the variable parents' highest educational attainments, with the higher educational attainment group having a higher reading comprehension level at the Literal level.

Table 8

Difference in the Level of Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Learners in the Inferential Domain by the Abovementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean	F	t-test	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex at Birth	Male	99	5.58	2.619	-1.040	0.299		Not Significant
	Female	134	5.83					
Place of Residence	Urban	91	5.90	1.063	1.289	0.199		Not Significant
	Rural	145	5.59					
Parents' Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	76	4.99	0.339	-4.325	0.001	0.05	Significant
	Higher	160	6.05					
Number of Siblings	Few	177	5.81	0.013	1.462	0.145		Not Significant
	Many	59	5.41					
Combined Family Income	Lower	180	5.60	0.004	-1.626	0.105		Not Significant
	Higher	56	6.05					

Table 8 illustrates the comparative analysis of the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners based on the inferential level of the same five demographic variables repeatedly mentioned in this chapter. The p -values of 0.299 for sex at birth, 0.199 for place of residence, 0.145 for number of siblings, and 0.105 for combined family income were all found more significant than the significance level of 0.05 and, similar to the findings in Table 10, are subsequently interpreted not significant. Thus, the hypothesis stating no considerable difference in the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners according to inferential levels and based on the respondents' sex at birth, number of siblings, combined family income, and place of residence is accepted. On the contrary, the p -value of 0.001 for the respondents' residence was lower than 0.05 and is subsequently interpreted as significant. The null hypothesis was subsequently rejected.

According to the study by Lazarus (2020), wherein he contradicts the result of the study, various demographic and profile variables have minimal impact on individuals' reading comprehension abilities, leading to the contradiction of the result of this study. Additionally, the profile variables brought into focus did not significantly influence or predict an individual's reading comprehension skills. Only one in five demographic variables produced a significant result in this study.

Table 9

Difference in the Level of Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Learners in the Evaluative Domain by the Abovementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean	F	t-test	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex at Birth	Male	99	3.74	1.040	-0.305	0.761	0.05	Not Significant

	Female	134	3.81				
Place of Residence	Urban	91	4.13	2.246	2.664	0.008	Significant
	Rural	145	3.54				
Parents' Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	76	3.13	0.233	-4.116	0.001	Significant
	Higher	160	4.07				
Number of Siblings	Few	177	3.81	0.119	0.734	0.464	Not Significant
	Many	59	3.63				
Combined Family Income	Lower	180	3.59	2.016	-2.951	0.003	Significant
	Higher	56	4.34				

Table 9 offers an insight into the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners based on the evaluative level and further based on five demographic variables. The p -values of 0.761 for sex at birth and 0.462 for the number of siblings were higher than the significance level of 0.05 and subsequently interpreted as insignificant. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no considerable difference in the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners according to evaluative levels and based on the respondents' sex at birth and number of siblings is subsequently accepted. On the contrary, the p -value of 0.023 for the respondents' residence, 0.001 for parents' highest educational attainment, and 0.003 for Combined Family Income were lower than 0.05 and subsequently interpreted as significant. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The significant difference in reading comprehension between learners in urban and rural areas is supported by the study of Egberongbe et al. (2017), which identifies several influencing factors. These include students' motivation, interest, teaching methodology, availability of reading materials, and vocabulary attainment. The study highlights that learners in urban areas generally have better access to resources and more exposure to diverse reading materials, contributing to improved reading comprehension compared to their rural counterparts. Moreover, Cekiso et al. (2022) affirmed this result that the reading performance of learners is affected by their Place of Residence such that the reading performance of those living in rural areas is affected by several factors like the low level of education of their parents, a home environment that is not conducive for after-school reading, the parents' socio-economic status, and non-availability of reading material at school and home.

Conclusions

In conclusions, the findings of this study reveal that Grade 5 learners generally demonstrate moderate reading comprehension skills, performing well across genders at basic to intermediate levels. Parental educational background consistently influences comprehension abilities, highlighting the need for continued support to ensure equal opportunities. Sibling interaction appears to positively impact reading skills, regardless of family size. Similar comprehension levels across income groups underscore the role of socio-economic factors, with equitable development being essential. While literal and inferential comprehension levels show no significant differences based on gender, residence, family size, or income, evaluative comprehension is notably influenced by residence, parental education, and family income, emphasizing the importance of socio-economic and environmental factors in shaping students' abilities. Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed: develop professional development programs for teachers, including workshops on critical reading and support for integrating these strategies into lessons; implement targeted reading programs to enhance learners' critical reading skills; use formative assessments and promote a culture of reading; collaborate with parents and community partners to support children's reading development; and encourage Grade 5 learners to set reading goals, practice active and reflective reading strategies, engage with diverse texts, and seek feedback and support from teachers, peers, and family members to overcome challenges and enhance their reading comprehension skills.

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