

Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes

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Abstract:

This study aimed to determine the level of difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes. Data for this descriptive study was collected from one hundred thirteen intermediate learners using a researcher-made instrument that has gone through rigorous tests of validity and reliability. The ensuing analysis showed a moderate level of difficulties of intermediate learners in the area of basic literacy, availability of learning resources while parental involvement was high. Additionally, no significant difference was found in the difficulties of intermediate learners in the area of number of siblings and parent's highest educational attainment. In contrast, a significant difference was found in the area of basic literacy based on grade level. Meanwhile, no significant difference was found when the same data was analyzed based on the parental involvement based on sex, grade level, number of siblings and parent's highest educational attainment. The findings of this paper call for a craft of training for upskilling teachers about parental involvement, strategies improving literacy activities, additional tools, methods and strategies that enables both sex to participate and do well in class.

Keywords: Difficulties in face-to-face classes, intermediate learners, Negros Oriental, Philippines

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

The country is observed to have been disturbed by a pandemic that has outbalanced its sphere a lot. Of its social services, the education sector is hit the hardest. Classes continued with a system that allowed parents to go to school and get modules for the children. Regardless of the outcome, the school and the parents tried their best to get the learners to move on. While this modular distance learning was an issue brought about by the pandemic, this researcher is more concerned by the recent Department Order for all learners to return to the classroom. Before the pandemic shot down face-to-face contact in school, there seemed to be an issue with the performance of learners. It is this concern that motivated this researcher to look into the difficulties of learners in face-to-face classes. The concepts that motivated the researcher to investigate are basic literacy, availability of learning resources, and parental involvement. There are learners observed to jump into class without having undergone the primary read, write, and count. In a foreign context, basic literacy is also known as FLN or Foundational Literacy and Numeracy. It is also noted that some schools don't even have books for reading. However, it is observed that there are schools that have to put up walls or gates because of parents, especially mothers, hovering around the schools. These observations influenced the outcome of the learning process, which moved the researcher to look into this phenomenon.

To ascertain difficulties in learning, the researcher is propelled to conduct this study mainly to evaluate and formulate better learning interventions to improve learners' performance in school.

Current State of Knowledge

A report entitled "Should Governments and Donors Prioritize Investments in Foundational Literacy and Numeracy?" was posted by David K. Evans and Susannah Hares in the Center for Global Development. Evans et al. (2021) observed that children and youth in many countries do not master basic literacy and numeracy skills, despite years of education. If children do not master foundational skills like literacy and numeracy early on, but the curriculum continues progressing, then they will not be able to engage in more advanced topics in later grades (Belafi et al., 2020; Gordon et al., 2019), and they will stop learning or drop out.

Moreover, Tagare (2023) saw seven important themes in teachers' concerns for the mandated return to face-to-face class: a) Students are demotivated to go to face-to-face classes, b) students are misbehaving and doing inappropriate learning actions, c) classroom settings need to be modified to follow standard health protocols, d) teaching strategies and learning activities need to be retrofitted, e) teachers' and students' performances are affected by the protective gear they have to wear all the time, and, f) there is a worry that COVID may surge again. Bottiani, J. (2019) states that even for highly skilled teachers with a myriad of personal resources, decision-making, and teaching practices may be hindered by stress and burnout arising from high demand and low organizational resources. The job can already take a toll on them, but if you add the stress of teaching in a classroom with insufficient resources, it can lead the teachers to lose their passion.

As the results of the study by Spencer & Temple (2021) proved that students performed better in and had higher levels of preference toward traditional face-to-face formats. Same with the results in the study of Ortiz, et.al. (2024) that participants have positive experiences which are categorized into innovation, creativity and adaptability during the implementation of blended learning modality. However, overall perceptions of online courses were positive, with students viewing instructional technologies as reliable and easy to use and reporting that online technologies facilitated prompt feedback, enhanced their problem-solving skills, and met their learning needs. Alongside this, students exhibited positive views towards their instructors' skill level and use of technology to support academic success. Logistic regression analyses of differences in student success across instructional formats revealed interaction effects with variables of age (nontraditional/traditional), aid status, and whether or not courses were taken to fulfill general education or major requirements, suggesting a more complex effect of instructional format across student subpopulations. The variability in the results observed in the current study warrants further exploration before definitive conclusions on the impact of instructional format on student outcomes and perceptions can be made.

Further, Caridade Sonia et al. (2021) recommend an investigation into parental involvement, suggesting that additional research into the implications of parental involvement in school activities and school students' behavior problems is necessary, aiming for assessment, prevention, and intervention strategies in this area. Researchers also found that children are motivated when their families or parents are interested in their school work and are consequently spurred to higher Achievement (Ramirez et al., 2020). Research began to focus on how parents were involved in school events or classroom activities (Reinke et al., 2019; Smith & Sheridan, 2019) and suggested that it is necessary to find strategies to support parental involvement because it influences the child's achievement and performance (Grace & Gerdes, 2019; Tan et al., 2019). Studies show differences in children's academic achievement between the parental involvement profiles, indicating children whose parents have a low involvement have lower academic achievement (Lara et al., 2019).

Also, Trinh, N. B., & Pham, D. T. T. (2021) investigated some difficulties that students faced in speaking classrooms, which led to an observation that revealed that non-English majors encountered more linguistic difficulties than psychological ones. Also, students' psychological problems identified include pressure to perform well, being overpowered by more competent students, fear of making mistakes in front of the class, and fear of criticism or losing face. Ramos (2022) added that difficulties in the learning process are particularly difficult to detect and respond to in educational environments with growing class sizes and that teachers cannot provide personalized feedback and support to help students overcome their difficulties.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is anchored on Perkins' (2007) theory of Conceptual Difficulty. This theory of difficulty stipulates learners' characteristic trouble spots for a particular area of instruction and includes some causal analysis of why they occur toward improved teaching and learning. In this study, these refer to the difficulties encountered by learners in terms of basic literacy, availability of learning resources, and parental involvement.

This theory is relevant for this study since it emphasizes the significance of difficulties to learners. This theory justifies between a theory of difficulty, which 'defines the design challenge' and a complete theory of pedagogy, which then tackles the challenge through the teaching-learning process as well as points out that the two are linked in the sense that it may be hard to identify whether the difficulties students are facing are as a result of 'the knottiness of the content' or 'the naughtiness of slack instruction.' Relating the theory as an anchor of this research since Perkins raises several important points for my research. Firstly, he suggests that several theories of difficulty may apply concurrently and urges teachers to focus on problems relating to content (which we might influence) rather than 'projecting the difficulty on the students or the conditions' (which may be outside our control). It is important to focus on conceptual difficulties relating to content and to identify the causes. One way to do this would be to separate these issues from those of student backgrounds or available resources. However, it is in the spaces where these factors interact that it becomes possible to understand the difficulties encountered, and this is where I want to locate my research.

Objectives

The study aimed to determine the difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes in one of the schools in a District in a large-sized school division for the school year 2022-2023 as the basis for an intervention plan. Specifically, it seeks answers to the following questions: 1) What are intermediate learners' difficulties in face-to-face classes according to basic literacy, availability of learning resources, and parental involvement; 2) what is the level of difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes when grouped according to the aforementioned variables; 3) the significant difference on the level of difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

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 utilized the descriptive research design to determine the difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes in one of the schools in a District in a large-sized school division for the school year 2022-2023 as the basis for an intervention plan. Descriptive design is used to describe the characteristics of the population or phenomenon being studied. It answers questions about how, when, and why the characteristics occurred. It is a study that depicts the participants accurately. More simply, descriptive research is all about describing people who participate in the study and can be done using observation, case study, or survey (Kowalczyk, 2016). A descriptive research design is appropriate for this study because it provides important information about the present status of the study. This method will apply to this study because of the present condition of learners having adjustments, especially the new normal.

Study Respondents

The respondents of this study were the 113 intermediate learners in one of the schools in a district in a large size division during the school year 2022-2023. Purposive sampling will be used to select respondents. According to Arikunto (2010: 183), purposive sampling is the process of selecting a sample by taking a subject that is not based on the level or area but is taken based on the specific purpose.

Instruments

The study used a self-made instrument to gather baseline-data. The research instrument was subjected to validity (4.56-excellent) and reliability (0.797-acceptable). All of them were interpreted as worthy and good; respectively. It is composed of two (2) parts. Part I is the respondents' demographic profile, including sex, grade level, number of siblings and parental highest educational attainment. Part II of the questionnaire is the level of challenges that intermediate learners encounter in face-to-face instruction in the following areas: basic literacy, availability of learning resources, and parental involvement. Each area is composed of ten (10) items, with a total of 30 items, which the respondents will rate as 5 – Always, 4 – Often, 3 – Sometimes, 2 – Rarely, and 1 – Almost Never.

Data Gathering Procedure

Upon approval of the panel members on the final copy of the survey questionnaire, the researcher submits it for validation by members of the jury experts. This will also be tested for reliability. The researcher asked permission from the Public Schools District Supervisor of the District III. Another letter of permission is prepared for the School Principal of the School where the study is conducted. Since the study involved underage learners, parental consent will also be secured. The researcher conducted the survey personally and gave the survey questionnaire to the respondents. Data analysis utilized in the study is the licensed Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Statistical tables were constructed to present the results and summary of the study.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No.1 used a descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the difficulties intermediate learners encounter in face-to-face classes regarding basic literacy, availability of learning resources, and parental involvement.

Objective No.2 used a descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine difficulties encountered by intermediate learners in face-to-face classes when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Objective No. 3 used a comparative analytical scheme and Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H Test to determine the significant difference in the difficulties encountered by the intermediate learners in face-to-face classes when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

Ethical Consideration

Issues considered in establishing the validity and reliability of the data, analysis, and findings. Ethical considerations were applied during the study. The name of the school and the respondents revealed in this study, as well as the purpose of this study, are clearly and completely discussed to them as the obligation of the researcher. The data gathered from the survey, whether written as they answered the questionnaire or through the secondary data

gathered, was used only for the study. Consequently, the researcher was not able to inject personal opinions and judgment regarding the result of the study, and all the data and information gathered will be kept confidential.

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

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in Basic Literacy

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I am having difficulties in....</i>		
1. Reading basic words correctly.	2.58	Moderate Level
2. Constructing my sentence.	2.83	Moderate Level
3. Understanding basic questions.	2.69	Moderate Level
4. Solving basic problems.	2.88	Moderate Level
5. Counting numbers aloud.	2.37	Low Level
6. Identifying numbers and words.	2.54	Moderate Level
7. Comprehending what I read or watch.	2.82	Moderate Level
8. Summarizing the main ideas of the text.	2.87	Moderate Level
9. In comprehending the text that I have read.	2.96	Moderate Level
10. Solving numbers using the four basic operations.	3.11	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.76	Moderate Level

The overall mean score of the difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face basic literacy classes is 2.76, interpreted as moderate. Item no. 5, on "Counting numbers aloud," obtained the lowest mean score of 2.37, interpreted as a low level. Item no. 10, which is on "solving numbers using the four basic operations," obtained the highest mean score of 3.11, also interpreted as moderate.

The respondents in this study experience difficulty in their basic literacy. It implies that the learners do not have basic literacy skills. Hence, they claim moderate difficulty in solving numbers using the four basic operations while obtaining the lowest mean score in counting aloud. The first reason may be because of the disruption of school because of COVID-19 and modular learning that intermediate learners don't have the time to practice and master the fundamental skills of literacy and numeracy, and they may encounter difficulties in more advanced topics later on. The majority of the respondents' parents are just elementary-level parents who may have forgotten or not have enough time to teach their children since they are often preoccupied with the disruptions and demands in life, such as being burdened by low income, inflexible work hours and having no proper or permanent jobs to cater their family needs. This agrees with Evans et al.'s study. (2021) observed that children and youth in many countries do not master basic literacy and numeracy skills, despite years of education. It further implies that the learners in this study haven't mastered basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Table 2

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in the Availability of Learning Resources

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I have difficulties with the following:</i>		
1. I have enough books to supplement my lessons at home.	3.28	Moderate Level
2. We have a library to give us additional information about the subjects taught at school.	3.35	Moderate Level
3. I have an encyclopedia at home to enrich and help me understand more about the discussed topic.	2.76	Moderate Level
4. We have charts, flashcards, and diagrams as guides to further understand the lesson at school.	2.83	Moderate Level
5. I have television to expose me to new languages I want to learn at home.	3.08	Moderate Level
6. We have a computer lab at school that helps and gives us additional information about our lessons.	2.93	Moderate Level
7. I have enough school supplies for activities at school and assignments at home.	3.50	High Level
8. I have dictionaries to help me better understand our subject, improve my communication, and use words correctly.	3.29	Moderate Level
9. I have a smartphone that helps me to access, find, and share new information and discoveries quickly and easily.	3.35	Moderate Level
10. I have a computer to help me with my projects and assignments at home.	3.38	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.18	Moderate Level

The difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes in the area of the availability of learning resources resulted in an overall mean score of 3.18, which is interpreted as a moderate level. The item with the lowest mean score in the difficulty level is item no. Three, which is "I have an encyclopedia at home to enrich and help me to understand more about the topic being discussed," garnered a mean score of 2.76, interpreted as a moderate level. The item that scored highest is "I have enough school supplies for activities at school and assignments at home," with a mean score of 3.50, interpreted as high level.

These findings indicate a moderate difficulty for intermediate learners in face-to-face classes in the area of availability of learning resources, implying that the learners have access to an encyclopedia as a learning resource. Still, they need more school supplies for activities at school and assignments at home. One reason why they need more supplies is the need for more money. With sufficient funds, it would be easier for the parents to provide enough school supplies since they must also fulfill their basic family needs. A child with adequate supplies and tools may avoid difficulties in learning and lose the motivation to learn things, which leads to low academic achievement or failure in school. This agrees with the study of Matimbe (2014), stating that lack of instructional materials to use during the teaching and learning process negatively affects effective teaching.

Table 3

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in Parental Involvement

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I have difficulties with the following:</i>		
1. My parents follow up my lessons at home.	3.50	High Level
2. My parents monitor my school performance.	3.24	Moderate Level
3. My parents encourage me to take my studies seriously.	3.78	High Level
4. My parents always provide me with emotional support.	3.69	High Level
5. My parents equip me with proper school supplies.	3.64	High Level
6. My parents make sure that all of my homework is completed.	3.62	High Level
7. My parents communicate with the teacher.	3.27	Moderate Level
8. My parents make sure I attend classes every day	3.96	High Level
9. My parents attend PTA meetings.	4.00	High Level
10. My parents support the school in developing self-discipline for my benefit.	4.09	High Level
Overall Mean	3.68	High Level

The difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes in parental involvement obtained an overall mean score of 3.68, interpreted as a high level. My parents monitor my school performance," getting the lowest mean score of 3.24, interpreted as a moderate level. The highest mean score was obtained by the item "10. My parents support the school in developing self-discipline for my benefit," which got a mean score of 4.09, interpreted as high level, with item "2.

These findings indicate a moderate to high level of difficulty in parental involvement, which implies that the learners lack discipline from their parents. One reason is that parents may be reluctant to discipline their children to avoid conflict or don't want them to be angry at them. Others may be unable or unwilling to devote their time and energy to disciplining their child because they don't know how to. Since most parent respondents are just at the elementary level, they might face difficulty disciplining their child, which is their biggest challenge. Parents may face many parenting challenges, such as aggression, tantrums, throwing, back talk, etc. Parents with low or no education may struggle to handle such pressure. Without knowledge and awareness of discipline, parents tend to use punishment to hold their children, and this causes suffering, leading to weaker emotional regulation and more impulsive behavior in the children. This is why parental involvement is very important, and without it may lead to loss, health and relationship problems, troubles, and failure in life. A relevant study was conducted by Baek (2010), which revealed that barriers to parental involvement in school are insufficient financial resources and lack of educational attainment.

Table 4

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in Basic Literacy When Grouped According to Sex

Items	Male		Female	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I am having difficulties in....</i>				
1. Reading basic words correctly.	2.90	Moderate Level	2.19	Low Level
2. Constructing my sentence.	3.03	Moderate Level	2.60	Moderate Level
3. Understanding basic questions.	3.07	Moderate Level	2.25	Low Level
4. Solving basic problems.	3.39	Moderate Level	2.27	Low Level
5. Counting numbers aloud.	2.59	Moderate Level	2.12	Low Level
6. Identifying numbers and words.	2.74	Moderate Level	2.31	Low Level
7. Comprehending what I read or watch.	3.23	Moderate Level	2.35	Low Level

8. Summarizing the main ideas of the text.	3.26	Moderate Level	2.40	Low Level
9. In comprehending the text that I have read.	3.46	Moderate Level	2.38	Low Level
10. Solving numbers using the four basic operations.	3.41	Moderate Level	2.75	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.11	Moderate Level	2.36	Low Level

Table 6 reveals the level of intermediate learners in basic literacy classes in face-to-face classes when grouped according to sex. The male respondents obtained an overall mean score of 3.11, which was interpreted as a moderate level, while the female respondents got an overall mean score of 2.36, which was interpreted as a low level.

Observing the numerical values of these mean scores, the lowest mean score was garnered by the female respondents, and the male respondents obtained the highest mean score among respondents. Female respondents may have felt their parents' involvement in school, such that they felt less difficulty than male respondents regarding the numerical values. Male learners may encounter these difficulties because of crises or a lack of financial support during pandemic times, and they tend to perform labor work to assist their parents in fulfilling the needs of their families. Lack of time, exposure to literacy strategies, and lack of adequate and proper resources may also be why they may encounter difficulties in practicing and developing their basic literacy skills, thus confusion that leads to low academic achievement in school. Additionally, these marked differences could also be influenced by parental involvement. This agrees with Reimer (2012), who states that poverty is one of the main factors in the way of boys' underperformance in education; thus, male learners engage in various labor forces, which badly affect their educational achievement. They are helping the family economy at a very early age.

Table 5

Level of Difficulties Encountered by Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in the Availability of Learning Resources When Grouped According to Sex

Items	Male Mean	Interpretation	Female Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I have difficulties in the following:</i>				
1. I have enough books to supplement my lessons at home.	3.20	Moderate Level	3.38	Moderate Level
2. We have a library to give us additional information about the subjects taught at school.	3.38	Moderate Level	3.33	Moderate Level
3. I have an encyclopedia at home to enrich and help me understand more about the discussed topic.	3.10	Moderate Level	2.37	Low Level
4. We have charts, flashcards, and diagrams as guides to further understand the lesson at school.	3.00	Moderate Level	2.63	Moderate Level
5. I have television to expose me to new languages I want to learn at home.	3.03	Moderate Level	3.13	Moderate Level
6. We have a computer lab at school that helps and gives us additional information about our lessons.	3.03	Moderate Level	2.81	Moderate Level
7. I have enough school supplies for activities at school and assignments at home.	3.41	Moderate Level	3.62	High Level
8. I have dictionaries to help me better understand our subject, improve my communication, and use words correctly.	3.62	High Level	2.90	Moderate Level
9. I have a smartphone that helps me to access, find, and share new information and discoveries quickly and easily.	3.75	High Level	2.87	Moderate Level
10. I have a computer to help me with my projects and assignments at home.	3.75	High Level	2.94	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.33	Moderate Level	3.00	Moderate Level

The level of difficulties intermediate learners encounter in face-to-face classes is the availability of learning resources when grouped according to sex. The overall means obtained by males is 3.33 and 3.00 for females, both interpreted as moderate, regardless of sex.

Though all items were of different levels, there is an excellent variation in mean scores in item no.9, where males got 3.75 or moderate and females with a mean of 2.87 or moderate level, which is on "I have a smartphone that helps me to access, find and share information and discoveries quickly and easily." Female respondents garnered the lowest mean score, and the male respondents obtained the highest mean score among respondents. This implies that male learners don't need a phone that helps them to share new information and discoveries than female learners do. The first reason is that males tend to rely on something other than phones to get information since we have books and other printed materials we could use to gain information. Secondly, phones are expensive, and it is not

easy to work and earn money to buy one. Mobile telephones may provide educational content but also have disadvantages such as addiction. Instead, it is safer and better to use books than phones.

This does not agree with what Catherine Cheney, a senior reporter of Devex, said in her report last March 8, 2022, that Across LMICs, women are 7% less likely than men to own a mobile phone and 18% less likely than men to own a smartphone, according to the data, which was released on International Women's Day as a preview to the Mobile Gender Gap Report 2022 coming in June.

Table 6

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in Parental Involvement When Grouped According to Sex

Items	Male		Female	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I have difficulties with the following:</i>				
1. My parents follow up my lessons at home.	3.61	High Level	3.38	Moderate Level
2. My parents monitor my school performance.	3.33	Moderate Level	3.13	Moderate Level
3. My parents encourage me to take my studies seriously.	3.70	High Level	3.87	High Level
4. My parents always provide me with emotional support.	3.67	High Level	3.71	High Level
5. My parents equip me with proper school supplies.	3.61	High Level	3.67	High Level
6. My parents make sure that all of my homework is completed.	3.51	High Level	3.75	High Level
7. My parents communicate with the teacher.	3.38	Moderate Level	3.13	Moderate Level
8. My parents make sure I attend classes every day	3.85	High Level	4.08	High Level
9. My parents attend PTA meetings.	3.95	High Level	4.06	High Level
10. My parents support the school in developing self-discipline for my benefit.	4.00	High Level	4.19	High Level
Overall Mean	3.66	High Level	3.70	High Level

The level of difficulties of male respondents in face-to-face classes in parental involvement is 3.66, while that of females is 3.70. These mean scores were both interpreted as high levels. A slight variance exists in the numerical values, but such mean scores indicate that the female respondents experience a slightly higher difficulty level than the male respondents.

Though all items were of different levels, there is an excellent variation in mean scores in item 7, where males got 3.38 or moderate and females with a mean of 3.13 or moderate level, which is on "My parents communicate with the teacher." Female respondents garnered the lowest mean score, and the male respondents obtained the highest mean score among respondents. The male respondents had a higher difficulty level than the female methods. As parents, we should be aware of our responsibilities to our children, especially in their education. They should be mindful of how their child is progressing in school. Neglecting such an important role may be because of the demands in life, such as lack of awareness, lack of time, and lack of financial asp. Parents with low educational backgrounds now focus on their children's daily needs and their families. Thus, they need more time to communicate and be involved in school, resulting in less participation and low academic performance. This agrees with Chingos & West's (2010) study, which states that pupils from lowly educated parents do not perform well at school because they need more motivation and parental support.

Table 7

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in Basic Literacy When Grouped According to Grade Level

Items	Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I am having difficulties in...</i>						
1. Reading basic words correctly.	2.33	Low Level	2.83	Moderate Level	2.56	Moderate Level
2. Constructing my sentence.	2.33	Low Level	3.55	High Level	2.56	Moderate Level
3. Understanding basic questions.	2.49	Low Level	2.88	Moderate Level	2.71	Moderate Level
4. Solving basic problems.	2.54	Moderate Level	3.20	Moderate Level	2.88	Moderate Level
5. Counting numbers aloud.	1.87	Low Level	3.00	Moderate Level	2.21	Low Level
6. Identifying numbers and words.	2.03	Low Level	2.95	Moderate Level	2.65	Moderate Level
7. Comprehending what I read or watch.	2.33	Low Level	3.25	Moderate Level	2.88	Moderate Level
8. Summarizing the main ideas of the text.	2.46	Low Level	3.20	Moderate Level	2.94	Moderate Level

9. In comprehending the text that I have read.	2.23	Low Level	3.43	Moderate Level	3.26	Moderate Level
10. Solving numbers using the four basic operations.	2.69	Moderate Level	3.50	High Level	3.12	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.33	Low Level	3.18	Moderate Level	2.78	Moderate Level

The difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face basic literacy classes, when grouped according to grade level, showed different values. The grade 4 respondents obtained a mean score of 2.33, which was interpreted as low level; the grade 5 respondents got a mean score of 3.18, interpreted as moderate level; and grade 6 respondents scored 2.78, interpreted as moderate level. Grade 4 respondents garnered the lowest mean score, and the grade 5 respondents obtained the highest mean score among respondents. This means that grade 5 learners have higher difficulties in basic literacy than in the other grades.

This may be because of the learner's lack of knowledge and techniques in basic literacy in early grades, especially during the pandemic and the implementation of modular distance learning. This may lead to confusion and difficulties in improving and developing their literacy skills, thus resulting in no practice at all. This agrees with Belafi et al. (2020) & Gordon et al. (2019), who state that if children do not master fundamental skills like literacy and numeracy early on, they will face difficulties in engaging in more advanced topics.

Table 8

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in the Availability of Learning Resources When Grouped According to Grade Level

Items	Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6	
	Mea n	Interpretati on	Mea n	Interpretati on	Mea n	Interpretati on
<i>As a learner, I have difficulties with the following:</i>						
1. I have enough books to supplement my lessons at home.	3.28	Moderate Level	3.73	High Level	2.76	Moderate Level
2. We have a library to give us additional information about the subjects taught at school.	2.54	Moderate Level	3.98	High Level	3.56	High Level
3. I have an encyclopedia at home to enrich and help me to understand more about the topic being discussed.	2.62	Moderate Level	2.84	Moderate Level	2.88	Moderate Level
4. We have charts, flashcards, and diagrams as guides to further understand the lesson at school.	2.77	Moderate Level	2.83	Moderate Level	2.91	Moderate Level
5. I have television to expose me to new languages I want to learn at home.	2.77	Moderate Level	3.43	Moderate Level	3.03	Moderate Level
6. We have a computer lab at school that helps and gives us additional information about our lessons.	2.67	Moderate Level	2.98	Moderate Level	3.18	Moderate Level
7. I have enough school supplies for activities at school and assignments at home.	3.59	High Level	3.48	Moderate Level	3.44	Moderate Level
8. I have dictionaries to help me better understand our subject, improve my communication, and ensure I use words correctly.	3.05	Moderate Level	3.18	Moderate Level	3.71	High Level
9. I have a smartphone that helps me to access, find, and share new information and discoveries quickly and easily.	3.00	Moderate Level	3.75	High Level	3.26	Moderate Level
10. I have a computer to help me with my projects and assignments at home.	2.74	Moderate Level	4.05	High Level	3.32	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.90	Moderate Level	3.42	Moderate Level	3.21	Moderate Level

The level of difficulties intermediate learners has in face-to-face classes regarding the availability of learning resources when grouped according to grade level is generally moderate. All three levels have similar difficulty levels regarding the availability of learning resources.

This implies that learning resources were equally available to the three grade levels. It further implies that the teachers handling these grades are treating them with equivalent passion for teaching. A study by Bottiani (2019)

finds that many teachers who go into the field of education have a passion for teaching students. In this case of intermediate learners, it may be taken that the teachers assigned have the same passion for their vocation.

Having a closer look, it can be noted that the mean results varied greatly in item no.10, which states that "I have a computer to help me with my projects and assignments at home," obtained a mean of 2.74 for grade 4 learners, 4.05 for grade 5 and 3.32 for grade 6. The lowest mean score was garnered by grade 4 respondents, and the grade 5 respondents obtained the highest mean score among respondents. This means that grade 5 learners have higher difficulties than the other grades.

This may be because computers are costly and parents cannot afford to buy them. Since the pandemic, families have been facing a crisis in financial. They may be able to work every day but still not enough to support their daily needs, especially those families with low or no education. This agrees with Hill (2014), who states that pupils from low-status families don't have different educational opportunities than middle and upper-class parents; thus, they need to perform more effectively.

Table 9

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in Parental Involvement When Grouped According to Grade Level

Items	Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6	
	Mea n	Interpretati on	Mea n	Interpretati on	Mea n	Interpretati on
<i>As a learner, I have difficulties with the following:</i>						
1. My parents follow up my lessons at home.	3.49	Moderate Level	3.63	High Level	3.38	Moderate Level
2. My parents monitor my school performance.	3.56	High Level	3.40	Moderate Level	2.68	Moderate Level
3. My parents encourage me to take my studies seriously.	3.82	High Level	3.85	High Level	3.65	High Level
4. My parents always provide me with emotional support.	3.85	High Level	3.75	High Level	3.44	Moderate Level
5. My parents equip me with proper school supplies.	3.59	High Level	3.70	High Level	3.62	High Level
6. My parents make sure that all of my homework is completed.	3.41	Moderate Level	3.53	High Level	3.97	High Level
7. My parents communicate with the teacher.	3.15	Moderate Level	3.55	High Level	3.06	Moderate Level
8. My parents make sure I attend classes every day	3.64	High Level	4.20	High Level	4.03	High Level
9. My parents attend PTA meetings.	3.36	Moderate Level	4.68	Very High Level	3.94	High Level
10. My parents support the school in developing self-discipline for my benefit.	3.33	Moderate Level	4.63	Very High Level	4.32	High Level
Overall Mean	3.52	High Level	3.89	High Level	3.61	High Level

The level of difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes in parental involvement is high regardless of the grouping according to grade level. These three grade levels belong to the intermediate level, implying that the learners have come to an age of awareness of their teachers who are passionate about for teaching. (Bottiani, J. 2019) supports this contention as he concludes that teachers want to make a difference and want to help those who need extra help.

Looking at each item, item no.9, which states that "my parents attend in PTA," obtained a mean of 3.36 for grade 4 learners, 4.68 for grade 5, and 3.94 for grade 6, which shows a bigger difference. The highest mean score among respondents was obtained by the grade 5 respondents, and the lowest mean score was garnered by grade 4 respondents. This means that grade 5 learners do have higher difficulties than the other grades.

This infers that grade 5 learners only have parental support from their parents as the other intermediate learners regarding parents attending PTA meetings. This may be because of some barriers such as time poverty, lack of access, lack of financial resources, and lack of awareness of the parents. Parents nowadays are more focused on their jobs or work to sustain their daily living; thus, being involved in school activities should be addressed. This results in learner's loss of motivation, less participation, and low academic performance in school, leading to failure in school. This agrees with Lara & Saracostti's (2019) study that states children whose parents have low involvement have low academic achievements.

Table 10

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in Basic Literacy When Grouped According to Number of Siblings

Items	Few Mean	Interpretation	Many Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I am having difficulties in....</i>				
1. Reading basic words correctly.	2.72	Moderate Level	2.43	Low Level
2. Constructing my sentence.	3.00	Moderate Level	2.66	Moderate Level
3. Understanding basic questions.	2.75	Moderate Level	2.63	Moderate Level
4. Solving basic problems.	3.02	Moderate Level	2.73	Moderate Level
5. Counting numbers aloud.	2.61	Moderate Level	2.13	Low Level
6. Identifying numbers and words.	2.68	Moderate Level	2.39	Low Level
7. Comprehending what I read or watch.	2.98	Moderate Level	2.66	Moderate Level
8. Summarizing the main ideas of the text.	2.91	Moderate Level	2.82	Moderate Level
9. In comprehending the text that I have read.	2.98	Moderate Level	2.95	Moderate Level
10. Solving numbers using the four basic operations.	2.98	Moderate Level	3.23	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.86	Moderate Level	2.66	Moderate Level

The level of difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face basic literacy classes when grouped according to the number of siblings is moderate. Regardless of the number of siblings, the difficulty level is the same. It implies that the number of siblings does not matter when the difficulty level in basic literacy is considered. It further implies that basic literacy is not affected by the number of siblings. It appears that presence of siblings is even significant as an intense influence. Cools and Patacchini (2017) state that sibling relationships are regarded as one of the most intensive and influential relationships in an individual's life. The presence of siblings could even be a motivation for the learners to do well in their learning journey.

However, the two groups vary more in their perceptions of item no.2, which states that learners have difficulties in constructing their sentences. The lowest mean score was garnered by many siblings with a mean of 2.66, interpreted as a moderate level, and the highest mean score among respondents was obtained by the few siblings with a mean score of 3.00, interpreted as a moderate level. This means that learners with few siblings have more trouble constructing sentences because they don't have the necessary skills in literacy and no social interaction since they are in a small sibling size. This will affect a child's intellectual growth, result in a struggle for school, while more siblings can provide children with greater opportunities to teach and learn from each other. This does not agree with the findings of De Haan (2010), who stated that sibling size has no impact on children's education.

Table 11

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in the Availability of Learning Resources When Grouped According to Number of Siblings

Items	Few Mean	Interpretation	Many Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I have difficulties with the following:</i>				
1. I have enough books to supplement my lessons at home.	3.07	Moderate Level	3.55	High Level
2. We have a library to give us additional information about the subjects taught at school.	3.46	Moderate Level	3.25	Moderate Level
3. I have an encyclopedia at home to enrich and help me to understand more about the topic being discussed.	2.91	Moderate Level	2.61	Moderate Level
4. We have charts, flashcards, and diagrams as guides to further understand the lesson at school.	2.54	Moderate Level	3.13	Moderate Level
5. I have television to expose me to new languages that I want to learn at home.	3.02	Moderate Level	3.14	Moderate Level
6. We have a computer lab at school that helps and gives us additional information about our lessons.	2.88	Moderate Level	2.98	Moderate Level
7. I have enough school supplies for activities at school and assignments at home.	3.56	High Level	3.45	Moderate Level
8. I have dictionaries to help me better understand our subject, improve my communication, and ensure I use words correctly.	3.30	Moderate Level	3.29	Moderate Level
9. I have a smartphone that helps me to access, find, and share new information and discoveries quickly and easily.	3.51	High Level	3.18	Moderate Level
10. I have a computer to help me with my projects and assignments at home.	3.72	High Level	3.04	Moderate Level

Overall Mean	3.20	Moderate Level	3.16	Moderate Level
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The level of difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes in the area of availability of learning resources when grouped according to the number of siblings is moderate, regardless of the number of siblings. The respondents with few siblings obtained a score of 3.20, while the respondents with many siblings obtained a mean score of 3.16; both mean scores interpreted moderate levels. The similar levels of difficulty imply that the availability of learning resources influences the learners' academic performance. Alache Ada Abah (2020) found that the availability of learning resources significantly affected the level of academic performance of students. It is obvious that it is not the number of siblings that influences the learners' academic performance.

Having a closer look, it can be noted that the two groups vary more on item no.10, which is on "I have a computer to help me with my projects and assignments at home." The lowest mean score was garnered by many siblings with a mean of 3.04 interpreted as moderate level and highest mean score among respondents was obtained by the few siblings with a mean score of 3.72 interpreted as moderate level. It can be concluded that learners with fewer siblings do not have computers at home. It could be because of crisis in financial aspects and that they do not have enough money to buy a computer since it is expensive and costly or maybe because parents don't really allow their child to use the computer since we can still use phones, books, and other printed materials to help them with their projects and assignments. This does not agree with the findings of Cools & Patacchini (2017), that the larger the sibling size, the fewer resources are used, resulting in a lower output of schooling.

Table 12

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in Parental Involvement When Grouped According to Number of Siblings

Items	Few Mean	Interpretation	Many Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I have difficulties in the following:</i>				
1. My parents follow up my lessons at home.	3.60	High Level	3.41	Moderate Level
2. My parents monitor my school performance.	3.23	Moderate Level	3.25	Moderate Level
3. My parents encourage me to take my studies seriously.	3.49	Moderate Level	4.07	High Level
4. My parents always provide me with emotional support.	3.56	High Level	3.82	High Level
5. My parents equip me with proper school supplies.	3.65	High Level	3.63	High Level
6. My parents make sure that all of my homework is completed.	3.53	High Level	3.71	High Level
7. My parents communicate with the teacher.	3.23	Moderate Level	3.30	Moderate Level
8. My parents make sure I attend classes every day	3.96	High Level	3.95	High Level
9. My parents attend PTA meetings.	4.12	High Level	3.88	High Level
10. My parents support the school in developing self-discipline for my benefit.	4.02	High Level	4.16	High Level
Overall Mean	3.64	High Level	3.72	High Level

The level of difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes in parental involvement when grouped according to the number of siblings is high. The respondents with few siblings obtained a mean score of 3.64, which was interpreted as high level, while the respondents with many siblings obtained a mean score of 3.72, which was interpreted as high level as well.

Having a closer look, it can be noted that the mean results varied greatly in item no. 3 where learners with less than three siblings got 3.49 or moderate level, while learners with more than three got 4.07 or high level. The lowest mean score was garnered by a few siblings, and the highest mean score among respondents was obtained by the many siblings. It is on parents to encourage their children to take their studies seriously. This means that learners with larger siblings didn't get any encouragement from their parents, maybe because of poor time management since they have a more significant number of siblings and work demands that they forgot the importance of education and obligation to their child. This negligence results in poor academic performance at school since parents play an essential role in shaping their child's educational experiences. For example, parents attended parent-teacher meetings, helped their children finish their homework, and volunteered in their children's classrooms a few days a month. If parents aren't involved in their education, they'll begin to learn that their education isn't that important. This conforms to what Lara and Saracosti's (2019) research which states that children whose parents have a low-involvement have lower academic achievement.

Table 13

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in Basic Literacy When Grouped According to Parents' Highest Educational Attainment

Items	Lower Mean	Interpretation	Higher Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I am having difficulties in....</i>				
1. Reading basic words correctly.	2.46	Low Level	2.73	Moderate Level
2. Constructing my sentence.	2.91	Moderate Level	2.73	Moderate Level
3. Understanding basic questions.	2.75	Moderate Level	2.60	Moderate Level
4. Solving basic problems.	2.83	Moderate Level	2.94	Moderate Level
5. Counting numbers aloud.	2.25	Low Level	2.54	Moderate Level
6. Identifying numbers and words.	2.52	Moderate Level	2.56	Moderate Level
7. Comprehending what I read or watch.	2.62	Moderate Level	3.10	Moderate Level
8. Summarizing the main ideas of the text.	2.78	Moderate Level	2.98	Moderate Level
9. In comprehending the text that I have read.	2.68	Moderate Level	3.35	Moderate Level
10. Solving numbers using the four basic operations.	2.89	Moderate Level	3.40	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.67	Moderate Level	2.89	Moderate Level

The level of difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes in basic literacy, when grouped according to parents' highest educational attainment, is moderate regardless of parents' highest educational attainment. The respondents with parents whose highest educational attainment is lower obtained a mean score of 2.67, while the respondents whose parents have higher educational attainment obtained a mean score of 2.89 in the area of basic literacy. These mean scores are interpreted as moderate levels of difficulty. The findings show that learners whose parents went to elementary school have the same level of difficulty as learners whose parents went to high school.

Having a closer look, the table reveals that the two groups vary in their views greatly in item no. 9, where the lower group got 2.68 or moderate, and the higher group got 3.35 or moderate, which is "I have difficulties in comprehending the text that I have read." The lowest mean score was garnered by the lower group, and the highest mean score among respondents was obtained by the higher group. It can be concluded that learners whose parents have higher education encounter difficulties in comprehending than learners whose parents have elementary-level education. This may be because parents do not buy or do not have time to buy pre-reader books, fail to stimulate pupils' interest in reading, and inadequate time of parents to their children, even if they are of higher education, may lead to low reading comprehension and lack of foundation in reading. Additionally, even if they are of higher education they might also forgot to assist their child because they are busy with their jobs or work results to less time for their child. This agrees to Rany (2013) states that it is not the parent's education but one of the reasons why pupil's lack of motivation to learn to read and comprehend is the fact that language teachers are not well-trained to teach reading in class as such, lack the teaching strategies to attract the interest of pupils in learning.

Table 14

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in the Availability of Learning Resources When Grouped According to Parents' Highest Educational Attainment

Items	Lower Mean	Interpretation	Higher Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I have having difficulties in the following:</i>				
1. I have enough books to supplement my lessons at home.	3.37	Moderate Level	3.17	Moderate Level
2. We have a library to give us additional information about the subjects taught at school.	3.34	Moderate Level	3.38	Moderate Level
3. I have encyclopedia at home to enrich and help me to understand more about the topic being discussed.	2.58	Moderate Level	3.00	Moderate Level
4. We have charts, flashcards and diagrams as guide and to further understand the lesson at school.	2.95	Moderate Level	2.67	Moderate Level
5. I have television to expose me to new languages that I want to learn at home.	3.18	Moderate Level	2.94	Moderate Level
6. We have computer lab at school that help and give us additional information about our lessons.	2.91	Moderate Level	2.96	Moderate Level
7. I have enough school supplies for activities at school and assignments at home.	3.40	Moderate Level	3.65	High Level
8. I have dictionaries to help me understand our subject better, improve my communication and make sure I use words correctly.	3.08	Moderate Level	3.58	High Level
9. I have smart phone that helps me to access, find and share new information and discoveries quickly and easily.	3.23	Moderate Level	3.50	High Level
10. I have a computer to help me with my projects and assignments at home.	3.23	Moderate Level	3.58	High Level

Overall Mean	3.13	Moderate Level	3.24	Moderate Level
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The level of difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes in the area of availability of learning resources when grouped according to parents' highest educational attainment. Lower group obtained an overall mean of 3.13 while higher group got 3.24, both interpreted as moderate level.

Having a closer look, table reveals that the two groups vary in their views greatly in item no. 8 where lower group got 3.08 or moderate level and higher group 3.58 or high level. It is on equipping the learners to have dictionaries at home to better understand their subject and improve their communication as well as use words correctly. The lowest mean score was garnered by lower group and highest mean score among respondents was obtained by higher group.

This infers that those coming from families of higher education don't have dictionaries as learning tool. This maybe because parents with high education uses a more advanced tools like phones or even computer other than dictionaries. Having digital tools are much easier and efficient to use since they can also afford it. This agrees to Alache Ada Abah (2020) states that availability of learning resources significantly affected the level of academic performance of students, she proposed that students should be supervised and encouraged to maintain the few available learning resources and the parents should be encouraged to support the state government by supplying some learning resources.

Table 15

Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Face-to-Face Classes in Parental Involvement When Grouped According to Parents' Highest Educational Attainment

Items	Lower Mean	Interpretation	Higher Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a learner, I have having difficulties in the following:</i>				
1. My parents follow up my lessons at home.	3.32	Moderate Level	3.75	High Level
2. My parents monitor my school performance.	3.02	Moderate Level	3.54	High Level
3. My parents encourage me to take my studies seriously.	3.62	High Level	4.00	High Level
4. My parents always provide me with emotional support.	3.63	High Level	3.77	High Level
5. My parents equip me with proper school supplies.	3.57	High Level	3.73	High Level
6. My parents make sure that all of my homework is completed.	3.66	High Level	3.56	High Level
7. My parents communicate with the teacher.	3.18	Moderate Level	3.38	Moderate Level
8. My parents make sure I attend classes everyday	4.02	High Level	3.88	High Level
9. My parents attend in PTA meetings.	4.02	High Level	3.98	High Level
10. My parents support the school in developing self-disciplines for my benefit.	4.18	High Level	3.96	High Level
Overall Mean	3.62	High Level	3.75	High Level

The level of difficulties of intermediate learners in face-to-face classes in the area of parental involvement when grouped according to parents' highest educational attainment is high. The lower group obtained an overall mean of 3.62 while higher group obtained a mean score of 3.75, both interpreted as high level. It can be observed that regardless of the parents' highest educational attainment, the level of difficulties is high. This implies that parents' educational attainment is not an influencer on the level of difficulty encountered by respondents. Boonk (2018) says parental involvement variables that show promises according to their correlations with academic achievement are: (a) reading at home, (b) parents that are holding high expectations/aspirations for their children's academic achievement and schooling, (c) communication between parents and children regarding school, (d) parental encouragement and support for learning.

Having a closer look, table reveals that the two groups vary in their views greatly in item no. 2 where the lower group got 3.02 or moderate level and higher group, 3.54 or high level. It is on "Parents' monitor my school performance". The lowest mean score was garnered by lower group and highest mean score among respondents was obtained by higher group. This infers that parents of intermediate learners coming from families of higher education doesn't monitor their child performance at school. This maybe because parents are busy, distracted, and preoccupied with the distraction of life especially with their work demands which fulfills the needs of the family. Thus, they don't have time to monitor their child performance in school that may leads to low academic performance in school.

This agrees to Bandhana & Sharma (2012) that students living in non- supportive home environment struggle in every walk of life including educational life. This does not agree with the findings of Cabrera et. al., (2018), states that highly educated parents are more likely to be involve in their children's education.

Table 16

Difference in the Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in Basic Literacy When Grouped According to the Aforementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	61	69.28	837.00	0.000		Significant
	Female	52	42.60				
Number of Siblings	Few	57	61.51	1339.00	0.139		Not Significant
	Many	56	52.41				
Parents' Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	65	52.93	1295.50	0.124	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	48	62.51				
	Grade 4	39	42.51				
Grade Level	Grade 5	40	71.43	15.43	0.000		Significant
	Grade 6	34	56.65				

Table 16 shows significant differences in the difficulty levels of intermediate learners in basic literacy based on sex and grade level, but not on the number of siblings or parents' highest educational attainment. Male learners had a mean rank of 69.28, while females had 42.60, with a Mann-Whitney U test result of 837.00 and a p-value of 0.000, confirming significance at the 0.05 level. These findings suggest that sex and grade level influence learners' basic literacy challenges, supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis for these variables. However, the number of siblings and parental education did not significantly impact difficulty levels, aligning with Iroegbu & Ifedayo (2020), who noted that parental education may have limited influence as families often provide external tutoring support. Grace & Gerdes (2019) similarly emphasize that parental involvement, rather than academic achievement, is critical to children's school performance. The findings also reflect Evans et al. (2021), who observed that many learners face difficulty mastering basic literacy and numeracy, hindering their progress with advanced topics in later grades.

Table 17

Difference in the Level of Difficulties of Intermediate Learners in the Availability of Learning Resources When Grouped According to the Aforementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Sex	Male	61	62.89	1226.50	0.038		Significant
	Female	52	50.09				
Number of Siblings	Few	57	57.92	1543.50	0.763		Not Significant
	Many	56	56.06				
Parents' Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	65	54.78	1416.00	0.402	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	48	60.00				
	Grade 4	39	46.77				
Grade Level	Grade 5	40	67.78	8.19	0.017		Significant
	Grade 6	34	56.06				

Table 17 highlights significant differences in the level of difficulties of intermediate learners in the availability of learning resources when grouped by sex and grade level, but not by number of siblings or parents' highest educational attainment. Male learners had a mean rank of 62.89, while females had 50.09, with a Mann-Whitney U test result of 1226.50 and a p-value of 0.038, indicating significance at the 0.05 level. This suggests that sex and grade level influence learners' difficulties, supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis. However, the number of siblings and parents' educational attainment do not significantly impact these difficulties, aligning with Alache Ada Abah (2020), who found that academic performance depends more on the availability of learning resources than family size. Similarly, Grace & Gerdes (2019) highlight that parental support, rather than academic achievement, affects

children's school performance. The findings also echo Evans et al. (2021), who noted that many learners struggle with advanced topics due to insufficient mastery of basic literacy and numeracy skills in earlier grades.

Conclusions:

The study concluded that the level of difficulties faced by intermediate learners in face-to-face classes varied across different areas. In basic literacy and availability of learning resources, the difficulty level was moderate, while in parental involvement, it was high. When grouped by sex, the difficulty level in basic literacy was low, moderate in availability of learning resources, and high in parental involvement. Similarly, when grouped by grade level, number of siblings, and parents' highest educational attainment, the difficulty level in basic literacy and availability of learning resources remained moderate, while parental involvement was consistently rated as high. Statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in the difficulty levels for basic literacy and availability of learning resources when compared across parents' highest education and the number of siblings. However, significant differences emerged when compared by sex and grade level. In contrast, no significant differences were observed in parental involvement across all the mentioned variables.

Recommendations

Based on the results, this paper recommends several actions to address the identified challenges. English language teachers are encouraged to provide pupils with reading strategy instruction to help them become more strategic readers and to utilize varied teaching and learning tools to improve basic literacy skills. Public Schools District Supervisors (PSDS) are urged to design training programs for upskilling teachers, focusing on parental participation, training workshops, and positive parenting programs. Guidance counselors should retool advisers and homeroom teachers through in-service training to equip them with skills and strategies for enhancing literacy activities, reading tools, assessments, and methods that motivate both sexes to perform well in school. Advisers are encouraged to supplement their instruction with additional learning materials, tools, and strategies that promote active participation and success among students. Lastly, teachers should ensure the provision of essential tools and materials that enhance children's critical thinking and comprehension abilities.

Acknowledgment

This endeavor will not become successful without the concerted effort and support of the following personalities. To Dr. Lisa C. Cañedo, the researcher's adviser who always extended her untiring guidance and assistance in the making of this research; panel members, family and friends, thank you so much.

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