Research Article

Factors Affecting the Reading Abilities of Grade 7 Learners, Basis for an Action Plan

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the factors affecting the reading abilities of Grade 7 learners of Castillejos Resettlement High School, Castillejos District, Schools Division of Zambales for the School Year 2022. The implemented distance learning modality was a great challenge in the teaching-learning process because of the limited assistance and guidance of teachers as the main facilitator in learning. After two academic years, when distance learning modality was implemented due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, the school year opened last August 22, 2022 with full implementation of in-person classes and schools have conducted reading pre-tests and screening tests with the use of Phil IRI *(Philippine Informal Reading Inventory).* The results in the conducted reading pre-test and group screening test pressed the necessity to find out the factors affecting the reading abilities of students in Grade 7 at Castillejos Resettlement High School. The researcher utilized a descriptive quantitative method of research and conducted a research questionnaire in gathering data as instrument which included respondents' profile and perception of the learner- related factors, teacher-related factors and school-related factors. Likert scale, frequency and percentage distribution, Pearson Correlation Coefficient r and mean were used to scale the gathered data. The results revealed that the respondents, in general, strongly agreed that learner-related factors, teacher-related factors and school-related factors affected their reading abilities. Hence, there was *negatively low non-significant correlation* between the reading abilities and the factors affecting the reading abilities among students in terms of learner-related factors, teacher-related factors and school-related factors.

Keywords: Oral fluency, Oral reading profile, Reading comprehension, Reading level

Introduction

Knowledge and wisdom root from the ability to read and comprehend. The ability to read is the foremost foundational skill that every learner must acquire, without this ability, students will not be able to attain academic skills and competencies taught in the educational curriculum (Gershon, 2022).

According to Philippines Information (2019), when the Philippines joined the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2018, Filipino obtained 340 points in the Over all Reading Literacy which was significantly lower than the OECD average of 487 points. It means only 1 out of 5, or 19.4% achieved the Minimum Proficiency Level in Over all Reading Literacy Level.

To ease the challenges and major changes of the Covid 19 Pandemic in the education system, the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines has implemented multiple distance learning modalities, teaching and learning adapts different strategies to make the learning possible to every learner.

During the implementation of Distance Learning Modalities, there were presumptions of learning gaps because of the limited guidance and assistance of teachers as the main facilitator of learning. In the study conducted by Domingue, et al (2022), where the results were students experienced tendency of slower growth on oral reading fluency as the effect of Covid 19 Pandemic during the academic year 2020-2021. These learning gaps had been diagnosed through the conducted diagnostic assessment test of the implemented in the Regional Memorandum No. 502, s. 2022 or Regional Diagnostic Assessment Test, which resulted to a low Minimum Proficiency Level (MPL). As reported by De Vera, B. (2022) from the Inquirer.net, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) cited that there are only less than five percent of school children in the Philippines who can read simple reading texts due to Covid 19 Pandemic.

Meanwhile, the significance of the reading abilities to the learners was the motivation to the researcher to conduct a study that had helped identify the factors that affected the reading and contributed in improving the reading abilities of the learners. This study included 100 Grade 7 learners at Castillejos Resettlement High School of the School Year 2022-2023.

Hypotheses

This study had tested these hypotheses below. A significance level of 0.05 indicates a 5% risk of concluding that a correlation existed when there was no actual correlation.

Ho_1 There is no significant correlation between the reading abilities and the factors affecting the reading abilities of the learners.

Methods

The descriptive-quantitative method that was used in this study where it was mainly a study that described a characteristic of a certain population. This study used the following paradigm in conducting the research:
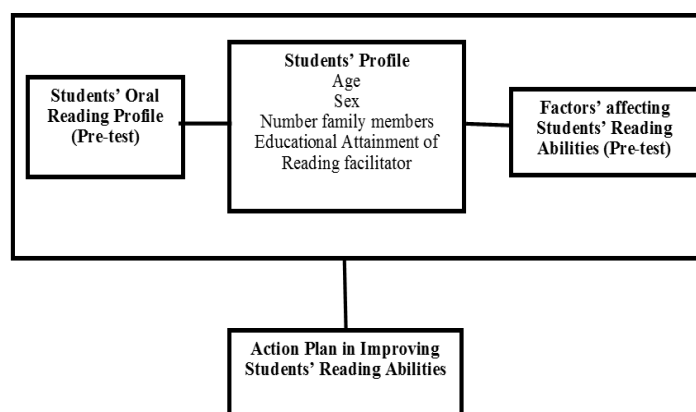

Figure 1. Paradigm of the Research Study

Data Analysis

Statistical treatment and interpretation of the processed data was employed using the following treatment: frequency and percent Distribution, mean, Likert scale, and Pearson Correlation Coefficient r.

Result and Discussion

The following data presents the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data. It includes the data of the respondents in terms of their profile, Pre-test Reading Level, and factors affecting students' reading ability.

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents in terms of age. Majority or 56% of the respondents belonged to the age bracket 13-14 years old

I. Profile of the Learners

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Learner-Respondents in terms of Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15 - 16 years old	2	2.00
13 - 14 years old	56	56.00
12 years old and below	42	42.00
Total	**100**	**100.00**

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution in terms of sex, 60% of the 100 total number of respondents were male and 40% were female. Majority of the respondents were male.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Learner-Respondents in terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	60	60.00
Female	40	40.00
Total	**100**	**100.00**

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents in terms of number of family members in a household. Majority or 51% of the respondents had 6 members.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Learner-Respondents in terms of Number of Family Members

Number of Family Members	Frequency	Percentage
6 members and above	51	51.00
4-5 members	40	40.00
3 members and below	9	9.00
Total	**100**	**100.00**

Table 4 shows the frequency and percentage distribution in terms of the respondents' family income in a month and a majority (68%) of the respondents belonged to the poor family with family income of Php 12,082.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Learner-Respondents in terms of Family Income

Family Income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than Php12,082	68	68.00
Between Php12,082 and Php24,164	19	19.00
Between Php24,164 and Php48,328	6	6.00
Between Php48,328 and Php84,574	4	4.00
Between Php84,574 and Php144,984	1	1.00
Between Php144,984 and Php241,640	1	1.00
Php241,640 and above	1	1.00
Total	**100**	**100.00**

Table 5 shows the highest educational attainment of the reading facilitator at home. The highest percentage of the respondents were guided by a family member who were college graduates with 35%.

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Learner-Respondents in terms of the Reading Facilitator's Highest Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary graduate	5	5.00
Highschool undergraduate	3	3.00
High school graduate	29	29.00
College level	26	26.00
College Graduate	35	35.00
Post Baccalaureate	2	2.00
Total	**100**	**100.00**

II. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Reading Level of the Learner-Respondents during Phil IRI Pre-test Result of School Year 2022-2023

Table 6 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the reading level of the respondents during the Phil IRI Pre-test Result of School Year 2022-2023. The highest frequency and percentage were Independent Level which is 42 or 41.58% of the respondents who were excellent in both oral reading and reading comprehension skills. While the 37 or 36.63% of the respondents belonged to the Instructional Level who needed enhancement in reading abilities. The least number of respondents with 22 or 21.78% of the total number of learner-respondents belonged to the Frustration level.

These results mean that there were 37 learners who needed enhancement in reading activities and 22 learners who needed assistance and reading intervention as remediation to improve their reading abilities.

After the identifying the oral reading profile or the level reading abilities learner-respondents, the researcher designed an intervention plan which helped assist and asses the learner-respondents with reading difficulties.

The following table presents the Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Reading Level of the Learner-Respondents.

Table 6. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Reading Level of the Learner-Respondents during the Phil IRI Pre-test Result

Reading Level	Frequency			Percentage
	Male	Female	Total	
Independent	17	25	42	41.58
Instructional	23	15	37	36.63
Frustration	21	1	22	21.78
Total		**101**		**100%**

III. Mean Rating of the Common Factors affecting the Reading Abilities of the Respondents in terms of Learner-Related Factors

The following data presents the results in learner-respondents in the conducted research questionnaires.

Table 7 reveals that learner-related factors; teacher-related factors; and school-related factors, the respondents, in general, strongly agreed that all these factors had affected their reading abilities.

Table 7. Mean Rating of the Common Factors Affecting the Reading Abilities of the Respondents

Common Factors	Grand Mean	Interpretation
1.Learner-related Factors	3.25	Strongly Agree
2.Teacher-related Factors	3.66	Strongly Agree
3.School-related Factors	3.61	Strongly Agree

Table 8 shows the correlation between the common factors affecting the reading abilities of the respondents and their profile in terms of learner-related factors. As can be seen from the table, that there was no significant correlation in the profile of the respondents: age ($r = -0.08450$) with low negative correlation; sex ($r = -0.1226$) with low negative correlation; number of family members ($r = -0.0085$) with low negative correlation; and family income ($r = -$ 0.1313) with low negative correlation; hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Meanwhile, it was also shown that the profile in terms of reading facilitator's highest educational attainment ($r = 0.2682$) with low positive correlation revealed that the educational attainment of the reading facilitator at home had a significant correlation in the respondents' reading abilities; thus, the null hypothesis is *accepted*.

Table 8. Correlation between the Common Factors affecting the Reading Abilities of the Respondents and their Profile in terms of Learner-Related Factors

Profile of the Respondents	Correlation Coefficient	Degree of Correlation	Interpretation
Age	-0.0845	Low negative correlation	Not Significant
Sex	-0.1226	Low negative correlation	Not Significant
Number of Family Members	-0.0085	Low negative correlation	Not Significant
Family Income	-0.1313	Low negative correlation	Not Significant
Highest Educational Attainment	0.2682	Low positive correlation	Significant
The critical r coefficient at .05 level of significance with df = 99, is 0.1946			

Table 9 shows the correlation between the common factors affecting the reading abilities of the respondents and their profile in terms of teacher -related factors that there was no significant correlation in the profile of the respondents: age ($r = -0.0929$) with low negative correlation; sex ($r = -0.0827$) with low negative correlation; number of family members ($r = -0.0198$) with low negative correlation; and

reading facilitator's highest educational attainment (r = 0.2535) with low negative correlation; thus the null hypothesis was rejected. Meanwhile, it was also shown that the profile in terms of with low positive correlation reveals

that the family income (r = - 0.2589) at home had a significant correlation in the respondents' reading abilities; therefore, the null hypothesis was *rejected*.

Table 9. Correlation between the Common Factors affecting the Reading Abilities of the Respondents and their Profile in terms of Teacher-Related Factors

Profile of the Respondents	Correlation Coefficient	Degree of Correlation	Interpretation
Age	-0.0929	Low negative correlation	Not Significant
Sex	-0.0827	Low negative correlation	Not Significant
Number of Family Members	-0.0198	Low negative correlation	Not Significant
Family Income	-0.2589	Low negative correlation	Significant
Highest Educational Attainment	0.1535	Low positive correlation	Not Significant
The critical r coefficient at .05 level of significance with df = 99, is 0.1946			

Shown in Table 10 is the correlation between the common factors affecting the reading abilities of the respondents and their profile in terms of school-related factors. Data reveals there was no significant correlation in the profile of the respondents: age (r = -0.1606) with low negative correlation; sex (r = 0.0126) with low positive correlation; number of family members (r = -0.1116) with low negative

correlation; and reading facilitator's highest educational attainment (r = 0.1722) with low positive negative correlation; hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. Meanwhile, data also showed with moderate correlation that the family income (r = - 0.3041) at home had a significant correlation in the respondents' reading abilities; therefore, the null hypothesis was *rejected*.

Table 10. Correlation between the Common Factors affecting the Reading Abilities of the Respondents and their Profile in terms of School-Related Factors

Profile	Correlation Coefficient	Degree of Correlation	Interpretation
Age	-0.1606	Low negative correlation	Not Significant
Sex	0.0126	Low positive correlation	Not Significant
Number of Family Members	-0.1116	Low negative correlation	Not Significant
Family Income	-0.3041	Moderate negative correlation	Significant
Highest Educational Attainment	0.1722	Low positive correlation	Not Significant
The critical r coefficient at .05 level of significance with df = 99, is 0.1946			

Conclusion
From the given findings, the following conclusions were drawn:
1. The majority of the respondents are 13-14 years old and majority were male.
2. The oral reading profile of the learners were determined through the Phil IRI Manual 2018. The reading pre-test results are as follows; there were 42 or 41.58% respondents who belonged to the Independent Level, who were excellent in word reading and comprehension abilities. While

there were 37 or 36.63 % belonged to the Instructional Level, those were the learners who needed enhancement in word reading and comprehensions abilities. There were 22 or 21.78% who belonged to the frustration level and these were the learners that need to be assisted in reading in word reading and comprehension skills.
3. In terms of learner-related factors; teacher-related factors; and school-related factors, the respondents, in general, strongly

agreed that all these factors had affected their reading abilities.

4. The educational attainment of the reading facilitator at home in terms of learner-related factors has a great impact in developing the reading skills at young age. Learners need the guidance and assistance of the parents or elders in order to improve reading abilities.

5. There is significant correlation in the family income in terms of teacher-related and school-related factors. In learner-respondents' perception, their family income has affected in developing their reading abilities.

6. The results pressed the necessity that language teachers must acquire education, trainings and workshops in developing innovative interventions in improving the learners' reading abilities (H. Liu, X. Chen, and X. Liu, 022).

7. The teachers and the school must establish a good rapport and respect among students where socio-economic status is not regarded as basis in obtaining learnings and skills (Qishan, C. et. al, 2018).

Acknowledgement

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