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Research Article

Reading Difficulties of Grade One Learners in Mother Tongue Based- Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in Relation to Performance: Basis for Intervention Plan

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the reading difficulties encountered by Grade One learners in District 1 of the Schools Division of Bago City for the school year 2023-2024 and examines their impact on academic performance. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, the study assessed 231 Grade One learners from five elementary schools using a modified Reading Difficulty Checklist. Findings indicate that learners experience moderate difficulties across five key areas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, with comprehension posing the greatest challenge. The study also reveals that demographic factors such as age, sex, parents' educational attainment, and family income significantly influence reading proficiency. Additionally, a strong correlation was found between reading difficulties and academic performance, highlighting the need for targeted intervention programs. Based on the results, an intervention plan is proposed to enhance reading skills and improve academic outcomes for young learners.

Keywords: *Reading difficulties, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, academic performance, early literacy, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), intervention program.*

Introduction

DepEd Memorandum No. 173, Series of 2019, the *Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa* (3Bs) initiative exhorts offices from central to division level and educational institutions to deepen their advocacies for reading to transform every learner into becoming a reader at

their grade level and equip teachers to heighten their skill as efficacious reading instructors. This campaign to step up the reading proficiency levels of school learners from kindergarten will resolve the knowledge gap, and it will address the low performance of Filipino

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students in national assessments for several years now (Department of Education, 2019).

Developing the skill to read is dire for each young child's endeavor, and cultivating the ability to read with great facility can positively create possibilities in his academic, economic, and social life (Collier, 2019). So many children can easily improve their competence to read without any difficulty, and there are a lot who can exhibit average reading capabilities and gain articulacy in word identification and fortify comprehension (Idulog, Gadiano, Toledo, and Hermosada, 2023). It is a sad fact, though, that 10% to 15% of young learners are confronted with difficulties in harnessing reading skills. Unfortunately, these children cannot capably perform in word reading and reading comprehension. Even if their senses are not impaired, they do not necessarily lack intellectual prowess, or they have not been subjected to poor reading instruction (Tomas, Villaros, and Galman, 2021).

Every educator, especially those facilitating the first few years of children's education, intends to make the learners learn how to read. Reading is the process of comprehending the written form of speech. It's important that beginning readers can connect written words to the vocabulary of spoken words that is familiar to them. They must recognize that each word is made up of letters and must understand that each letter stands for individual sounds used in speech. To grow into a competent reader, a child has to be taught and provided with opportunities to enhance skills in word reading competence as well as understanding what has been read (Kelly, 2021).

The Philippines' educational system is challenged to produce effective readers. A disparaging fact about Filipino students is that they have poor reading abilities. According to the 2019 PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) statistics, Filipino pupils fared worse in reading comprehension than their international counterparts. This suggests that it is imperative to address the obstacles and possible areas for improvement in the reading ability of Filipino kids.

The researcher, being an educator herself at the primary level, has witnessed firsthand the inadequacy of the school children in reading in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in her very own classroom, and their lack of proficiency in this important skill will certainly affect their academic performance not only in the current school year but in the next many years that they spend in school. Wanting to gather objective data on this, she decided to pursue this study so that she could also propose an intervention plan that would aid the young learners in enhancing their reading skills.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. It is a form of descriptive research used to describe current phenomena affecting Grade One learners regarding their reading skills, using numerical data for analysis. This design evaluates the nature of existing conditions without manipulation of treatments or subjects, as the researcher measures variables as they are (McCombes, 2023). In this case, the study focuses on the reading difficulties of Grade One learners in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education.

Subjects and Respondents of the Study

The subjects of this study were Grade One learners from District 1A of the Schools Division of Bago City. They were selected from five elementary schools. Their reading difficulties were assessed by their teachers, who were requested to respond to the research instrument used in this study.

Population and Sample Size

The total population consisted of 544 Grade One learners, with a sample size of 231 pupils assessed by 19 teachers regarding their reading difficulties. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula:

Where:

- = sample size
- = population size
- = desired margin of error (0.05)

The data are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Population and Sample Size of the Grade One Learners and Teacher-Respondents

Schools	Grade One Learners		Grade One Teachers
	Population	Sample Size	
A	80	34	3
B	160	68	6
C	112	48	3
D	125	53	4
E	67	28	3
Total	544	231	19

The table shows that Elementary School B had the largest population, with 68 out of 160 learners and six teachers participating. The smallest representation came from Elementary School E, where 28 out of 67 learners were assessed by three teachers.

Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling was used to distribute respondents across schools. The specific respondents were selected using simple random sampling through the lottery method.

Data Gathering Instrument

The researcher utilized a modified version of the Reading Difficulty Checklist from the Informal Diagnostic Inventory by the Landmark School Outreach Program. The instrument consisted of two parts: (1) an introductory letter explaining the purpose of the study and confidentiality assurances, and (2) the inventory itself, which contained 25 descriptors of reading difficulties. Teachers rated each descriptor based on the extent to which they observed the difficulty in their students.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The modified instrument was validated by four research experts with doctorate and master's degrees. They conducted face and content validity assessments using a validation form designed by Good and Scates, yielding a validity score of 4.89, indicating strong validity.

For reliability testing, the instrument was pilot-tested on 40 Grade One learners from a public school in the second district of the Schools Division of Bago City. The resulting Cronbach's alpha value was 0.80, indicating good reliability.

Data Gathering Procedures

After establishing the validity and reliability of the research instrument, the researcher sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Bago City. Upon approval, additional consent was obtained from the District Supervisor of District 1A and the school heads of the five elementary schools. Teachers were then briefed on how to assess students' reading difficulties, and they completed the inventory forms. After one week, the researcher collected the completed forms for data analysis.

Data Analysis

To ensure meaningful results, statistical methods were applied:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequency distribution and percentage were used to analyze the learners' profiles (age, sex, parents' educational attainment, and family income).
- **Extent of Reading Difficulties:** The mean was computed using the formula:

where:

- = mean
- = summation of scores
- = sample size

Interpretation of scores:

Score	Numerical Range	Interpretation	Description
5	4.21 – 5.00	Very High Extent	Highly observable difficulty
4	3.41 – 4.20	High Extent	Moderately observable difficulty
3	2.61 – 3.40	Moderate Extent	Sometimes observable difficulty
2	1.81 – 2.60	Low Extent	Rarely observable difficulty
1	1.00 – 1.80	Very Low Extent	Not observable difficulty

To determine significant differences in reading difficulties based on variables, the Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis Test were used.

The Mann-Whitney U Test formula:

where:

- = number of participants in each group
- = sum of ranks in each group

The Kruskal-Wallis Test formula:

where:

- = number of groups
- = size of the jth group
- = rank sum for the jth group
- = total sample size

To analyze academic performance in MTB-MLE, the mean was computed and interpreted as follows:

Grade Range	Interpretation	Description
90 – 100	Outstanding	Excellent performance
85 – 89	Very Satisfactory	Very good performance
80 – 84	Satisfactory	Good performance
75 – 79	Fairly Satisfactory	Fair performance
Below 75	Did Not Meet Expectations	Poor performance

To determine the relationship between reading difficulties and academic performance, Goodman and Kruskal’s Gamma Coefficient was used:

where:

- = number of concordant pairs
- = number of discordant pairs

These statistical tools provided insights into the extent of reading difficulties and their impact on academic performance.

Results and Discussions

Demographic Profile of the Grade One Learners

The table below reveals the demographic profile of the Grade One learners of the first dis-

trict in the Schools Division of Bago City according to age, sex, parents’ educational attainment, and family’s average income.

Table 1 shows the profile of the 231 Grade One learners in the first district of Schools Division of Bago City for the Academic Year 2023-2024 when they are grouped according to age, sex, parents’ educational attainment, and average family monthly income.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Grade One Learners

Profile	Category	f	%
Age	6 years old or younger	167	72.30
	7 years old or older	64	27.70
	Total	231	100.00
Sex	Male	123	53.20
	Female	108	46.80
	Total	231	100.00
Father's Educational Attainment	Elementary Level	13	5.60
	Elementary Graduate	13	5.60
	High School Level	49	21.20
	High School Graduate	87	37.70
	College Level	54	23.40
	College Graduate	15	6.50
	Total	231	100.00
Mother's Educational Attainment	Elementary Level	7	3.00
	Elementary Graduate	7	3.00
	High School Level	41	17.70
	High School Graduate	92	39.80
	College Level	66	28.60
	College Graduate	18	7.80
	Total	231	100.00
Family's Average Family Income	Below P10,000	93	40.30
	P10,000 - P19,999	116	50.20
	P20,000 or more	22	9.50
	Total	231	100.00

In terms of age, one hundred sixty-seven or 72 percent are age 6 years old or younger, while sixty-four or 28 percent are 7 years old or older.

In terms of sex, one hundred twenty-three or 53 percent are male, while one hundred eight or 47 percent are female.

In terms of fathers' educational attainment, eighty-seven or 38 percent are high school graduates, fifty-four or 23 percent are college undergraduates, forty-nine or 21 percent are high school undergraduates, fifteen or 6 percent are college graduates, and thirteen or 5 percent each for the group of elementary school graduates and the group of elementary school undergraduates.

In terms of mothers' educational attainment, ninety-two or 40 percent are high school graduates, sixty-six or 29 percent have finished college level, forty-one or 18 percent have

reached high school level, eighteen or 8 percent are college graduates, and seven or 3 percent each for mothers who graduated from elementary school and those who completed only elementary level.

In terms of the family's monthly income, one hundred sixteen or 50 percent earn from ten thousand to nineteen thousand nine hundred ninety-nine pesos, while ninety-three or 40 percent have monthly earnings below ten thousand pesos. Only twenty-two or about 10 percent belong to families who yield a monthly income of twenty thousand pesos or more.

It can be noted that the Grade One learners in the first district of Schools Division of Bago City are generally younger males, whose parents are mostly high school graduates, and who come from families who earn an average income per month.

Extent of Difficulties of the Grade One Learners in the Five Aspects of Reading

The Grade One learners are confronted with difficulties in the five aspects of reading:

phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. The data are revealed in Table 3.

Table 3. Extent of Difficulties in the Five Aspects of Reading

Aspects in Reading	N	Mean	Interpretation
Phonemic Awareness	231	2.83	Moderate
Phonics	231	2.66	Moderate
Fluency	231	2.93	Moderate
Comprehension	231	3.02	Moderate
Vocabulary	231	2.90	Moderate
As a Whole	231	2.83	Moderate

It can be gleaned that when the Grade One learners are taken as a whole, they experience a moderate extent of difficulties in reading. They have moderate difficulties in all five aspects. Among the aspects, it can be noted that their greatest challenge is comprehension (3.02). They also find fluency (2.93) and vocabulary (2.90) equally hard. Their less troublesome aspects are phonemic awareness (2.83) and phonic (2.66).

This finding is supported by Esteves (2019) whose own research findings affirm that Grade One pupils are experiencing difficulties in reading. The results revealed that Grade One pupils are slow readers and not that adept in comprehending materials read. It was also evident that their pre-oral scores in reading in English are quite low, categorized as *frustration level*, while their scores in reading in Mother-tongue oral is in the *instructional level*.

The same concern was raised in the research conducted by Hubag, Elona, and Felisilda (2021) as they studied the reading performance of Grade One pupils in Mother

Tongue Based-Multilingual Education. The pupils in the primary levels displayed very low performance in reading, so they needed to introduce an intervention to assist the learners to develop the capability to read as they used the distance learning modality. They had to ask the help of the parents to facilitate reading at home. After the intervention, the learners were able to register increased scores in reading.

This establishes the fact that Grade One pupils generally go through challenges in reading, they must be helped by their teachers by means of an intervention program.

Extent of Difficulties of the Grade One Learners in Developing Reading Skills When grouped according to Profile

The teachers have observed that the Grade One learners have gone through difficulties in harnessing their reading skills. This study tried to look into these difficulties when learners are grouped according to variables. Table 4 on the next page shows the data.

Table 4. Extent of Difficulties of the Grade One Learners in Developing Reading Skills when Grouped according to Profile

Profile	Category	n	Mean	Interpretation
Age	6 years old or younger	167	2.82	Moderate
	7 years old or older	64	2.86	Moderate
Sex	Male	123	2.94	Moderate
	Female	108	2.70	Moderate
Father's Educational Attainment	Elementary Level	13	3.22	Moderate
	Elementary Graduate	13	3.25	Moderate
	High School level	49	3.34	Moderate

Profile	Category	n	Mean	Interpretation
Mother's Educational Attainment	High School Graduate	87	2.80	Moderate
	College Level	54	2.40	Moderate
	College Graduate	15	2.14	Moderate
	Elementary Level	7	3.06	Moderate
	Elementary Graduate	7	2.95	Moderate
	High School level	41	3.41	High
	High School Graduate	92	2.93	Moderate
	College Level	66	2.42	Moderate
	College Graduate	18	2.37	Moderate
	Family's Average Monthly Income	below P10, 000	93	3.10
P10, 000- P19, 999		116	2.68	Moderate
P20,000 or more		22	2.47	Moderate

It can be seen that all sub-groups of the Grade One learners encounter moderate extent of difficulty in improving their reading skills, except for those whose mothers are high school undergraduates, because they have a higher extent of challenges along that line.

When the learners are grouped according to age, the older children ($M = 2.86$) have slightly higher difficulty than their younger counterparts ($M = 2.82$).

When they are segregated according to sex, the male learners ($M = 2.94$) are more challenged than the female learners ($M = 2.70$).

When they are clustered according to their fathers' educational attainment, the learners whose fathers are high school undergraduates ($M = 3.34$) have the most difficulty enhancing their reading skills, while the learners whose fathers are college graduates ($M = 2.14$) have the least extent of difficulty.

When they are classified according to their mothers' educational attainment, the children of mothers who are high school undergraduates ($M = 3.41$) find improving their reading skills quite difficult than the rest of the groups. The children of mothers who finished college ($M = 2.37$) have the least extent of difficulty.

When they are categorized according to family income, it can be seen that the lesser the income, the higher the extent of difficulty of the learners to harness their reading skills as shown in the table those who belong to families with the lowest income range ($M = 3.10$) have the highest score pertinent to the difficulty experienced in reading compared to those from families with the highest earnings ($M = 2.47$).

The result of this study with regard to age and reading ability is negated by Vlachos, Papadimitriou, and Walla (cited in Amofu, 2019). In their study, it was found that older children are better able to perform in reading than the younger ones. This implies that older children are not affected by difficulties in reading as much as those younger than they are.

In the same research, gender was found to have no significant bearing with regards to reading difficulties. Both boys and girls have equal capabilities to read well, and they can also be confronted with difficulties when it comes to reading. This is in contrast, too, to the present research, in which boys have more difficulties in reading than girls. However, the study undertaken by Kadtong (cited in Oyekola, Tella, Adeyemo, and Oyeweso, 2020), had proved that the boys have better performance in reading using their Mother-based tongue, while the girls had the edge in reading in English.

These findings are affirmed by De Guzman and De Vera (2018) whose conclusion in the research conducted is that Grade One pupils are confronted with difficulties in English proficiency ranging from a moderate level of difficulty to a very low level. Moreover, the difficulties of the said group lie in phoneme recognition, synonyms, and reading comprehension.

Furthermore, the study made by Vázquez-Cano, De la Calle-Cabrera, Hervás-Gómez, and López-Meneses (2020) on the students in Canada, Finland, and Singapore supports the findings in this current research. The parents' educational attainment, profession, and socio-

economic status have been found to influence their children's ability to read, ability to perform well in class, and overcome difficulties in school work. Those whose parents are better educated and better paid at work are also exposed to more opportunities that contribute to their children's positive learning experience.

This is affirmed by Xiaofeng, Wenhui, and Aibao (2018). Parents who are more educated can teach their children how to read and discuss content with them, thus improving not only their reading ability but also their reading comprehension. On the other hand, parents who have not attained a higher level of education tend to have limited exposure and are unable to widen their children's vocabulary and understanding of the world. They also tend to take on menial jobs that take up much of their time. In effect, their children are left to fend for themselves. In the study by Jeynes (cited in Mao, Zang, and Zhang, 2020), it was established that parental absence impedes the development of children's reading comprehension abil-

ity. Parents who take the time and effort to assist their children learn and grow academically can make them perform much better in class.

Chiu and Ko (2019) have also proven that a mother's education is a positive contributor to their children's reading ability. Mothers who have graduated from high school have more exposure to a wide variety of reading content that they can pass on to their children as well as have more positive reading attitudes that they can enable their children to imbibe.

Though the studies have different findings, one thing that is common among them is that the pupils are facing difficulties in reading, though to varied extents

Academic Performance of the Grade One Learners for the First Quarter When Grouped according to Profile

The academic performance of the Grade One learners for the first quarter was also looked into. Data are revealed in Table 5 on the next page.

Table 5. Academic Performance of Grade One Learners when Grouped according to Profile

Profile	Category	n	Mean	Interpretation
Age	6 years old or younger	167	84.92	Satisfactory
	7 years old or older	64	83.88	Satisfactory
Sex	Male	123	84.11	Satisfactory
	Female	108	85.22	Very Satisfactory
Father's Educational Attainment	Elementary Level	13	82.92	Satisfactory
	Elementary Graduate	13	82.54	Satisfactory
	High School level	49	83.00	Satisfactory
	High School Graduate	87	84.69	Satisfactory
	College Level	54	85.93	Very Satisfactory
	College Graduate	15	88.27	Very Satisfactory
Mother's Educational Attainment	Elementary Level	7	83.57	Satisfactory
	Elementary Graduate	7	83.29	Satisfactory
	High School level	41	82.63	Satisfactory
	High School Graduate	92	84.22	Satisfactory
	College Level	66	86.24	Very Satisfactory
Family's Average Monthly Income	College Graduate	18	86.33	Very Satisfactory
	below P10, 000	93	83.17	Satisfactory
	P10, 000- P19, 999	116	85.22	Very Satisfactory
	P20,000 or more	22	87.73	Very Satisfactory
As a Whole		231	84.63	Satisfactory

The Grade One learners have satisfactory academic performance.

When the learners are grouped according to age, both the younger and the older groups

have satisfactory academic performance, but the younger learners ($M = 84.92$) perform better than their older counterparts ($M = 83.88$).

When they are segregated according to sex, the female learners ($M = 85.22$) have very satisfactory grades in the first quarter compared to the male learners ($M = 84.11$), whose academic performance is satisfactory.

When they are clustered according to their fathers' educational attainment, the children of fathers who are college graduates ($M = 88.27$) or fathers who reach college level ($M = 85.93$) perform better academically compared to the other learners whose educational attainment is lower such as high school graduate ($M = 84.69$), high school level ($M = 83.00$), elementary school level ($M = 82.92$), and elementary school graduate ($M = 82.54$).

The same is true when they are classified according to their mothers' educational attainment. The children of mothers who have higher educational attainment – college graduate ($M = 86.33$) and college level ($M = 86.24$) – have very satisfactory academic performance, while those whose mothers have lower educational attainment – high school graduate ($M = 84.22$), elementary level ($M = 83.57$), elementary graduate ($M = 83.29$), and high school level ($M = 82.63$) perform only satisfactorily in academics.

When they are categorized according to family income, the learners who come from families with higher earnings – income range of twenty thousand pesos or more ($M = 87.73$) and of ten thousand to nineteen thousand nine hundred ninety-nine pesos ($M = 85.2$) – perform very satisfactorily in academics, while those who belong to families with lower

earnings ($M = 83.17$) have only satisfactory grades.

The result of this aligns with the claim of De Guzman and De Vera (2018) that Grade One pupils were assessed to have fairly satisfactory academic performance in Mother Tongue, while Grades One to Three learners yielded lower levels of academic performance in English.

According to Dietz and Wilson (Ampofo, 2019), age does not have any significant impact on a child's academic standing.

Chen, Kong, Gao, and Mo (2018) acknowledge that many studies affirm that there is a strong relationship between socioeconomic status and achievement in academics and mental facility, but in their study, they did not find a high correlation between the family's occupation and earnings with the children's ability to perform well in class.

According to PISA (cited in Vázquez-Cano, De la Calle-Cabrera, Hervás-Gómez, and López-Meneses, 2020), family context – parents' educational attainment, profession, and income – was seen to strongly impact students' reading ability and academic performance in all countries.

No matter what profile the pupils may have, it is a common observation that there is room for improvement in terms of their level of academic performance.

Difference in the Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Grade One Learners in Reading When Grouped According to Age

Table 5.1 reveals the data pertinent to whether or not there is a significant difference in the extent of difficulties of the learners when grouped according to age.

Table 5.1. Difference in the Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Learners in Reading when they are Grouped according to Age

Age	N	Mean Rank
6 years old or younger	167	115.46
7 years old or older	64	117.41
Total	231	
Computed value (U):	5254.00	
P-value:	0.843	
Decision:	Accept Ho	
Interpretation:	Not significant at 0.05 level of significance	

As shown in Table 5.1, there is no significant difference in the extent of difficulties encountered by Grade One learners in reading when they are grouped according to age. Using the Mann-Whitney U test, the computed value is 5254.00, and the p-value yielded 0.843, is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is not rejected. The result shows that whether the learners are younger or older, they are confronted with the same extent of difficulties in reading. This implies that age has no impact on the challenges experienced by learners when it comes to reading.

Schlaggar & Church (cited in Ampofo, 2019) negate this because they are of the contention that there are differences in the reading skills of younger and older pupils, and so with the

difficulties they face as they struggle to learn and master the skill. In their very own study, however, Vlachos, Papadimitriou, and Walla (cited in Ampofo, 2019) proved that older children are better equipped at reading, thus, their difficulties are minimal compared to those of the younger ones.

Difference in the Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Grade One Learners in Reading When Grouped According to Sex

Table 5.2 as seen on the next page presents the data pertinent to whether or not there is a significant difference in the extent of difficulties of the learners when grouped according to sex.

Table 5.2. Difference in the Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Learners in Reading when they are Grouped according to Sex

Sex	N	Mean Rank
Male\	123	124.53
Female	108	106.29
Total	231	
Computed value (U):	5593.00	
P-value:	0.038	
Decision:	Reject Ho	
Interpretation:	Significant at 0.05 level of significance	

It can be gleaned from Table 5.2 that there is a significant difference in the extent of difficulties encountered by Grade One learners in reading when they are grouped according to sex. Using the Mann-Whitney U test, the computed value is 5593.00 and the p-value yielded, 0.038, is lesser than the 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that male and female learners encounter difficulties in reading differently. The boys find it hard to read and comprehend the materials compared to the girls. This implies that sex influences how learners deal with challenges pertinent to reading.

This is affirmed by Quinn (2018) who asserts that it is the boys who tend to be faced with a reading difficulty. For McGeown, Goodwin, Henderson, and Wright (cited in Quinn, 2018), however, there are justifications why boys are vulnerable to experiencing difficulties in reading. It is believed that girls are more

driven to read and are blessed to be more receptive towards reading, thus teachers may unconsciously display more attention and care for girls' reading than for boys; so, this has a negative effect on the boys when they try to read (Barberg, 2022). Because girls are expected to nurture more interest in reading and are potentially able to read better, the boys are led to take reading for granted but recognize that they could suffer from more consequences because they read poorly. Adetunji (2023) stated that boys fear being treated negatively if they do not perform well in reading tests. Seemingly, teachers' negative typecasts have an adverse impact on how boys see themselves and their reading skills over and above their reading performance (Barberg, 2022).

Difference in the Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Grade One Learners in

Reading When Grouped According to Father's Educational Attainment

Table 5.3 on the next page shows the data pertinent to whether or not there is a

significant difference in the extent of difficulties of the learners when grouped according to what their fathers have attained in education.

Table 5.3. Difference in the Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Learners in Reading when they are Grouped according to Fathers' Educational Attainment.

Father's Educational Attainment	N	Mean Rank
Elementary Level	13	139.96
Elementary Graduate	13	152.27
HS level	49	153.21
HS Graduate	87	113.75
College Level	54	85.37
College Graduate	15	65.53
Total	231	
Computed value (H):	40.75	
P-value:	<0.001	
Decision:	Reject Ho	
Interpretation:	Significant at 0.05 level of significance	

As indicated in Table 5.3, there is a significant difference in the extent of difficulties encountered by the learners when grouped according to their fathers' educational attainment. Using the Kruskal-Wallis test, the computed value is 40.75, and the p-value - <0.001 is lesser than the 0.05 level of significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result shows that the extent of difficulties encountered by the learners in reading has something to do with what level their father has finished in school. Those whose fathers have higher educational attainment have fewer difficulties. This implies that the learners' fathers' attainment in school has an impact on the way the learners deal with reading.

It was noted in the research conducted by Ahmad, Ajmal, and Hafeez (2023) that the higher the educational attainment of the fathers, the lesser their children's concerns in learning how to read. The fathers' level of education has a positive relationship with their daughters' English reading performance. The scores earned by the daughters of educated

fathers in reading were higher than those of the sons of fathers who finished the same level of education.

This is supported by Vasquez-Cano et al. (2020) whose conclusion was that children of fathers whose attainment is low cannot also read satisfactorily well because they are confronted with much difficulty in gaining proficiency in reading.

These studies underscore the need for parental support in promoting the development of reading skills of young learners and in minimizing their stress in learning how to read.

Difference in the Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Grade One Learners in Reading When Grouped According to Mother's Educational Attainment

Table 5.4 on the next page reveals the data pertinent to whether or not there is a significant difference in the extent of difficulties of the learners when grouped according to the educational attainment of their mothers.

Table 5.4. Differences in the Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Learners in Reading when they are Grouped according to Mother's Educational Attainment

Mother's Educational Attainment	N	Mean Rank
Elementary Level	7	129.29

Mother's Educational Attainment	N	Mean Rank
Elementary Graduate	7	126.93
HS Level	41	158.91
HS Graduate	92	121.07
College Level	66	88.04
College Graduate	18	85.44
Total	231	
Computed value (H):	33.266	
P-value:	<0.001	
Decision:	Reject Ho	
Interpretation:	Significant at 0.05 level of significance	

It can be gleaned in Table 5.4 that there is a significant difference in the extent of difficulties encountered by the learners when grouped according to their mothers' educational attainment. Using the Kruskal-Wallis test, the computed value is 33.266, and the p-value – <0.001 is lesser than the 0.05 level of significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result indicates that the extent of difficulties confronting the learners when reading is affected by whatever their mothers have hurdled in school. The higher the educational attainment of their mother is, the lower the extent of their difficulties become. This simply implies that the educational attainment of the learners' mothers' can potentially affect how the learners cope with reading difficulties.

Whatever mothers have finished in education is positively associated with the learners' cognitive development (Alibraheim and

Taifour, 2023), thus mothers can very well help their children cope with challenges that beset them in learning how to read.

Greenwood, Dudley, Hutton, DiFrancesco, Farah, and Horowitz-Kraus, (2021) echoed that higher maternal education has a positive influence on children to have better phonemic fluency, sustained/divided attention, and decreased inattentiveness for children with dyslexia.

Difference in the Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Grade One Learners in Reading When Grouped According to Family Income

Table 5.5 shows the data pertinent to whether or not there is a significant difference in the extent of difficulties of the learners when grouped according to family income.

Table 5.5. Difference in the Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Learners in Reading when they are Grouped according to Family Income.

Family Income	N	Mean Rank
below P10, 000	93	136.32
P10, 000- P19, 999	116	104.84
P20,000 or more	22	88.98
Total	231	
Computed value (U):	15.452	
P-value:	<0.001	
Decision:	Reject Ho	
Interpretation:	Significant at 0.05 level of significance	

As indicated in Table 5.5, there is a significant difference in the extent of difficulties encountered by Grade One learners in reading when they are grouped according to family income. Using the Kruskal-Wallis test, the

computed value is 15.452, and the p-value yielded, >0.001, is lesser than the 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This reveals that the learners' family's monthly income affects the way they face

difficulties when reading. Those who come from families with higher income have lesser difficulties compared to those whose families earn less. This implies that family income or socio-economic status can potentially impact how difficult learners perceive reading to be.

This finding is supported by Tuell (2021) who asserts that children who come from low socio-economic status find it more difficult to develop good reading skills as they are confronted with a lack of materials to read, poor access to technology to aid them in their struggles, and parents' preoccupation with earning a living rather than spend time helping them improve.

Pollard (2019) also agreed that children who come from low socio-economic environments are faced with obstacles that they have no control over. The absence of parental

support and enough resources to nurture their reading prowess makes them perform poorly in class.

This is another sad reality that teachers must address – how they can help children from families with barely enough resources and support to gain facility in reading.

Difference in the Academic Performance of the Learners When Grouped According to Age

Results for the learners' academic performance and their demographic profile were tested if there is a significant difference. Data are presented in Tables 6.1 to 6.5.

Table 6.1 presents the data pertinent to whether or not there is a significant difference in the academic performance of the learners when grouped according to age.

Table 6.1. Difference in the Academic Performance of the Learners when they are Grouped according to Age

Age	N	Mean Rank
6 years old or younger	167	120.59
7 years old or older	64	104.02
Total	231	
Computed value (U):	4577.50	
P-value:	0.091	
Decision:	Accept Ho	
Interpretation:	Not significant at 0.05 level of significance	

It can be gleaned from Table 6.1 that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of the Grade One learners when they are grouped according to age. Using the Mann-Whitney U test, the computed value is 4577.50, and the p-value yielded 0.091, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is not rejected. This is indicative that no matter what the age of the learner is, he or she can perform equally in academics just like all the other learners. This implies that age cannot influence academic performance.

This result is negated by Hanly, Edwards, Goldfeld, Craven, Mooney, Jorm, and Falster (2019) because in his study kindergarten pupils who go to school at an older age have a greater facility, while those who enter kindergarten at a younger age tend to perform lower in reading than the older kids.

This is supported by Brower (2020) whose own research found that age and academic performance in kindergarten in a rural school do not correlate. Younger pupils are not up for the academic challenges that they are exposed to in reading because of their underdeveloped mental capabilities. However, those who enroll in kindergarten later or at an older age are more likely to have a better academic advantage.

Difference in the Academic Performance of the Learners When Grouped According to Sex

Table 6.2 presents the data pertinent to whether or not there is a significant difference in the academic performance of the learners when grouped according to sex.

Table 6.2. Difference in the Academic Performance of the Learners when they are Grouped according to Sex

Sex	N	Mean Rank
Male	123	109.33
Female	108	123.59
Total	231	
Computed value (U):	5822.00	
P-value:	0.105	
Decision:	Accept Ho	
Interpretation:	Not significant at 0.05 level of significance	

As shown in Table 6.2, there is no significant difference in the academic performance of Grade One learners when they are grouped according to sex. Using the Mann-Whitney U test, the computed value is 5822.00, and the p-value yielded 0.105, is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is not rejected. This proves that male and female learners can perform in academics at the same level. This only implies that sex does not have any impact on the learners' academic performance.

The research undertaken by Vasilyeva, Antipkina, Coughlan, and Kardanova (2021) negates this because they concluded that girls can perform better in reading hurdles, such as decoding and reading comprehension because their parents engage girls in literacy activities.

Xhomara (2023) affirms this, too. Boys, who belong to the lowest level, have higher scores in reading, while the girls, who belong to the highest and average level, scored higher than the boys.

These studies only prove that the gender of pupils has something to do with how they fare in academics.

Difference in the Academic Performance of the Learners When Grouped According to Father's Educational Attainment

Table 6.3 on the next page reveals the data pertinent to whether or not there is a significant difference in the academic performance of the learners when grouped according to their fathers' educational level.

Table 6.3. Difference in the Academic Performance of the Learners when they are Grouped according to Fathers' Educational Attainment

Father's Educational Attainment	N	Mean Rank
Elementary Level	13	139.96
Elementary Graduate	13	152.27
HS Level	49	153.21
HS Graduate	87	113.75
College Level	54	85.37
College Graduate	15	65.53
Total	231	
Computed value (H):	40.75	
P-value:	<0.001	
Decision:	Reject Ho	
Interpretation:	Significant at 0.05 level of significance	

It can be noted from Table 6.3 that there is a significant difference in the academic performance of the Grade One learners when grouped according to their fathers' educational attainment. Using the Kruskal-Wallis test, the

computed value is 40.75, and the p-value – <0.001 is lesser than the 0.05 level of significance; thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that learners perform differently in academics depending on their fathers' level of

educational attainment. The children of fathers with higher attainment have better performance than those of fathers with lower attainment. This is indicative of the positive influence of the learners' fathers' educational attainment on the learners' academic potential.

There is an affirmation to this in the research of Vasquez-Cano et al. (2020) whose conclusion was that fathers' educational accomplishment predicts their children's reading performance in school as well as in the study of Ahmad, Ajmal, and Hafeez (2023) who assert that the higher the educational attainment of the fathers, the better is their children's English reading performance. The fathers' level of education has a positive relationship with their daughters' English reading performance. The

scores earned by the daughters of educated fathers in reading were higher than those of the sons of fathers who finished the same level of education.

However, Lundborg et al. (2014) found that the father's high level of education does not necessarily pave the way for pleasant outcomes in his children's future.

Difference in the Academic Performance of the Learners When Grouped According to Mother's Educational Attainment

Table 6.4 reveals the data pertinent to whether or not there is a significant difference in the academic performance of the learners when grouped according to their mothers' educational accomplishments.

Table 6.4. Difference in the Academic Performance of the Learners when they are Grouped according to Mothers' Educational Attainment

Mother's Educational Attainment	N	Mean Rank
Elementary Level	7	129.29
Elementary Graduate	7	126.93
HS Level	41	158.91
HS Graduate	92	121.07
College Level	66	88.04
College Graduate	18	85.44
Total	231	

Computed value (h): 33.266

P-value: <0.001

Decision: Reject Ho

Interpretation: Significant at 0.05 level of significance

As presented in Table 6.4, there is a significant difference in the academic performance of the learners when grouped according to their mothers' educational attainment. Using the Kruskal-Wallis test, the computed value is 33.266, and the p-value - <0.001 is lesser than the 0.05 level of significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result indicates that the learners' mothers' educational attainment can make the children perform differently in academics. The children of mothers with higher attainment have higher grades than those whose mothers have lower attainment. This is indicative of the influence of mothers' educational attainment on the learners' performance in school.

Dong et al. (2019) can affirm that mothers' attainment in education contributes to the development of their children. Also, they conclude that those whose parents are better educated are also able to perform in academics better as well as enjoy better health and adjustment. This is echoed by Li and Qiu (2018), who found that the mother's education had a noteworthy and positive bearing on her son's skills and health status.

However, some studies yield that the higher the educational level of the mother, the better chance she has to advance in her career, which would negatively affect her children's academic achievement (Behrman & Rosenzweig cited in Wang, Dong, Liu, Bai, and Zhang, 2020).

Difference in the Academic Performance of the Learners When Grouped According to Family Income

Table 6.5 shows the data pertinent to whether or not there is a significant difference in the academic performance of the learners when grouped according to family income.

Table 6.5. Difference in the Academic Performance of the Learners when they are Grouped according to Family Income

Family Income	N	Mean Rank
below P10, 000	93	136.32
P10, 000- P19, 999	116	104.84
P20,000 or more	22	88.98
Total	231	
Computed value (H):	15.452	
P-value:	<0.001	
Decision:	Reject Ho	
Interpretation:	Significant at 0.05 level of significance	

As revealed in Table 6.5, there is a significant difference in the academic performance of the Grade One learners when they are grouped according to family income. Using the Kruskal-Wallis test, the computed value is 15.452, and the p-value yielded, >0.001, is lesser than the 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that the learners who come from better-off families can lead the children to perform better in class, while those whose households have certain constraints due to lesser income cannot deliver that well in academics. This implies that family income is a considerable factor in the learners' academic performance.

This is supported by Kemanae and Mnjokaya (2022) and Kendra (2022) whose conclusion is that the income of parents influ-

ences the way their children perform in academics. Pupils who come from families with meager incomes live in poor conditions, and their parents are unable to provide them with the substantial resources needed for their studies, thus a promising academic performance is also impeded. However, in the study of Casas (2023), some pupils who do not consider poverty as a hindrance to academic success.

Relationship between Extent of Difficulties Encountered in Reading and Academic Performance of Learners

The extent of difficulties encountered by learners in reading and their academic performance were tested for a possible relationship with the use of gamma. Results are reflected in Table 7.

Table 7. Relationship in the Extent of Difficulties Encountered in Reading and Academic Performance

Extent of Difficulties Encountered	Level of Academic Performance				Total
	Fairly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Outstanding	
Very Low	0	0	10	27	37
Low	0	9	23	10	42
Moderate	7	56	47	0	110
High	4	14	1	0	19
Very High	18	3	2	0	23
Total	29	82	83	37	231
Computed value (G)	-0.88				
P-value	<0.001				
Decision	Reject Ho				
Interpretation	Significant at 0.05 level of significance				

Table 7 shows that there is a relationship between the difficulties confronting the learners in reading and their academic performance. Using the Gamma test, the p-value yielded, <0.001 , which is lesser than the 0.05 level of significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result indicates that there is a significant relationship between the extent of difficulties encountered in reading and the pupils' level of performance. The negative G value indicates that the correlation is negative. This implies that the lower the extent of the difficulties, the higher the academic performance, and the higher the difficulties, the lower the academic performance. This simply means that pupils who do not much difficulty as they attack reading challenges in class are more likely to earn high grades compared to those who have experienced more difficulties who, accordingly, will also end up getting lower grades.

Results of this study have established that Grade One pupils go through a considerable extent of difficulties as they learn how to read in class. Although their academic performance ranges from satisfactory to very satisfactory, there is room for improvement to make it outstanding. Teachers are challenged to creatively think of ways to assist the pupils overcome their difficulties and gain proficiency in all five aspects of reading.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The Grade One pupils in the first district of Schools Division of Bago City are generally younger males, whose parents are mostly high school graduates, and who come from families who earn an average income per month.
2. The Grade One pupils are faced with difficulties in developing reading skills in Mother Tongue-based education that they need as much help as they can get from their teachers and their families at home.
3. The Grade One pupils may be able to perform academically well in reading in the Mother Tongue-based education, but they can do even better.
4. Age does not make the pupils deal with difficulties in reading differently, but sex,

parents' educational attainment, and family income can influence how they deal with these difficulties.

5. There is no difference in the pupils' performance in reading no matter what their age and sex may be, but parents' educational attainment and family income are factors that can make them fare in academics differently.
6. The greater the extent of difficulties the learners experience in learning reading, the lower is their academic performance. They can earn higher grades when the difficulties are addressed.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. The Grade One teachers can initiate more concrete classroom activities that can lead the pupils to learn reading with very minimal difficulty.
2. They can creatively think of ways to improve classroom instruction that can pave the way for their pupils to gain greater mastery in reading.
3. They can also facilitate open communication with parents who can very well support the pupils in developing reading skills while they are at home.
4. The school administrators and teachers may encourage parents and guardians to be more active participants in the growth and formation of their children, particularly in enhancing their skills in reading.
5. The school administrators can establish linkages with government and non-government agencies as well as other stakeholders that can donate facilities and resources that would enable the children to love reading books and other materials.

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