

Reading Comprehension Challenges Among Grade 6 Learners: Basis for a Reading Mentorship Program

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the reading comprehension challenges faced by Grade 6 learners and to propose a reading mentorship program as an intervention to improve their literacy skills. A total of 125 Grade 6 learners from a selected school participated in the study. Data were gathered using questionnaires focused on learner profiles, types of reading materials engaged pwith, and the specific reading comprehension challenges they encountered. The study found that household income and parental education level significantly influenced the learners' reading comprehension abilities. Learners from higher-income households and those with better-educated parents faced fewer challenges in reading comprehension. In contrast, challenges such as inadequate use of context clues, limited vocabulary knowledge, and difficulties in making inferences were prevalent. Furthermore, engagement with various types of reading materials, including e-books and online articles, showed some

correlation with improved comprehension, though not statistically significant. Based on these findings, a reading mentorship program was proposed to provide targeted support in vocabulary development, reading strategies, and comprehension monitoring. The program also aims to involve parents and address socio-economic barriers to enhance the reading abilities of Grade 6 learners. The study concludes that a holistic, multi-faceted approach, including mentorship, parental involvement, and access to diverse reading materials, is essential for improving reading comprehension outcomes among learners.

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, Reading Mentorship Program, Reading Challenges*

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a critical skill that forms the foundation of academic success and lifelong learning. In elementary education, it is essential for learners to develop strong reading skills to comprehend texts across various subjects. However, many elementary learners face significant challenges in reading comprehension, impacting their overall academic performance. Addressing these difficulties is crucial for ensuring that learners are equipped with the necessary skills to excel academically and beyond. Research has highlighted several factors influencing reading

comprehension among young learners. According to Snow (2017), reading comprehension involves complex cognitive processes that require the integration of decoding skills, vocabulary knowledge, and prior knowledge. Stanovich (2016) emphasizes the "Matthew effect" in reading, where early success in reading leads to greater subsequent success, while early difficulties lead to ongoing challenges.

Additionally, Guthrie and Wigfield (2015) discuss the importance of engagement in reading, suggesting that learners who are motivated and engaged in reading activities demonstrate better comprehension skills. Similarly, Duke and Pearson (2017) argue that instructional practices that promote active engagement and strategy use are crucial for improving reading comprehension among elementary learners.

Empirical studies have provided further insights into reading comprehension challenges and interventions. For instance, a study by Torgesen et al. (2016) found that early intervention programs focusing on phonemic awareness and decoding skills significantly improved reading comprehension outcomes for struggling readers. Torgesen et al. (2016) demonstrated that children who received systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics showed marked improvement in their reading skills, suggesting that early, targeted support can mitigate long-term reading difficulties.

Another study by van Keer and Verhaeghe (2015) demonstrated the effectiveness of peer tutoring programs in enhancing reading comprehension among elementary learners. Their research indicated that learners who participated in peer tutoring not only improved their reading comprehension but also developed greater self-efficacy and motivation for reading. This highlights the value of collaborative learning environments where learners can support each other.

Moreover, a longitudinal study by Pfof, Hattie, Dörfler, and Artelt (2018) highlighted the persistent nature of reading comprehension difficulties and the need for continuous support and targeted interventions throughout elementary education. Their findings underscored that without ongoing, structured interventions, reading comprehension difficulties can persist and even exacerbate over time, reinforcing the importance of sustained educational support.

Kamil et al. (2018) also emphasized the role of vocabulary instruction and text structure awareness in improving comprehension skills. They argued that learners need explicit instruction in understanding the structure of texts and the meanings of complex vocabulary to enhance their overall comprehension, advocating for comprehensive literacy programs that address these components.

This study aimed to identify the unique needs and challenges of learners in Guimba West Annex District to

develop targeted interventions that can be adapted and implemented in similar educational contexts across the Philippines.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlation research design to evaluate reading comprehension challenges among Grade 6 learners in the Guimba West Annex District, Schools Division of Nueva Ecija, for the school year 2024-2025, serving as a basis for implementing a Reading mentorship Program.

Participants and Locale

The data for this study were collected from 125 Grade 6 learners at the Guimba West Annex District, Schools Division of Nueva Ecija, for the 2024-2025 school year. These learners participated by responding to a questionnaire developed by the researcher. To ensure a representative sample, simple random sampling was employed to select the participants, providing a systematic approach to gathering the necessary data for the study.

Sampling and Data Collection

The data for this study were collected from 125 Grade 6 learners at the Guimba West Annex District,

Schools Division of Nueva Ecija, for the 2024-2025 school year. These learners participated by responding to a questionnaire developed by the researcher. To ensure a representative sample, simple random sampling was employed to select the participants, providing a systematic approach to gathering the necessary data for the study.

Data Analysis

The following tools were utilized to treat the data statistically.

Ethical Considerations

The study employed a descriptive-correlation research design to evaluate reading comprehension challenges among Grade 6 learners in the Guimba West Annex District, Schools Division of Nueva Ecija, for the school year 2024-2025, serving as a basis for implementing a Reading mentorship Program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The study found that household income and parental education level significantly influenced the learners' reading comprehension abilities.

2. Learners from higher-income households and those with better-educated parents faced fewer challenges in reading comprehension.
3. Furthermore, engagement with various types of reading materials, including e-books and online articles, showed some correlation with improved comprehension, though not statistically significant.
4. Based on these findings, a reading mentorship program was proposed to provide targeted support in vocabulary development, reading strategies, and comprehension monitoring.
5. Specifically, 30% of learners have household incomes between PHP 10,000 and PHP 20,000, while the largest group, 38%, falls within the PHP 20,000 - PHP 30,000 bracket.
6. This indicates that a significant portion of learners come from middle-income households.
7. A smaller proportion, 24%, have household incomes between PHP 30,000 and PHP 40,000, and only 5% belong to households with incomes exceeding PHP 40,000.
8. The income distribution also shows that 3% of learners come from households earning below PHP 10,000, which may indicate a lower socio-economic background.
9. Table 2 Parental Education Level N = 125 Parental Education Level | f | % No formal education | 3 | 2 Elementary level | 28 | 22 High school level | 55 | 44

College level | 33 | 26 Postgraduate level | 8 | 6 Total | 125 | 100 Specifically, 44% of parents have completed only high school education, while 26% have reached the college level.

10. A smaller group, 6%, have completed postgraduate education, and 2% of parents have no formal education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Socio-economic factors, such as household income and parental education level, significantly influence reading comprehension challenges. Learners from lower-income households or those with less-educated parents experience more serious reading comprehension challenges.

Inadequate vocabulary knowledge and the inability to use context clues are primary obstacles to reading comprehension, highlighting the need for interventions that focus on these foundational skills.

Exposure to various reading materials, though beneficial, was not the sole factor influencing reading comprehension, indicating that other targeted interventions are necessary to address the challenges faced by learners.

There is a need for tailored interventions focusing on key areas such as vocabulary development,

decoding skills, and reading comprehension strategies, including making inferences and identifying main ideas.

While providing access to reading materials is important, a more comprehensive approach that includes mentorship, personalized strategies, and socio-economic support is needed to improve reading comprehension among Grade 6 learners.

Recommendations

1. Establish a mentorship program that pairs students with trained mentors to provide personalized support in vocabulary building, decoding, and context clue usage. The program should focus on helping students develop strategies for making inferences and understanding complex texts.
2. Offer workshops for parents to educate them on supporting their children's reading development at home, particularly in fostering vocabulary growth, engaging with reading materials, and practicing comprehension strategies.
3. Ensure learners have access to a variety of reading materials, including e-books, comics, and educational apps, which are engaging and help develop reading fluency and comprehension. Encourage engagement with different types of texts to develop a broader understanding of language and reading styles.
4. Implement specific reading comprehension strategies, such as teaching learners how to identify main ideas,

- make inferences, and monitor their comprehension during reading. These strategies should be reinforced through both individual and group reading sessions.
5. Schools should explore ways to provide additional resources and support to students from low-income households. This could include subsidized access to reading materials, digital platforms, and additional academic support.

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