

READING COMPREHENSION AMONG GRADE 1 LEARNERS: BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEXTUALIZED ACTIVITY SHEETS

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Abstract : Reading comprehension is a critical skill essential for academic success and lifelong learning. However, Grade 1 learners of Tupa Integrated School – Main face various challenges that hinder their reading proficiency, including limited access to reading resources, distractions at home, and insufficient time spent reading. Recognizing these issues, this study was conducted to examine the reading comprehension levels of these learners and explore their relationship with selected profile variables to serve as the basis for developing contextualized activity sheets. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study surveyed 26 Grade 1 learners through cluster sampling. A validated self-made questionnaire and standardized tools were utilized to gather data, while statistical techniques such as frequency, percentages, chi-square tests, and Spearman's rho were employed for analysis. Findings revealed that most learners had low reading comprehension levels, often influenced by minimal time spent reading at home. Among the profile variables, only the number of hours reading books at home showed a significant relationship with reading comprehension at the 0.01 level. Teachers identified key challenges, including lack of home support, insufficient materials, and varying learning preferences. The study recommends the development of contextualized activity sheets tailored to learners' cultural and environmental contexts. These materials aim to enhance engagement and comprehension skills, addressing identified barriers. Strengthened parental involvement, improved resource allocation, and teacher training on differentiated strategies are also suggested to support learners' reading development effectively.

Beyond understanding simple words, competency in reading needs active interaction with the book, in-depth examination of its content, and making of data to produce fresh ideas and viewpoints (Saro et al., 2024). Students will suffer academically with this skill. Reading comprehension is crucial for future learning and understanding (Acedillo, 2023).

According to Requiso-Jimenez & Bascos-Ocampo (2022), reading comprehension is essential today. They emphasize the idea that reading is not just a hobby but rather an essential requirement for living life to the fullest and taking an active part in national-building initiatives. Their emphasis on the value of reading comes from their belief that it is a means of acquiring knowledge. They contend that reading is fundamental to human existence and is necessary for both mental and cultural growth.

Moreover, Acedillo (2023) emphasizes how many chores students do every day involve reading, estimating that students read for 80% of their daily assignments. This statistic suggests that reading is essential, demonstrating its importance in both educational settings and daily life. As such, reading comes out as one of the most important hobbies, necessary for both academic endeavors and figuring out the intricacies of modern life. Reading comprehension is still a major problem for Philippine schools, even though its importance in learning has long been acknowledged. Reading helps people with their academic endeavors because it provides them with useful skills and access to a large amount of knowledge. Competency in reading is a prerequisite across all learning domains (Deluao et al., 2022).

About low reading proficiency as determined by national and international large-scale examinations, the Department of Education's current efforts offer chances to improve students' academic performance. According to the Department of Education (DepEd), the Philippines' dismal performance in the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) suggests a five- to six-year gap in the nation's learning competencies. In the student assessment for 15-year-old learners conducted by the OECD, the Philippines came in at number 77 out of 81 nations worldwide. The nation received scores of 355 in math, 347 in reading, and 373 in science on the 2022 student evaluation, which was almost 120 points below the average (Ines, 2023). Notably, reading scores remain low, suggesting that every student needs immediate attention to close learning gaps and improve their reading ability.

The subpar results indicated significant shortcomings within the educational system. The necessity for swift intervention was highlighted by the World Bank's 2022 study, which revealed that an alarming 91% of 10-year-old Filipino children struggled with basic reading comprehension.

DepEd has revised its K–10 curricula, now known as the MATATAG Curriculum, in light of the aforementioned shortfall. When it comes to giving everyone access to a basic education that is high-quality, timely, inclusive, and responsive, the Department of Education (DepEd) responds quickly. This promise is outlined in the MATATAG Education Agenda, which aims to develop capable people with the necessary competencies and abilities for lifelong learning to become responsible, engaged, and job-ready citizens (DepEd Memorandum No. 54, series of 2023).

The "Catch-Up Fridays" project was started by the Department of Education (DepEd) in accordance with these aims. This intervention program, which is introduced across elementary and secondary schools as well as community learning centers (CLCs) countrywide, is intended to optimize learning possibilities. Throughout the school year, every Friday is set aside for the "Drop Everything and Read" (DEAR) program, which promotes reading and knowledge acquisition in society (Hernando-Malipot, 2024).

Furthermore, the program's rules can be improved by using Catch-Up Fridays as a forum to get insightful input from senior implementers. In order to ensure the project's efficacy and relevance in achieving educational objectives, it also offers the chance to gather information on students' opinions regarding its execution (DepEd Memorandum No. 001, series of 2024). Reading is the cornerstone of language competency and a basic ability required for success in the classroom, according to Tomas et al. (2021),

who believe that reading has a substantial impact on a child's educational journey. Furthermore, it is the fundamental ability for all other study skills (Helarde, 2021).

Research shows that primary kids' gender distribution is typical. In a research conducted in a rural Philippine school, 56% of the students were female and 44% were male. This suggests a higher proportion of females than males. It was also discovered that a significant number of pupils had parents who just completed high school, and many of them did not pursue further education. According to Duque et al. (2022), the students in the same study appear to have three to five siblings, indicating that their family is large. People read for 0.34 hours a day on average in 2020. As opposed to the thirteen minutes that pupils in grade schools read each day, high school students read for as little as four minutes each day (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021).

Particularly when compared to international standards, the reading comprehension levels at which pupils currently follow the MATATAG Curriculum exhibit serious difficulties. The World Bank (2022) reports that 91% of 10-year-old Filipino children have difficulty with basic reading comprehension as of 2022, indicating the need for significant improvements in literacy.

According to Caraig & Quimbo's (2022) investigation of students' reading comprehension levels, only 7% of all respondents are categorized as Mastery Level readers. In comparison to the 49% near mastery level and the 44% bad mastery level, the result is poor. However, the findings of the Saro et al. (2024) study showed that during the Matatag Curriculum's Catch-Up Friday sessions, a sizable percentage of pupils showed impressive growth in their reading comprehension. Most children were classified as independent readers, indicating their high competency levels, the study's conclusion stated.

The gender and greatest level of education attained by either parent is insignificant (Lofranco & Luzano, 2023). On the other hand, it appears from Orellano et al. (2024) that there is marginal gender-based disparities in reading comprehension, with women often scoring higher than men on comprehension tests. Additionally, Wu & Hindman (2024) noted that children tend to do better in reading comprehension when their parents have greater levels of education. Early parental involvement has a beneficial effect on literacy because these parents are more likely to participate in structured reading programs.

Lofranco & Luzano (2023) found a statistically significant correlation between pupils' reading comprehension and the number of siblings they had. However, a study by Rambuyon & Susada in 2023 discovered that students in elementary school did not significantly differ in their reading comprehension results based on the number of siblings they had.

Furthermore, the research shows that even brief daily reading sessions greatly enhance reading comprehension, while the effect also varies according to the difficulty of the text being read (Orellano et al., 2024). Conversely, Çigdemir & Akyol's study from 2022 discovered that pupils with greater comprehension scores were those who read more frequently at home. This is consistent with the widely held belief that improved literacy outcomes result from more exposure to reading practice.

According to the study, reading comprehension was severely hindered for pupils who were taught in a language other than their mother tongue. Prior to concentrating on the second language, which is English, the first language needs to be learned. They claim that when pupils study English and their mother tongue together, they become confused (Manlapig, 2020). However, according to Papat Stefanou et al. (2021), bilinguals outperformed monolinguals in decoding throughout all years.

Tomas et al. (2021) revealed that pupils who did not have a strong foundation in literacy found it difficult to understand new concepts taught in the curriculum and more difficult reading materials. The findings underscored the need for interventions to bridge these fundamental gaps if students' reading comprehension wasn't improving, especially in places with few resources. However, Smith et al. (2021) discovered that although weaker readers were able to somewhat compensate for their relatively poor reading skills in the context of a high degree of background knowledge, readers with lower background knowledge appeared to benefit more from texts with high cohesion.

The English pupils' reading comprehension abilities were enhanced via differentiated instruction. It affects them significantly in comparison to the minimal effect of the conventional procedure (Potot et al., 2023). On the other hand, Smith & Lee (2021), discovered that in a standardized educational context, students' learning preferences had no effect on their reading comprehension. This suggests that material quality was more important than accommodating individual learning styles.

Studies discovered that it was extremely difficult for younger pupils and those with attention issues to stay focused throughout class (Schmidt, 2020). As per de la Mora Velasco & Hirumi (2020), certain pupils' comprehension and concentration skills were enhanced by subtle distractions like background music or adjustable seats.

Academic materials that call for critical thinking are difficult to understand. Understanding authors' points of view, dispositions, and intricate higher-order cognitive tasks were the main areas of difficulty. For instance, while assessing the objectives and tones of authors, participants mentioned lacking previous information (Le et al., 2024). Nevertheless, Al Roomy (2022) demonstrated how teaching children a wide range of critical reading abilities helped them overcome reading difficulties since they were able to read not only what was written directly but also what was being said in between and outside of the lines.

Students' reading comprehension abilities are impacted when they have little or no reading materials at home or in school (Torres, 2021). In contrast, research by Dockx et al. (2020) found no correlation between textbooks and students' average learning gain in reading comprehension.

One aspect that may contribute to challenges to reading is a lack of parental attention during reading time. Reading difficulties in children can be caused by repeated reading sessions at school and a lack of help for reading at home (Rohimah, 2021). According to Çalışkana & Ulaşb (2022), parent-involved reading programs improved pupils' reading comprehension, motivation, and attitudes toward reading.

Pancardo et al., (2022) suggest that it would be useless to assess pupils' understanding by traditional testing methods like multiple-choice exams. However, contemporary assessment practices, like including comprehension questions within reading passages rather than having students answer questions at the conclusion of the passage, have a big influence on how well students do. This method of measuring reading comprehension may be more reliable, leading to higher reading comprehension ratings for students (Guerreiro et al., 2022).

The finest teaching strategies are determined by the training of educators, which also enhances students' interests and academic performance (Hafeez, 2021). However, even after receiving training, research revealed that more than 200 teachers in the Bangsamoro region who participated in the DepEd reading program scored below 50% in reading comprehension, and only about 35% of teachers were at least proficient following the program (Chi, 2024).

Kheang et al. (2024) conducted a review that examined the noteworthy influence of reading enthusiasm on students' comprehension skills. A variety of good outcomes are displayed by motivated students, such as making informed predictions,

improving performance, conquering obstacles, and lowering comprehension anxiety. For this reason, pupils may benefit greatly from the regular integration of reading motivation into the curriculum. However, reading motivation was not found to be substantially correlated with reading comprehension for either proficient or struggling readers, according to Li & Gan (2022).

The remark raised by Sambayaon et al. (2023) regarding the significant impact of contextualized teaching and learning on the development of students' reading comprehension and skills is well-founded. Also, the concept of adult learning has once again been reinforced using contextualization in the classroom. Learning is motivated; students can connect text and context, analyze the information using their schema, and read instructions with greater confidence.

Furthermore, through the integration of game-based learning principles, Bondaug (2021) investigated the efficacy and validity of the generated instructional material for the development of reading comprehension. Following their participation in the games, pupils' reading comprehension abilities could indeed increase, according to the study's results. In addition, student users stated how the instructional materials encouraged them to participate in their education and provided them with the opportunity to apply various comprehension techniques in order to reach a high level of comprehension of the texts they read. Teacher users also mentioned the greater involvement of the kids in their reading sessions.

Moreover, according to Puspita et al. (2022), using instructional materials built around the Canva software significantly improves students' comprehension of informational texts. It affects how simple it is for educators to meet learning objectives using instructional resources, media, worksheets, and engaging, hands-on activities that help students develop their comprehension of informational texts.

Additionally, Abenir (2023) argues that the teacher-made small books' contextualized reading passages, vibrant illustrations, and word choices have made it easier for readers to understand the stories presented. As a result, these resources have proven to be effective in helping students' comprehension skills.

Based on the empirical observation in Tupa Integrated School – Main, Urdaneta City, some of the learners have low reading comprehension levels. Thus, the study's purpose was to address the issue of low reading comprehension among students and propose a basis for the development of contextualized activity sheets.

The study aimed to determine the current comprehension level of Grade 1 of Tupa Integrated School, Division of Pangasinan I.

Furthermore, the results of the study can help educational officials make choices about curriculum, teacher preparation, and resource distribution. It can also prompt a review to promote reading comprehension better. Moreover, research may also help with the creation or updating of teaching resources that close reading comprehension gaps.

Theoretical Framework

This study incorporates foundational theories of reading comprehension and offers a framework to guide the design of targeted learning activities. Here, three relevant theoretical models—the Simple View of Reading (SVR), the Structure-Building Framework, and the Interactive Reading Model—provide a strong basis for understanding and addressing the specific needs of young learners.

First, the Simple View of Reading (SVR) model posits that reading comprehension is the product of two primary skills: decoding and language comprehension (Hoover & Gough, 1990). Decoding refers to the ability to translate written text into spoken words through phonemic awareness and fluency, which is essential for early readers like those in Grade 1. Language comprehension, on the other hand, encompasses vocabulary knowledge and background understanding, both crucial for interpreting and making sense of the decoded words. This dual focus aligns well with the goals of developing contextualized activity sheets, as it highlights the need to include activities that strengthen both word recognition and comprehension of the text's meaning (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014; Kendeou et al., 2009).

Another useful framework is the Structure-Building Framework by Gernsbacher (1991). This model conceptualizes reading comprehension as a process that involves laying a foundation, mapping new information onto existing knowledge, and shifting when new, unrelated information arises. The framework emphasizes mental representations, where students learn to construct coherent “structures” of information as they read, which is essential for understanding complex ideas and narratives. For Grade 1 learners, this approach suggests that activity sheets should encourage students to link new reading material to what they already know and build mental “structures” that support comprehension (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education, 2020). Through this framework, educators can design exercises that allow students to map new vocabulary and ideas onto their prior knowledge base, enhancing the depth of their comprehension.

Lastly, the Interactive Reading Model integrates both bottom-up and top-down processes, allowing for a more dynamic comprehension process. This model posits that readers decode text through a combination of phonemic awareness, vocabulary knowledge, and context-based inference, which is particularly suited to young learners who benefit from interactive, contextualized learning activities. Through this approach, reading comprehension becomes an interactive task where students use decoding skills and actively engage with the text, promoting critical thinking and prediction-making. The model is well-suited for contextualized learning, as it can help students relate textual content to real-world concepts and experiences, fostering meaningful connections that aid retention and understanding (Sharma, 2023).

Conceptual Framework

This framework uses an Independent Variable (IV) – Dependent Variable (DV) structure, where the independent variables include specific demographic and lifestyle factors: the learner's sex, parents' highest educational attainment, number of siblings, and number of hours spent reading at home each day. The dependent variable is the respondents' current reading comprehension level, providing an understanding of how these factors might influence or predict a child's ability to comprehend text.

The variable “sex” examines potential differences in reading comprehension between male and female students. Research suggests that boys and girls may develop reading skills at different rates, influenced by both biological and social factors (Logan & Johnston, 2009). For instance, some studies have shown that girls often perform better in early literacy skills, which may affect their reading comprehension levels in primary school (Mullis et al., 2017). By assessing this variable, the study can determine if

gender influences reading comprehension within the sample of Grade 1 learners and guide activity sheet development to address any observed differences.

Parents' highest educational attainment is another significant factor, as parental education often correlates with children's literacy development and academic success. Higher levels of parental education may mean greater access to reading resources at home and more engagement in educational activities, which can improve children's vocabulary and comprehension skills. Studies by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2019) show that children whose parents have higher educational levels tend to have stronger reading skills, possibly due to the enriched literacy environment and modeling provided by educated parents. This factor within the framework provides insights into the extent to which parental education impacts Grade 1 learners' reading comprehension, which could influence recommendations for engaging parents in supporting reading at home.

The number of siblings variable examines whether the number of children in a family affects reading comprehension. Previous research has found that children with more siblings may receive less individual attention from parents, potentially impacting their literacy development (Downey, 2001). However, sibling interactions can also foster language development and comprehension skills. This variable provides a unique perspective on the social dynamics within the home that might contribute to reading comprehension abilities in Grade 1 learners.

The number of hours spent reading books at home daily is critical, as reading practice is foundational for developing literacy skills. Studies confirm that time spent reading independently or with caregivers strengthens comprehension and vocabulary, enabling students to engage with texts more effectively in school (Mol & Bus, 2011). The impact of reading time as an independent variable emphasizes the role of consistent practice outside of school in achieving higher levels of reading comprehension. Tracking this variable will aid in understanding whether increasing reading time could be a beneficial intervention to support struggling readers.

Lastly, for a descriptive analysis, it is important to examine any challenges teachers face concerning learners' reading comprehension. Teachers' perspectives provide essential qualitative data on the obstacles to effective reading instruction in the classroom, including factors such as class size, curriculum constraints, and individual learner needs. Understanding these challenges can inform the design of activity sheets that support teachers in addressing common comprehension difficulties observed among Grade 1 students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses research methodology, which includes research design and the procedures used to solve research problems. Similarly, it discusses the data collection tools as well as the statistical treatments that will be used to analyze the data.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the reading comprehension levels of Grade 1 learners at Tupa Integrated School and explore their relationship with selected demographic factors. The descriptive aspect of the design was utilized to provide a detailed account of the learners' reading comprehension abilities. At the same time, the correlational component was used to determine the extent of the relationship between the respondents' profiles—such as sex, parents' highest educational attainment, number of siblings, and hours spent reading at home—and their reading comprehension levels.

This design was appropriate for the study as it facilitated the identification and analysis of relationships between variables without manipulating them, ensuring an accurate representation of the existing conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The descriptive-correlational approach also allowed for the exploration of patterns and potential predictors of reading comprehension, which served as the basis for developing targeted instructional materials, such as contextualized activity sheets.

Data were gathered using structured tools, including a researcher-developed survey for the respondents' profiles and standardized tests to measure their reading comprehension levels. The findings were analyzed to determine correlations and assess the significance of relationships between the identified variables. This design was chosen to address the study's objectives comprehensively while maintaining the reliability and validity of the results.

Sources of Data

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Tupa Integrated School, located in Bolinao, Pangasinan. As a central institution within the Division of Pangasinan I, the school serves as a hub for elementary education, catering to a diverse population of learners and educators. It operates with a teaching staff of 20 dedicated professionals and is supported by two non-teaching personnel who assist in the administrative and operational needs of the school. The school accommodates a substantial learner population of 502, making it a vibrant educational environment where various challenges and opportunities intersect.

This locale was selected for the study because it reflects a typical public school setting in the region, where teachers and learners face common issues related to literacy and reading comprehension. The Grade 1 learners, as the primary focus of the research, represent an age group crucial for the development of foundational reading skills. Their learning environment at Tupa Integrated School provided a rich context for investigating reading comprehension levels and identifying factors that influence literacy outcomes.

The school is equipped with basic facilities that support primary education, but like many public institutions, it faces challenges such as limited resources and large class sizes. These factors underscore the importance of targeted interventions like contextualized activity sheets, which the study aims to develop. Furthermore, the collaborative attitude of the school administration and teaching staff made the research process seamless, ensuring access to relevant data and facilitating the implementation of the study.

By situating the research in this locale, the study was able to gather valuable insights that are not only relevant to Tupa Integrated School but also potentially applicable to other schools with similar conditions. The findings contribute to addressing the reading comprehension challenges faced by learners in public schools, reinforcing the role of evidence-based strategies in enhancing educational outcomes.

Population Sampling

This study utilized a cluster sampling technique to select the respondents from the Grade 1 learners at Tupa Integrated School. Cluster sampling is a probability sampling method in which the population is divided into naturally occurring groups or clusters, and entire clusters are randomly selected to participate in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the context of this study, the clusters were the Grade 1 sections within the school. Once the clusters were identified, one or more sections were randomly chosen to represent the population of Grade 1 learners.

Cluster sampling was deemed appropriate for this study due to its practicality and efficiency. Given the large number of students in Grade 1, it would have been logistically challenging and time-consuming to collect data from every learner. Cluster sampling provided a feasible solution by narrowing the focus to selected sections while still maintaining the representativeness of the sample. Additionally, the technique minimized the disruption to the school’s operations, as data collection was concentrated on a smaller, manageable subset of learners within their natural classroom settings.

Another reason this method was suitable for the study lies in its alignment with the research objectives. The study aimed to assess the reading comprehension levels of Grade 1 learners and examine the relationship between their profiles and reading performance. By employing cluster sampling, the research ensured that the chosen sample was reflective of the larger population, capturing the diversity in learners' backgrounds, reading habits, and comprehension levels. This approach strengthened the validity of the findings and enhanced their applicability to the entire Grade 1 population.

Moreover, cluster sampling is particularly effective in educational settings, where naturally formed groups like classrooms or sections can serve as clusters (Etikan & Bala, 2017). This method allowed the researchers to work within existing organizational structures, streamlining the process of data collection and analysis. The selection of this technique ensured a balance between methodological rigor and practical implementation, making it an ideal choice for the study.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The data for this study were gathered using a self-made questionnaire specifically designed to address the research objectives. The questionnaire was developed to collect information on the learners’ demographic profiles, such as sex, parents’ highest educational attainment, number of siblings, and hours spent reading books at home. It also included items aimed at identifying the challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading comprehension and the learners’ current reading comprehension levels. To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, it underwent expert validation by three specialists in the fields of education and literacy. Each expert assessed the questionnaire using a 10-item Likert scale, evaluating its clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study’s objectives. Necessary revisions were made based on the experts’ feedback before finalizing the instrument.

Once validated, the questionnaire was administered face-to-face to the selected respondents. This mode of administration ensured that participants fully understood the questions and allowed the researchers to address any clarifications immediately. The direct interaction also minimized the likelihood of misinterpretation, which could compromise the quality of the data collected.

The use of a self-made questionnaire was appropriate for this study because it allowed the researchers to tailor the instrument to the specific needs of the research. Unlike standardized tools, the self-made questionnaire was customized to reflect the unique context of the Grade 1 learners at Tupa Integrated School – Main, as well as the local challenges associated with reading comprehension. This customization ensured that the data collected were relevant and actionable, serving as a strong basis for developing contextualized activity sheets.

Moreover, the expert validation process enhanced the credibility of the questionnaire by ensuring its content validity. This step confirmed that the instrument was aligned with the study’s objectives and capable of capturing the necessary data. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), expert validation is a critical step in designing research instruments as it reduces the risk of bias and ensures that the tool measures what it intends to measure. The use of a Likert scale for validation provided a systematic and quantifiable means of evaluating the questionnaire’s effectiveness.

The face-to-face administration of the validated questionnaire further supported the reliability of the data collection process. This approach allowed for direct engagement with the respondents, fostering a more accurate and thorough collection of responses. As Etikan and Bala (2017) noted, face-to-face data collection is particularly effective in ensuring high response rates and maintaining the integrity of the responses, especially when working with young learners.

Below is the rating used in the instrument’s validation.

Numerical value	Score Range	Description
5	4.51 – 5.00	Very High (VH)
4	3.51 – 4.50	High (H)
3	2.51 – 3.50	Moderate (M)
2	1.51 – 2.50	Low (L)
1	1.00 – 1.50	Very low (VL)

Result of Research Instrument Validation

The table presents the results of the research instrument validation based on various indicators assessed by experts. The overall mean score of 4.54, described as "Very High," indicates that the instrument is highly effective and well-designed for its intended purpose. This strong evaluation suggests that the questionnaire meets the standards necessary for accurately collecting data relevant to the study.

Breaking down the indicators, several aspects of the instrument received exceptionally high ratings. For instance, the readability of the items scored a mean of 4.9, reflecting a "Very High" descriptive equivalent. This suggests that the items were not only easily understood by the respondents but also accessible in terms of language and format. Similarly, the comprehensiveness of the instrument and the avoidance of item overlap both scored a mean of 4.8, further emphasizing the tool's thoroughness and precision in addressing the study's objectives. The systematic arrangement of items was also rated very highly, with a mean of 4.5, indicating that the sequence of questions followed a logical and coherent structure.

Result of research Instrument validation

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The directions are clear in all sections of the gathering instrument.	4.7	High
2. Each item is clearly stated.	4.3	High
3. Each item is readable, i.e., the items are easily read.	4.9	Very High
4. Each item is attractive; enough space is provided to avoid crowding among the items.	4.2	High
5. The data gathering instrument is comprehensive, i.e., covered all areas important to the study.	4.7	Very High
6. Each item is focused on a particular thought or idea.	4.2	High
7. The items are objective, i.e., the responses to be elicited are neither biased nor reactive.	4.3	High
8. The items are formulated per the study's explicit and implicit objectives.	4.8	Very High
9. The items are systematically arranged according to a desirable sequence.	4.5	Very High
10. The items do not overlap with each other; no duplication of items is observed.	4.8	Very High
Overall mean	4.54	Very High

Other indicators scored slightly lower but still fell within the "High" descriptive equivalent. These included the clarity of directions (4.7), the clear statement of each item (4.3), the attractiveness and spacing of the items (4.2), the focus on specific ideas (4.2), and the objectivity of the items (4.3). These scores reflect a strong level of agreement among experts regarding the instrument's quality. However, they also suggest potential areas for minor improvements, such as enhancing item spacing and refining the clarity of specific questions.

Overall, the validation results confirm that the instrument is a robust tool for gathering data, effectively aligning with the study's explicit and implicit objectives. Its high ratings across nearly all indicators ensure that it is capable of eliciting reliable and meaningful responses, which is critical for the success of the research. The very high overall mean reinforces the confidence in the instrument's ability to serve as a foundational component of the study.

Tools for Data Analysis

The data underwent a rigorous analysis employing appropriate statistical methods through IBM SPSS Statistics 20 to derive valuable insights and make significant discoveries. This process ensured the precision of the results in accurately portraying the actual situation and providing solutions to the research's addressed concerns.

To answer sub-problem 1, the profile of the respondents, frequency counts, and percentages were used.

To answer sub-problem 2, current reading comprehension level, scores are described using the Literacy Level Scale (FLAT-Functional Literacy Assessment Tool) with descriptive equivalent shown below:

Score	Descriptive Equivalents
6	Local Material Level + Comprehension
5	Story Level + Comprehension
4	Story Level
3	Paragraph Level
2	Word Level
1	Letter Level
0	Nothing

To answer sub-problem 3, the test to determine whether there is a significant relationship between profile and school heads' perceived levels of supervisory skills and profile, Chi-Square Test, and Spearman Rank were utilized.

To answer sub-problem 4, problems encountered by the teachers concerning learners' comprehension, the weighted mean was computed and described using a five-point Likert scale with a descriptive equivalent shown below:

Score	Median Score Range	Descriptive Equivalents
5	4.51 – 5.00	Very Highly Serious (VHS)
4	3.51 – 4.49	Highly Serious (HS)
3	2.51 – 3.49	Moderate Serious (MS)
2	1.51 – 2.49	Slightly Serious (SS)
1	1.00 – 1.49	Not Serious (NS)

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations are a fundamental aspect of this study, ensuring that all research processes uphold the rights, dignity, and well-being of the participants. In conducting the research, the principles of respect, integrity, and transparency were strictly observed. To begin with, the researchers obtained informed consent from the parents or guardians of the Grade 1 learners. This process involved providing clear and concise information about the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. By doing so, the participants' representatives were empowered to make voluntary and well-informed decisions about their child's involvement in the research.

Confidentiality was another critical ethical principle adhered to throughout the study. All data collected, including the respondents' demographic profiles and reading comprehension results, were treated with strict confidentiality. The identities of the participants were anonymized by assigning unique codes to ensure that no individual could be directly linked to their responses. This practice was essential in maintaining the trust of the respondents and their families while safeguarding their privacy.

Additionally, the principle of non-maleficence was prioritized to ensure that no harm, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, would come to the participants. The instruments used were designed to be age-appropriate and culturally sensitive, avoiding any content that could potentially cause discomfort or offense. Moreover, during the administration of the questionnaire and other tools, the researchers provided a supportive and non-coercive environment, allowing the learners to respond at their own pace without any undue pressure.

Transparency and honesty were also maintained by openly communicating with the school administrators, teachers, and parents throughout the study. Any questions or concerns raised by stakeholders were addressed promptly and respectfully. The researchers also ensured compliance with institutional and legal guidelines governing research involving minors, aligning the study with ethical standards recommended by professional organizations.

Lastly, the results of the study were shared with the school and other stakeholders in a way that emphasized the collective benefit of improving reading comprehension among learners. By upholding these ethical considerations, the researchers not only ensured the integrity of the study but also fostered a sense of responsibility and accountability toward the participants and the broader educational community.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the study's results based on the gathered, analyzed, and interpreted data. The results are arranged according to the order of the problems stated in the previous chapter.

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 highlights the distribution of the respondents based on their sex, indicating that out of 26 Grade 1 learners, 57.7% are male (15 respondents), and 42.3% are female (11 respondents). This reflects a slight male majority among the sample population, which is consistent with findings in other studies involving primary-level learners where gender distribution often shows variability depending on the locale and school demographics (Duque et al., 2022).

The sex distribution of the sample is significant in understanding reading comprehension, as the literature suggests that male and female learners may exhibit differing levels of proficiency in literacy skills. For instance, Orellano et al. (2024) observed slight differences in reading comprehension between genders, with females often outperforming males in comprehension tasks. However, Lofranco and Luzano (2023) emphasized that such differences are marginal and should not lead to generalized assumptions about performance.

The slight male majority in this study offers a balanced perspective, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of reading comprehension levels that accounts for potential gender-related factors. This demographic data provides the foundation for exploring interventions tailored to the needs of all learners, regardless of gender. Moreover, it corroborates prior findings that highlight the necessity of addressing individual differences in literacy development within the classroom (Tomas et al., 2021).

Additionally, the importance of improving reading comprehension for all learners, irrespective of sex, is underscored by alarming literacy statistics at the national level. The World Bank (2022) reported that 91% of Filipino children aged 10 struggle with basic reading comprehension, emphasizing the urgency for targeted interventions. By addressing these gaps through contextualized activity sheets, this study contributes to enhancing educational equity and literacy outcomes for both male and female learners.

The results of this demographic analysis align with the objectives of the Department of Education's MATATAG Curriculum, which emphasizes inclusivity and equitable access to quality education (DepEd Memorandum No. 54, series of 2023). Furthermore, the Catch-Up Fridays initiative, with its focus on improving literacy through the "Drop Everything and Read" (DEAR) program, reinforces the need for gender-neutral strategies that support all learners in bridging literacy gaps (Hernando-Malipot, 2024).

Table 1. Profile of the respondents in terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	15	57.7
Female	11	42.3
Total	26	100.0

Table 2 presents the profile of the respondents' parents in terms of their highest educational attainment. The data indicates that the majority of the parents are high school graduates, constituting 57.7% of the total respondents. This is followed by 34.6% of parents who have completed elementary education, while only 7.7% are college graduates. These figures suggest that most parents of the respondents have limited formal education, with a substantial portion not pursuing education beyond high school.

The educational background of parents plays a pivotal role in shaping children's academic performance, particularly in reading comprehension. According to Wu and Hindman (2024), children whose parents have attained higher levels of education tend to perform better in reading comprehension, as these parents are more likely to engage in structured reading programs and provide an enriched literacy environment. Conversely, limited parental education may impact the degree of support children receive at home, such as assistance with schoolwork or exposure to books and other reading materials.

This situation aligns with the findings of Tomas et al. (2021), who emphasized that a lack of foundational literacy skills in the home environment significantly hinders children's ability to grasp new concepts in school. The low proportion of parents with college degrees in this study reflects potential limitations in academic support and guidance, reinforcing the need for interventions to bridge these gaps.

Furthermore, parental education levels may influence the motivation and reading habits of learners. Çalışkana and Ulaş (2022) found that parent-involved reading programs improved students' comprehension and attitudes toward reading.

Table 2. Profile of the respondents' parents in terms of Highest Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percent
Elementary Graduate	9	34.6
High School Graduate	15	57.7
College Graduate	2	7.7
Total	26	100.0

Table 3 presents the profile of the respondents based on the number of siblings. Among the 26 Grade 1 learners surveyed, the majority (69.2%) reported having 1 to 3 siblings. A smaller proportion, 15.4%, indicated that they had no siblings, while an identical percentage (15.4%) had 4 to 6 siblings. This distribution suggests that most learners belong to families with a moderate number of children, reflecting typical Filipino family structures, as supported by Duque et al. (2022), who found that many students come from households with three to five siblings. This family setup may influence how resources, such as parental time for reading, are allocated among siblings.

Studies indicate that the number of siblings can have varying impacts on reading comprehension. While Lofranco and Luzano (2023) identified a significant correlation between the number of siblings and reading proficiency, Rambuyon and Susada (2023) contradicted this, stating that the number of siblings does not significantly affect elementary students' reading comprehension. The diverse findings highlight that while family size may shape the home learning environment, other factors, such as parental involvement and availability of reading materials, might have a more direct influence on literacy outcomes.

The prominence of students with 1 to 3 siblings aligns with Çıgdemir and Akyol's (2022) research, which underscores the benefits of a manageable family size in fostering better home reading habits. Families with fewer children may allocate more time and resources to each child's learning activities, potentially supporting the development of reading comprehension. Conversely, for students in larger families, limited individualized support may hinder their progress in literacy skills, especially when external academic interventions, such as contextualized teaching materials, are absent.

Table 3. Profile of the respondents in terms of Number of Siblings

Number of Siblings	Frequency	Percent
No Siblings	4	15.4
1 to 3 Siblings	18	69.2
4 to 6 Siblings	4	15.5
Total	26	100.0

Table 4 reveals the distribution of respondents based on the time they dedicate to reading books at home. The data shows that 69.2% of the learners spend 30 minutes or less reading daily, while only 30.8% allocate between 31 minutes to 1 hour for reading. This suggests that a significant majority of Grade 1 learners at Tupa Integrated School – Main dedicate minimal time to reading outside of school, which could be a critical factor influencing their reading comprehension levels.

The limited time spent reading aligns with findings by Çıgdemir & Akyol (2022), who observed that students who read more frequently at home tend to have higher comprehension scores. Similarly, Orellano et al. (2024) emphasize that even short, daily reading sessions positively affect reading comprehension, though the degree of impact depends on the text's complexity. Conversely, minimal exposure to reading practice, as evidenced by the data, could hinder literacy development, particularly in foundational years like Grade 1.

The observed trend mirrors the broader challenges in Philippine education, highlighted by the World Bank (2022), which reported that 91% of 10-year-old Filipino children struggled with basic reading comprehension. This systemic issue points to the need for targeted interventions, such as the Department of Education's "Catch-Up Fridays" program, which includes initiatives like "Drop Everything and Read" to encourage reading habits (DepEd Memorandum No. 001, series of 2024).

Additionally, the findings resonate with Torres (2021), who linked limited access to reading materials and insufficient reading time at home to poorer literacy outcomes. The lack of sufficient reading time may also reflect broader socio-economic or familial challenges, as seen in studies like Duque et al. (2022), where family size and parental education levels correlate with students' literacy development.

These observations underscore the importance of fostering a culture of reading both at home and in school to enhance literacy. The implementation of contextualized activity sheets, as proposed in the study, aligns with recommendations from Sambayaon et al. (2023), who highlighted the effectiveness of contextualized teaching in improving comprehension skills.

Moreover, resources like teacher-made books with contextualized reading passages and engaging illustrations, as suggested by Abenir (2023), could further motivate students to increase their reading time, thereby addressing comprehension challenges.

Table 4. Profile of the respondents in terms of the Number of Hours Reading Books at Home

Number of Hours Reading Books at Home	Frequency	Percent
30 minutes and below	18	69.2
31 minutes to 1 hour	8	30.8
Total	26	100.0

Table 5 presents the profile of the respondents based on their current reading comprehension levels, revealing significant insights into the reading proficiency of Grade 1 learners at Tupa Integrated School – Main. Among the 26 respondents, 30.8% (8 learners) were classified as reading at the "Below Letter Level," indicating fundamental struggles with recognizing and processing even the most basic reading units. Meanwhile, the majority, 34.6% (9 learners), achieved the "Letter Level," suggesting an ability to identify letters but limited progression toward forming words or sentences. A smaller group, 11.5% (3 learners), reached the "Word Level," demonstrating some capacity to understand single words but not yet achieving sentence-level comprehension. Lastly, 23.1% (6 learners) attained the "Paragraph Level," reflecting a more advanced ability to understand and process coherent sentences in short paragraphs.

The data underscores the pressing challenge of literacy development among these learners. A significant portion of the respondents (approximately two-thirds) remain at the foundational "Below Letter" or "Letter Level," indicating substantial deficits in early literacy. These findings align with broader national concerns about the state of reading proficiency among Filipino learners. According to the World Bank (2022), 91% of Filipino children aged 10 struggle with basic reading comprehension, a figure that reflects systemic issues in literacy education.

The predominance of learners in the lower reading comprehension categories reinforces the importance of early interventions and the use of contextualized teaching approaches. Studies such as those by Tomas et al. (2021) and Sambayaon et al. (2023) emphasize the necessity of scaffolding reading instruction with tailored materials to address varying learner needs. The Department of Education's (DepEd) initiatives, such as the MATATAG Curriculum and "Catch-Up Fridays," aim to mitigate these gaps by promoting reading as a core educational priority (DepEd Memorandum No. 001, series of 2024).

Furthermore, the findings mirror trends highlighted by Acedillo (2023), who identified reading comprehension as integral to academic success, with students dedicating up to 80% of their daily assignments to reading tasks. However, as noted by studies like that of Deluao et al. (2022), reading proficiency remains an essential yet underdeveloped skill in Philippine schools. This gap underscores the urgent need for contextualized and engaging instructional strategies, such as those incorporating game-based learning (Bondaug, 2021) or digital tools like Canva (Puspita et al., 2022), to foster comprehension skills.

Ultimately, the profile presented in Table 5 not only highlights the current challenges faced by Grade 1 learners in developing reading comprehension but also provides a clear rationale for the development of contextualized activity sheets. Such materials, as suggested by Abenir (2023), could leverage localized content, engaging visuals, and relatable contexts to make reading instruction more effective and relevant for these young learners.

Table 5. Profile of the respondents in terms of Current Reading Comprehension Level

Current Reading Comprehension Level	Frequency	Percent
Below Letter Level	8	30.8
Letter Level	9	34.6
Word Level	3	11.5
Paragraph Level	6	23.1
Total	26	100.0

Relationship Between the Reading Comprehension Level and Profile Variables of Grade 1 Learners

Table 6 illustrates the relationship between the reading comprehension level and profile variables of Grade 1 learners at Tupa Integrated School – Main, Division of Pangasinan I. The statistical analysis reveals varying degrees of significance among the variables tested.

The sex of the learners showed no statistically significant relationship with reading comprehension levels ($\chi^2 = 0.268$, $p = 0.599$), aligning with findings by Lofranco and Luzano (2023), who suggested that gender does not strongly influence comprehension. However, some studies, such as Orellano et al. (2024), noted slight advantages in female students' reading outcomes, hinting at marginal gender-based differences.

The highest educational attainment of parents also did not yield a significant relationship ($\rho = 0.349$, $p = 0.080$). This result contrasts with Wu and Hindman's (2024) assertion that higher parental education fosters improved literacy outcomes through increased engagement and structured learning at home. However, it corroborates the findings of Lofranco and Luzano (2023), where parental education levels were not always determinative in influencing children's reading skills.

Similarly, the number of siblings showed no significant correlation with reading comprehension ($\rho = -0.036$, $p = 0.860$). This finding agrees with Rambuyon and Susada's (2023) study, which found no clear link between sibling count and comprehension outcomes, though other literature (e.g., Lofranco & Luzano, 2023) suggests that larger families might indirectly impact reading habits due to resource constraints.

Conversely, a highly significant relationship emerged between the number of hours spent reading books at home and reading comprehension levels ($\rho = 0.632$, $p = 0.001$). This result highlights the critical role of regular reading practice, echoing findings by Çigdemir and Akçol (2022), who reported substantial literacy improvements among students engaging in frequent home

reading. These outcomes reinforce the widely held belief that exposure to reading fosters literacy development, emphasizing the importance of creating supportive environments at home and in schools.

These results provide a strong empirical basis for designing targeted interventions. For example, programs like DepEd’s “Drop Everything and Read” (DEAR) initiative align well with the evidence supporting increased reading practice. Moreover, contextualized teaching and learning strategies, as highlighted by Sambayaon et al. (2023), could address the observed gaps by tailoring reading materials to students’ experiences, thereby fostering engagement and comprehension.

Table 6. Test of Relationship Between the Reading Comprehension Level and Profile Variables of Grade 1 Learners

Profile	Comprehension Reading Level	
	Statistics	p-value
Sex ^a	0.268	0.599
Parents Highest Educational Attainment ^b	0.349	0.080
Number of Siblings ^b	-0.036	0.860
Number of Hours Reading Books at Home^b	0.632**	0.001

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

^aChi-Square Test; ^bSpearman – Rank

Challenges Encountered Related to Learners’ Reading Comprehension by Teachers

Table 7 highlights the challenges teachers face in fostering reading comprehension among Grade 1 learners at Tupa Integrated School – Main. The findings reveal a hierarchy of issues, with the highest-ranked challenge being students’ experiences of distractions or lack of support at home, which severely impede their ability to focus and comprehend lessons, as evidenced by a weighted mean of 4.31. This corroborates studies like Çalışkana and Ulaşb (2022), which emphasize the role of parental involvement in enhancing students’ reading motivation and comprehension.

Other equally ranked challenges, with a weighted mean of 4.15, include encountering inherently difficult topics, insufficient access to learning materials, and mismatched teaching strategies to diverse learning preferences. The findings align with Tomas et al. (2021), who stressed that without foundational literacy skills, students struggle with higher-order cognitive tasks, and Torres (2021), who highlighted the detrimental impact of limited access to reading resources on comprehension. Similarly, Orellano et al. (2024) noted the importance of differentiated instruction in addressing diverse learning styles. Smith and Lee (2021) suggested that even well-prepared lessons require strategic adaptation to learners’ needs.

Ranked sixth, with a weighted mean of 4.08, is students’ difficulty in maintaining focus during lessons, particularly among younger learners or those with attention deficits. This resonates with Schmidt (2020), who found that younger students often lose focus in traditional classroom settings. Subtle interventions, like background music or flexible seating, as suggested by de la Mora Velasco and Hirumi (2020), may help mitigate this issue. The same rank is shared by challenges involving traditional assessment methods, which may not accurately reflect comprehension levels, as highlighted by Guerreiro et al. (2022), and the need for additional teacher training to improve instructional delivery, echoing findings from Chi (2024), which indicated suboptimal teacher preparedness despite participation in reading programs.

Low student motivation (mean = 4.00) ranks eighth, underscoring the critical role of fostering reading enthusiasm, as emphasized by Kheang et al. (2024). However, Li and Gan (2022) argued that motivation alone might not directly translate to improved comprehension, indicating the need for an integrated approach. Lastly, ranked ninth, challenges include language barriers (mean = 3.85) and the absence of foundational knowledge necessary to grasp new concepts. These findings are consistent with those of Manlapig (2020), who noted the confusion students experience when taught in a second language without mastery of their first language. Tomas et al. (2021) stressed the necessity of bridging foundational literacy gaps.

This table underscores the interconnectedness of home, school, and systemic factors influencing learners’ reading comprehension. Addressing these challenges calls for targeted interventions such as contextualized activity sheets, robust teacher training, and resource accessibility to foster a conducive learning environment for young readers.

Table 7. Challenges Encountered Related to Learners’ Reading Comprehension by Teachers

INDICATORS	Weighted Mean	Rank
1. Experience distractions or lack of support at home, affecting their ability to concentrate on and comprehend their studies.	4.31	1
2. Encounter inherently difficult topics that require more time and different teaching strategies to ensure comprehension.	4.15	3
3. Face insufficient access to learning materials, such as textbooks and digital resources, hindering their ability to understand the curriculum fully.	4.15	3
4. Different learning preferences (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) and a one-size-fits-all approach may not cater to all, affecting comprehension.	4.15	3
5. Find it challenging to stay focused during lessons, especially younger students or those with attention difficulties, impacting their understanding.	4.08	6
6. Deal with traditional assessment methods that may not accurately reflect their understanding, leading to misconceptions about their comprehension levels.	4.08	6
7. More training or resources are required to deliver effectively, impacting their ability to help students understand the material.	4.08	6

8.	Suffer from low motivation or interest in the subject matter, leading to disengagement and making it harder to comprehend the lessons.	4.00	8
9.	Struggle with the language of instruction, especially if it is not their first language, leading to difficulties in understanding the material.	3.85	9.5
10.	Lack of the foundational knowledge required to grasp new concepts, making it harder to follow along with the curriculum.	3.85	9.5

Contextualized Activity Sheets for Grade 1 of Tupa Integrated School – Main, Division of Pangasinan I.

I. Rationale

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that lays the foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. However, the findings of the study revealed significant challenges faced by Grade 1 learners of Tupa Integrated School – Main, including low reading comprehension levels, distractions at home, insufficient learning materials, and limited time dedicated to reading. Furthermore, the diversity of learners' needs and preferences highlights the necessity for tailored instructional approaches that resonate with their cultural and environmental contexts. Addressing these issues requires innovative strategies that engage learners while bridging gaps in their comprehension skills.

Contextualized activity sheets are a practical solution, as they are designed to align with the learners' specific experiences, cultural background, and immediate environment. These materials can foster a deeper connection to learning by making it relevant and relatable, thereby increasing engagement and motivation. By addressing the unique needs of these learners, contextualized activity sheets have the potential to enhance their comprehension skills and equip them with the tools needed to succeed academically.

II. Goal

The primary goal of developing contextualized activity sheets for Grade 1 learners at Tupa Integrated School – Main is to improve their reading comprehension skills by providing materials that are culturally relevant, engaging, and aligned with their learning needs. These activity sheets aim to support differentiated instruction, address the challenges identified in the study, and promote active learning both inside and outside the classroom. Ultimately, this initiative seeks to empower learners to achieve better academic outcomes while fostering a lifelong appreciation for reading and learning.

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