



Determining the Reading Proficiency Level of Grade Three Learners: Inputs to a Self-Learning Module

HENRICH ARNOLD L. AFRICA¹ , SHANE YVETH C. SANCHEZ¹ 

¹University of Batangas - Batangas City Campus,
Hilltop, Batangas City 4200 – Philippines

Corresponding author: henrichafrica378@gmail.com

Originality: 100% • Grammarly: 95% • Plagiarism: 0%

ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 10 May 2025
Revised: 06 Jan 2026
Accepted: 23 Feb 2026
Published: 30 Mar 2026

Keywords— Education, reading fluency, reading comprehension, reading difficulties, EGRA, self-learning module, descriptive design, Philippines

Reading is an essential learning skill, yet many young Filipino children lack the foundational knowledge to read text competently. Particularly, the younger generations need a better level of reading skills. This study assessed the reading fluency and comprehension levels of Grade 3 pupils and identified common reading difficulties affecting their literacy development. Employing a descriptive research design with a qualitative approach, data were gathered through EGRA results and validated interviews with three purposely selected Grade 3 teachers from Balete Relocation Site Elementary School. Descriptive statistics and t-tests were used to analyze the correlation between reading proficiency and student profiles. Findings revealed that both fluency and comprehension remain significant challenges, with teachers citing limited practice and resources as key barriers. Notably, a significant difference was found in reading fluency based on sex, with



© Africa, H. A. L., & Sanchez, S. Y. C. (2026). Open Access. This article published by JPAIR Multidisciplinary Research is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). You are free to share (copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format) and adapt (remix, transform, and build upon the material). Under the following terms, you must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. You may not use the material for commercial purposes. To view a copy of this license, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

female students achieving a higher mean score (2.77) than males (2.50); $t = 2.21$, $p = 0.030$. In reading comprehension, female students also outperformed males, with a t -value of 2.41 and a p -value of 0.018. In response, a self-learning module was developed, offering structured and engaging reading activities aimed at enhancing pupils' fluency and comprehension skills.

INTRODUCTION

As world leaders assemble in New York for the UN General Assembly's Transforming Education Summit, UNICEF, or the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, issues an urgent statement about the global education crisis and the pressing need for immediate action. It is estimated that only one-third of 10-year-olds worldwide can read and comprehend a simple written story. About two-thirds (64%) of the remaining students are unable to meet this minimal skill level in reading comprehension (UNICEF, 2022). Pre-pandemic data indicate that, by the end of fourth grade in Bulgaria, one in every eight students cannot read or comprehend simple text. Similarly, in the Philippines, the World Bank's 2022 statistics on learning poverty show that at least 90% of Filipino children aged 10 have difficulty reading or comprehending simple text (Lu, 2024). However, learning poverty in the Philippines was estimated to be 70% even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which hindered pupils' progress in their studies. In addition, about 27% of Filipino learners in fifth grade only recognized single words, while only 10% have reading skills that allow them to transition to high school, based on 2019 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (Adonis, 2020). This issue of reading proficiency must be addressed to increase and improve the ratings of the students. In the study of Son et al. (2022), many pupils cannot comprehend the reading material or the textbook being used in teaching reading. More specifically, the pupils were being left behind in terms of reading skills. Readers in different parts of the world easily comprehend text in familiar language but are less successful with unfamiliar language. Readers easily comprehend text on familiar topics but are less successful at comprehending texts on unfamiliar topics. At the same time, the interpretations readers construct from texts, as well as the types of texts they read, are influenced by their life experiences.

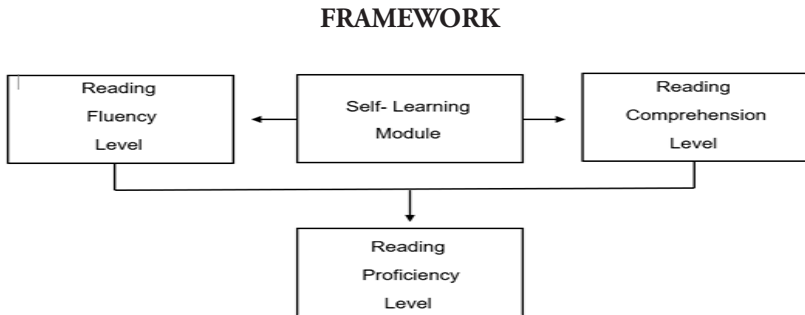
According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), reading proficiency is an active, complex process that extends beyond simple recognition of written words. It involves constructing and interpreting meaning, which is influenced by the type of text, the reader's purpose, and the context in which reading occurs (Ho, 2019). This perspective highlights that reading is not merely a mechanical skill but a cognitive process that requires readers to engage

with texts meaningfully to fully understand what they read.

Within this process, oral reading fluency serves as a critical link between decoding and comprehension, two fundamental components of reading development. Pajor (2023) emphasized that students with strong oral reading fluency are more likely to achieve success in other areas of literacy, as fluency supports the transition from accurate word recognition to effective meaning-making. Furthermore, Son et al. (2022) highlighted that comprehension is essential for students to function effectively in both academic and real-life contexts. Therefore, learners must not only strengthen their decoding skills but also be provided with ample opportunities to develop fluency and comprehension to become proficient and skilled readers.

Despite the importance of reading proficiency, many schools fail to provide targeted interventions at the Grade Three level. As Fowler (2022) has proven, if a student is not proficient in reading by the end of third grade, there is little chance that they will be able to overcome future academic challenges as the curriculum becomes more difficult. This research gap will be addressed by the researchers since the third-grade level is the end of the Key Stage 1, based on the MATATAG Curriculum. Hence, students need to be fluent in reading before transitioning to the intermediate level because reading fluency serves as a foundation for more complex learning. In contrast to other educational institutions in Batangas City that serve more demographically stable and long-established populations, Balete Relocation Site Elementary School presents a distinct academic setting due to its origins as a relocation site following the demolition of Sta. Clara, Batangas, in 1984. While the school's historical background is notable, the primary reason for selecting this institution as the focus of the study is to assess and better understand the reading proficiency levels of its elementary pupils. The researchers aim to evaluate students' reading abilities in this specific context, thereby contributing to the broader goal of improving literacy instruction and identifying targeted interventions to enhance reading outcomes in similar educational environments.

To address reading problems, particularly in fluency and comprehension, the researchers—aspiring elementary educators—propose a learning module with a set of practices to help students with reading difficulties. With these, the researchers studied the Grade Three pupils of Balete Relocation Site Elementary School. Through the development of the printed self-learning module, the researchers aim to produce an effective intervention that helps students enhance their reading proficiency, bridge the gap between fluent reading and comprehension, and ultimately achieve higher academic results and foster a positive attitude towards reading.

Figure 1*Conceptual Framework for the Development of Self-Learning Module*

The Reading Proficiency Level indicates the target outcome of the intervention, as reading proficiency encompasses both fluency and comprehension, which contribute to a student's literacy development. This learning module is directed towards improving both "Reading Fluency" and "Reading Comprehension" levels, which are placed on either side of the central concept to reflect their complementary roles in the overall reading proficiency level. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the learning module in improving reading proficiency depends on how well it targets and strengthens these core areas, creating a positive cycle where improved fluency supports comprehension, and enhanced comprehension reinforces fluency. Thus, a tailored learning module that addresses both variables can lead to significant improvements in a learner's overall reading proficiency.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to (1) determine the reading proficiency level of the Grade three pupils by measuring both their reading fluency and reading comprehension. This initial assessment will then serve as the foundation for the subsequent steps. The analysis will proceed to (2) correlate the pupil's profile, which is the sex, with the reading proficiency levels previously established. Following this correlation, the study intends to (3) determine the specific reader's difficulties encountered by the pupils in both oral fluency and comprehension. Based on the comprehensive results, the study seeks to (4) design a printed self-learning module that is appropriately tailored to address the identified proficiency gaps and specific reading difficulties of the pupils.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design to assess the current reading proficiency levels of Grade Three pupils. Descriptive research focuses on describing the characteristics of a population or phenomenon, enabling researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of learners' reading abilities. Through this design, the study aimed to provide an accurate and detailed picture of pupils' reading performance, based on their fluency and comprehension levels. It also provided a factual basis for identifying patterns and trends among learners, including common strengths and weaknesses and factors affecting their reading development. Additionally, a qualitative approach was employed to explore and identify the specific reading difficulties students experience, providing deeper insights into the challenges they face. This approach enabled the researchers to gather rich, descriptive data through observations, interviews, and open-ended responses, thereby revealing the underlying reasons behind the pupils' reading struggles. The combination of descriptive and qualitative methods ensured that both numerical data and contextual information were analyzed, leading to a more holistic understanding of the issue. The data gathered was neither controlled nor manipulated; rather, it served as the foundation for developing a targeted self-learning module designed to address the pupils' identified needs and enhance their reading fluency and comprehension skills.

Participants

The respondents in this study were the three Grade Three teachers from Balete Relocation Site Elementary School. The research employed purposive sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique in which participants are deliberately selected based on their relevance to the research objectives. These teachers were selected because of their direct experience and familiarity with the reading abilities and challenges of the pupils in their grade level. Their close interaction with learners during daily classroom activities enabled them to provide accurate and meaningful insights into students' reading performance, behaviors, and progress. Their insights provided valuable qualitative data that helped understand the learners' reading difficulties. Through their professional observations and firsthand experiences, the researchers identified the most common problems that hinder reading fluency and comprehension, including limited vocabulary, decoding difficulties, and a lack of motivation to read. Moreover, the teachers' perspectives helped validate the results obtained from other data sources, ensuring the reliability and consistency of the findings. Although limited in number, the

responses of the three teachers were considered representative and were used to generalize findings for the broader Grade Three population in the school. The teachers' shared experiences and comparable classroom contexts contributed to a unified understanding of the reading proficiency situation in the institution. Furthermore, the small number of respondents allowed for a more in-depth and focused discussion, enabling the researchers to gather detailed narratives and reflections that might have been overlooked in a larger sample.

Instrumentation

One of the most widely used assessments in early literacy research is the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), which is designed to measure young children's progress in learning to read. EGRA evaluates foundational reading skills, including letter recognition, word reading, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension, making it a comprehensive tool for assessing early literacy development. In this study, the EGRA was administered by the Grade Three teachers through an oral, one-on-one assessment with each pupil, following standard procedures to ensure consistency and accuracy in evaluating learners' reading abilities. The researchers used EGRA results as secondary data to correlate pupils' reading proficiency levels in oral reading fluency and reading comprehension, enabling the identification of learners' strengths and areas for improvement. Oral reading fluency in EGRA refers to a pupil's ability to read connected text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression, while reading comprehension measures the learner's ability to understand and respond to questions based on the text read. Based on performance in these components, pupils were classified into frustrational, transitional, and independent reading levels, wherein the frustrational level includes pupils who experience significant difficulty in decoding and understanding text even with assistance, the transitional level consists of learners who can read with partial accuracy and comprehension but still require guided support, and the independent level represents pupils who can read fluently and comprehend texts with minimal or no assistance. These classifications provided a clear framework for monitoring reading development and determining appropriate instructional interventions.

In addition to EGRA, the study employed a semi-structured interview guide as the primary qualitative data-gathering instrument to obtain in-depth insights from Grade Three teachers regarding their pupils' reading proficiency. The interview questions focused on identified reading difficulties, instructional strategies, available reading resources, and classroom-based interventions, with particular attention given to fluency, comprehension, and sex-related differences. Before implementation, the interview guide was validated by three education

experts who evaluated its clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Revisions were made based on their recommendations. The validated interview guide generated qualitative data that supported the interpretation of EGRA results and informed the development of appropriate literacy interventions.

For quantitative analysis, *t*-tests were employed to examine the relationship between pupils' demographic profiles and their reading proficiency levels. This analysis aimed to determine whether variables such as sex significantly influenced reading outcomes. Findings revealed a statistically significant difference in oral reading fluency, with female pupils obtaining a higher mean score ($M = 2.77$) compared to male pupils ($M = 2.50$), $t = 2.21$, $p = 0.030$. Similarly, in reading comprehension, female pupils outperformed male pupils, as indicated by a *t*-value of 2.41 and a *p*-value of 0.018. The integration of quantitative results and qualitative insights from teacher interviews provided a comprehensive basis for identifying key factors affecting reading proficiency and for proposing a self-learning module.

Data Gathering Procedure

At the onset of the data collection process, the researchers sought approval from the Schools Division Office (SDO) to obtain the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) results for District 3, particularly focusing on Balete Elementary School, which falls under the said district. Multiple follow-up visits were made to secure the requested data. After several attempts, the researchers were eventually granted access to the EGRA results.

Upon receiving the necessary approval, the following day, the researchers proceeded to Balete Relocation Site Elementary School and conducted the interview. Three Grade 3 teachers were gathered in a designated room, where the interview was carried out. The teachers openly shared their insights, thoughts, and experiences in response to the research questions. The discussion took on the nature of a focused group discussion (FGD) due to the interactive and reflective nature of the participants' responses.

Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitivity and privacy of the information involved in the study, several ethical considerations were put in place to protect data and the rights of all participants. Before the data collection, the researchers sought informed consent from the Grade 3 teacher-respondents. The purpose, objectives, and nature of the study were clearly explained to them, including their role in the research process. The respondents were informed of their right to voluntarily participate in the interview. They were assured they could withdraw from the

study at any time without negative consequences. The researchers emphasized that all responses and personal information would be kept strictly confidential. Identifiable data were excluded from the report, and the information gathered was stored securely and used solely for this academic research. Furthermore, the respondents were informed about the estimated duration of data retention and provided with clear information on how the collected data would be properly disposed of after the study's completion. The researchers also encouraged the respondents to ask questions and express any concerns before, during, or after the interview process to ensure transparency and build trust throughout the data collection phase.

Statistical Analysis

The data collected in this study were carefully organized, analyzed, and subjected to appropriate statistical and qualitative treatments to derive meaningful findings that addressed the research objectives. The researchers utilized descriptive statistics to summarize and interpret the quantitative data, including the distribution of students based on sex and their corresponding reading proficiency levels. Frequency counts and percentages were employed to present the data in a clear and comprehensible manner, allowing the researchers to describe trends and identify notable differences among learners' reading performances. These statistical tools were instrumental in providing an overview of the pupils' fluency and comprehension levels, which served as the foundation for further interpretation and analysis.

Meanwhile, the qualitative data obtained from interviews with the Grade Three teachers were thematically analyzed to identify recurring themes, patterns, insights, and perceptions related to students' reading difficulties, instructional practices, and existing interventions. This process involved coding and categorizing the teachers' responses to uncover significant ideas that reflected the real challenges encountered by both learners and educators in developing reading proficiency. Through thematic analysis, the researchers were able to connect the qualitative findings with the quantitative results, providing a more holistic understanding of the issue.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Reading Fluency Level of Grade Three Pupils

Sex	Independent	Instructional	Struggling	Non-Reader	Total
Male	35	14	7	0	56
Female	23	5	2	0	30
Total	58	19	9	0	86

The results showed that the female group has a higher level of fluency compared to the male group. This means that the oral reading fluency of learners has a substantial difference when they are grouped according to gender. These gender differences are evident even at early stages of education and across diverse contexts. These findings align with the study of Binaloga (2024), which found a significant difference in the oral reading fluency of learners when grouped and compared according to sex. The results showed that the female group has a higher level of fluency compared to the male group. This means that the oral reading fluency of learners has a substantial difference when they are grouped according to gender. As emphasized by Fonseca et al. (2023), early interventions targeted specifically at boys are crucial in mitigating the gender gap in literacy skills. Implementing gender-responsive strategies in early literacy programs is therefore essential to promote equitable educational outcomes. The majority of the pupils in both groups exhibited proficiency in oral reading. However, a higher percentage of boys (25%) required instructional support compared to girls. Although the percentage of struggling readers was relatively low in both groups, the findings highlight the necessity for targeted interventions, particularly for boys who are at the instructional and struggling levels.

Table 2

Reading Comprehension Level of Grade Three Pupils

Sex	Independent	Instructional	Struggling	Non-Reader	Total
Male	19	22	15	0	56
Female	15	9	6	0	30
Total	34	31	21	0	86

These findings show that females outperform males. The study reinforced the observed gender differences in reading comprehension performance. Most students demonstrated proficiency in comprehension, with a slightly higher

percentage of girls (50%) being independent readers compared to boys (33.93%). However, a greater proportion of boys (39.29%) required instructional support relative to girls (30%). Although the percentage of struggling readers was lower, 26.78% of boys and 20% of girls still faced significant challenges. Supporting this, Putri and Melani (2021) found that females outperform males in reading comprehension, reporting a mean score of 66.16 for females compared to 53.5 for males. This result, where $66.16 > 53.5$, further confirms that females tend to demonstrate stronger reading comprehension skills than males. Additionally, Ngongare (2019) shows that gender differences influence reading comprehension achievement through factors like topic preference, reading attitude, environment, parental support, and motivation. Girls generally perform better than boys in reading, although there are individual exceptions. Boys and girls also use different reading strategies when comprehending factual texts, with boys preferring discussion activities and girls favoring writing activities after reading. Girls excel in nine out of eleven reading skills, especially in determining unfamiliar words, while boys are strong in finding specific information. Additionally, boys tend to prefer informational texts, while girls are more interested in literary texts, suggesting that gender traits and preferences impact reading comprehension levels.

Table 3
Difference in Reading Fluency Based on Sex

Sex	Mean Score	N	SD	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Male	2.50	56	0.65	2.21	0.030	Significant difference
Female	2.77	30	0.52			

The results presented indicate that there is a significant difference in reading fluency based on sex. Female students had a higher mean score of 2.77 compared to the male students' mean score of 2.50. The standard deviations were 0.52 for females and 0.65 for males, suggesting slightly more variability in the male group. A t-test was conducted to determine whether this difference was statistically significant, resulting in a t-value of 2.21 and a p-value of 0.030. Since the p-value is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05, the difference in scores is considered statistically significant. This suggests that female students performed better in oral reading fluency than their male counterparts. Fonseca et al. (2023) noted that girls begin reading fluently at an earlier stage than boys and consistently demonstrate higher levels of reading fluency across various proficiency percentiles. This means that, on average, girls outperform boys in

measures such as correct words per minute, accuracy, and reading expression from the early grades onward. The advantage held by girls is evident across most skill levels, particularly among low to mid-performing readers. However, the performance gap between boys and girls tends to narrow among high-performing learners, indicating that while gender may influence early and average reading fluency outcomes, top-performing boys are capable of catching up to or matching the fluency levels of their female peers. Additionally, it showed that a noticeably higher percentage of boys scored zero on oral reading fluency tasks compared to girls, indicating a lack of foundational reading skills such as decoding and word recognition. Similarly, the gap was even more pronounced in the Philippines, where 17% of boys were unable to read a single word correctly, whereas only 2% of girls fell into this category.

Table 4

Difference in Reading Comprehension Based on Sex

Sex	Mean Score	N	SD	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Male	2.07	56	0.72	2.41	0.018	Significant difference
Female	2.30	30	0.64			

Table 4 shows the difference in reading comprehension scores between male and female students. The mean score for male students was 2.07 with a standard deviation of 0.72, while female students had a higher mean score of 2.30 and a standard deviation of 0.64. A t-test was conducted to determine whether the difference in reading comprehension between the two groups was statistically significant. The results yielded a t-value of 2.41 and a p-value of 0.018. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the result is considered statistically significant. This indicates that female students performed significantly better in reading comprehension compared to male students. Ngongare et al. (2021) investigate the influence of gender on reading comprehension performance. The participants were given standardized reading comprehension tests consisting of neutral texts, and their scores were analyzed using an independent sample t-test. The results revealed a statistically significant difference in performance between male and female students, with girls outperforming boys in overall reading comprehension scores. Rianto (2021) observed small but consistent gender differences in the use of reading comprehension strategies: female EFL learners used problem-solving and support strategies more frequently—and significantly—than males ($p = .019$ and $.012$ respectively), indicating superior metacognitive engagement during reading. Additionally, this results resonates with the study of Paciencia (2024)

states that both males and females are “Independent” in oral passage reading whereas, in reading comprehension females are “Independent” while males are “Instructional”. This suggests that girls not only perform better but also employ more effective comprehension strategies. The researchers concluded that gender is a notable factor in reading comprehension and that female students generally exhibit stronger abilities in understanding written texts.

Table 5
Identification of Reading Difficulties

Theme	Sub-Themes	Illustrative Samples
Identification of Reading Difficulties	Weak Reading Fluency	“They read the text slowly and not cleanly... their reading usually lacks expression.” – Teacher 2
	Poor Reading Comprehension	“Their reading comprehension is really weak. They know how to read the words, but they don’t understand what they are reading.” – Teacher 3
	Limited Vocabulary Knowledge	“Especially when they are not familiar with the words, they have difficulty reading it.” – Teacher 1
	Interdependence of Fluency and Comprehension	“Fluency and comprehension should be possessed by the reader to be considered as an independent reader.” – Teacher 3

Learning to read is one of the most critical milestones in a child’s academic development, serving as the foundation for all future learning. By Grade 3, pupils are expected to transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn,” meaning that they should have developed sufficient decoding, fluency, and comprehension skills to understand and apply information from texts across different subjects. However, the findings in Table 5 reveal that many pupils struggle to meet these expectations due to persistent reading difficulties. The study identified four interrelated areas of concern: weak reading fluency, poor reading comprehension, limited vocabulary knowledge, and the interdependence of fluency and comprehension.

Pupils with weak reading fluency tend to read slowly, with frequent pauses and little to no expression, which disrupts meaning-making and lessens reading enjoyment. This observation aligns with the study of Chung and Bidelman (2022). In Taiwanese Grade 3–4 students, specific prosodic measures—such as pause intrusions and pitch matching—were strong predictors of both fluency

and comprehension. This lack of fluency indicates insufficient mastery of decoding and automatic word recognition, preventing pupils from reading smoothly and efficiently. In addition, poor reading comprehension was evident among learners who could pronounce words correctly but failed to grasp their meanings or understand the overall message of the text. This condition can co-occur with other language disorders such as dyslexia, complicating the journey of reading and learning. Individuals affected often experience difficulties in listening comprehension as well, leading to an inadequate understanding of both written and spoken language (Spencer & Wagner, 2024). Another major factor contributing to reading difficulties is limited vocabulary knowledge. When learners encounter unfamiliar words, they struggle to decode or interpret them, hindering their understanding of entire sentences or passages. Without a strong vocabulary base, reading becomes a frustrating and fragmented experience, discouraging pupils from reading further. Finally, teachers highlighted the interdependence of fluency and comprehension, noting that the two skills must coexist for pupils to become independent readers. A lack of fluency can impede comprehension, while poor comprehension limits the motivation and purpose for reading fluently.

These findings are consistent with Tomas et al. (2021), who emphasized that deficiencies in foundational literacy components—such as phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension—are key predictors of reading failure. Identifying these indicators early is essential, as it enables educators to design targeted interventions that address specific weaknesses. Through systematic assessment and evidence-based reading instruction, teachers can support learners in developing stronger reading fluency, broader vocabulary, and deeper comprehension. Ultimately, recognizing and addressing these reading difficulties in the early grades ensures that pupils not only learn how to read but also gain the confidence and ability to use reading as a lifelong tool for learning and understanding the world.

Table 6*Causes of Reading Difficulties*

Theme	Sub-Themes	Illustrative Samples
Causes of Reading Difficulties	Lack of Parental Involvement	“When there is no one at home to assist... it becomes very difficult for them to learn how to read.” – Teacher 2
	Peer Influence and Environmental Distraction	“If they see others playing basketball, they are likely to join in rather than focus on reading.” – Teacher 2
	Lack of Reading Motivation	“When they are motivated, it means their minds are active... the students become more engaged in reading.” – Teacher 1

Identifying the underlying causes of reading difficulties among Grade 3 pupils is a vital concern for both educators and parents, as these challenges directly influence children’s literacy development and overall academic performance. Understanding the root causes allows teachers to design more effective interventions that address not only the symptoms but also the deeper factors affecting reading progress. Based on the findings, three major causes emerged: lack of parental involvement, peer influence and environmental distractions, and lack of reading motivation.

The lack of parental involvement remains one of the most significant barriers to improving reading proficiency. Many parents, due to work demands, economic challenges, or limited awareness of literacy strategies, are unable to provide consistent reading guidance and reinforcement at home. This aligns with the findings of Van Voorhis et al. (2019), who assert that family involvement in learning, especially in reading, has a profound impact on a child’s academic growth. Without parental supervision and encouragement, pupils often miss the opportunity to practice and strengthen the reading skills introduced in school. This lack of home literacy support can lead to slower progress in fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension. Another contributing factor is peer influence and environmental distraction, which greatly affect pupils’ concentration and study habits. Children at this age are naturally drawn to play and social activities, and when they see their peers engaging in games or other forms of entertainment, they tend to prioritize these over reading. Furthermore, noisy home or community environments, limited access to quiet study spaces, and the prevalence of digital distractions make it more difficult for learners to focus on reading tasks. Such distractions hinder their ability to sustain attention, process information, and develop a deep understanding of what they read. Lastly, lack of reading motivation is a recurring challenge that directly

impacts learners' willingness to engage in reading activities. Pupils who are not intrinsically motivated often perceive reading as a chore rather than an enjoyable and meaningful activity. Factors such as limited exposure to interesting reading materials, low self-confidence in reading, and a lack of positive reinforcement from teachers or parents contribute to this problem. Without motivation, pupils are less likely to practice reading regularly, leading to decreased fluency and comprehension over time.

Collectively, these causes highlight the complex interplay between home, school, and environmental influences in shaping children's reading development. Addressing these issues requires a holistic and collaborative approach that involves parents, teachers, and the community. Schools should strengthen parental literacy programs, create supportive reading environments, and employ engaging reading activities that nurture motivation and curiosity. By doing so, educators can help pupils not only overcome their reading difficulties but also develop a lifelong love for reading that supports their academic success and personal growth.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that reading fluency and comprehension remain significant challenges among Grade Three pupils in Balete Relocation Site Elementary School. These foundational skills are crucial as learners prepare to transition into the intermediate level, where more complex texts and academic tasks demand a higher level of reading proficiency. Respondents consistently indicated that a considerable number of pupils still require extensive practice and support due to their limited fluency and comprehension abilities.

The results showed a considerable portion of the learners were classified under the instructional and struggling levels, both in reading fluency and comprehension. Very few reached the independent level, while a zero number of pupils were found to be non-readers. In correlation, a statistically significant difference was found in the reading performance of pupils based on sex, with female learners generally outperforming their male peers in both fluency and comprehension. This difference suggests that girls may develop reading-related skills earlier or benefit more from existing literacy instruction, classroom practices, and reading materials. It also implies that boys may require more structured, engaging, and differentiated reading interventions to sustain interest, motivation, and practice in oral reading activities. The results highlight the need for gender-responsive instructional strategies, such as developing a self-learning module, incorporating texts aligned with boys' interests, increasing opportunities for guided oral reading, and providing additional scaffolding for male learners

at the instructional and struggling levels. Addressing these differences early is essential to prevent widening literacy gaps and to ensure equitable reading development among all learners. All three teacher-respondents agreed that both fluency and comprehension are crucial and must be developed simultaneously to ensure overall reading success.

Based on the findings of the study, several positive outcomes are expected from the implementation of the developed self-learning module. Primarily, the module is anticipated to improve pupils' oral reading fluency and reading comprehension, particularly among learners classified at the struggling and instructional levels. Baron (2022) emphasized that students demonstrate better academic performance when using printed materials, as comprehension, understanding, and retention are significantly higher compared to screen-based, audio, or video materials. Guided by these findings, the module was developed in printed form and structured with varying levels of difficulty corresponding to learners' reading proficiency levels—struggling, instructional, and independent. Through leveled and structured activities, pupils are expected to demonstrate increased reading accuracy, improved vocabulary knowledge, and enhanced understanding of text, which may facilitate their progression toward the independent reading level.

Additionally, the learner-centered and interactive design of the module is expected to boost pupils' confidence and motivation in reading, encouraging more active participation in reading-aloud activities and independent practice. The availability of printed, self-paced learning materials may also support consistent reading engagement both in school and at home, thereby reinforcing skills beyond classroom instruction. Overall, the module is expected to contribute to more equitable reading development, help narrow observed reading gaps—particularly between male and female pupils—and serve as a practical instructional support for teachers in addressing diverse reading needs effectively.

The findings of this research may serve as a valuable reference for future elementary teachers aiming to strengthen the reading abilities among learners. Future researchers may consider expanding the study to include a broad range of perspectives by including other variables such as socio-economic background, parental-involvement, or language exposure, which may influence a child's reading proficiency. Other schools are encouraged to adopt and customize the learning module developed in this study to suit their specific context, and to provide developmentally appropriate for the needs of learners. Ultimately, this study reinforces the vital role of early reading intervention in shaping a learner's academic future. The commitment to improving literacy outcomes must not end with this research—it must continue through collective action, innovation, and

an unwavering belief in every child's potential to succeed.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The self-learning module developed from this study can be translated into a practical intervention tool that other schools may adopt to address similar reading challenges among Grade 3 pupils. It serves as an alternative learning material designed to enhance reading fluency and comprehension, supporting teachers in providing individualized and engaging literacy instruction. This module bridges learning gaps by providing structured, learner-centered activities that strengthen foundational reading skills. Furthermore, it empowers both teachers and learners by offering a flexible, self-paced approach to literacy development that aligns with the Department of Education's goal of improving reading proficiency in the early grades.

Beyond its printed form, the module can also be converted into a digital format to promote wider accessibility and convenience for both teachers and students, especially in areas implementing blended or distance learning. This digital adaptation allows learners to practice reading skills at their own pace while enabling teachers to track progress and provide timely feedback. It also opens opportunities for interactive and multimedia-based learning experiences that can make reading more engaging and enjoyable. The digital version can be distributed through online learning platforms or school-based systems, ensuring that even learners with limited access to traditional classroom instruction can benefit.

By translating the findings of this study into an accessible educational resource, the module can serve as a model for other institutions seeking evidence-based solutions to improve literacy outcomes. It not only addresses current reading difficulties but also promotes inclusive, technology-integrated, and sustainable reading instruction practices. In the long run, this translational output contributes to the continuous improvement of literacy education by fostering innovation, accessibility, and collaboration among educators and schools. Through this, the study extends its impact beyond the research setting that transforms theoretical insights into practical applications that improve learning experiences for every child.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With profound gratitude and heartfelt appreciation, we acknowledge the individuals and institutions whose unwavering support, guidance, and

encouragement have been instrumental in the successful completion of this research.

First and foremost, we give all glory and praise to Almighty God for His divine wisdom, strength, and grace that sustained us throughout the course of this academic endeavor. His presence served as our constant source of inspiration and perseverance.

We extend our deepest appreciation to our Research Adviser, Dr. Angela Napa, for her exceptional mentorship, insightful feedback, and steadfast support. Her expertise and commitment greatly enriched the quality of our study and guided us toward academic excellence. Our sincerest thanks also go to Ma'am Myraflor Gutierrez, whose generous assistance in the statistical correlation aspect of our research was invaluable. Her knowledge and guidance significantly contributed to the integrity and accuracy of our data analysis. We are equally grateful to our instrument validators, to Ms. Judith Asistin, Ma'am Merly Panaligan, and Dr. Edelyn Briones, for their time, expertise, and professional insights in reviewing and validating our research instruments. Their contributions were essential in ensuring the validity and reliability of our tools.

We would also like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the Grade Three teachers of Balete Relocation Site Elementary School, who willingly served as our respondents. Their cooperation and honest participation provided meaningful data that became the foundation of our findings. Lastly, we acknowledge with deep gratitude the unwavering support, understanding, and encouragement of our families and friends. Their love and belief in our capabilities have been a constant source of strength and motivation throughout this academic journey. To all who have, in one way or another, contributed to the completion of this research—thank you for being part of this milestone.

LITERATURE CITED

Adonis, M. (2020, December 3). *Filipino pupils lagging in 3Rs, Southeast Asia tests show* | Global News. *INQUIRER.net*. <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/192487/filipino-pupils-lagging-in-3rs-southeast-asia-tests-show>

Baron, N. (2021). *How we read now: Strategic choices for print, screen, and audio*. Oxford University Press. <https://tinyurl.com/2j4mcd2d>

- Binaloga, J. M. (2024). Level of Oral Reading Fluency of Learners: Basis for An Intervention Plan. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM)*, 12(1), 3128-37. <https://ijsrm.net/index.php/ijsrm/article/view/4981/3108>
- Chung, W. L., & Bidelman, G. M. (2022). Acoustic features of oral reading prosody and the relation with reading fluency and reading comprehension in Taiwanese children. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 65(1), 334-343. https://doi.org/10.1044/2021_JSLHR-21-0025
- Fonseca, J., Bahrawar, L., Dubeck, M. M., Sitabkhan, Y., Cummiskey, C., & Unadkat, D. (2023). *Girls have academic advantages and so do boys: A multicountry analysis of gender differences in early grade reading and mathematics outcomes*. RTI Press. <https://doi.org/10.3768/rtipress.2023.rr.0049.2305>
- Fowler, J. (2022, May 10). *The importance of 3rd grade reading skills*. Accessibility.com. <https://www.accessibility.com/blog/the-importance-of-3rd-grade-reading-skills>
- Ho, A. D. (2019). *Reading framework for the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress*. National Center for Education Statistics. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED604485.pdf>
- Lu, B. J. (2024, October 28). *Literacy important for PH development | Philippine News Agency*. <https://tinyurl.com/35axxvhe>
- Ngongare, G., Samalo, N., & Rettob, A. (2021). The influence of gender on reading comprehension. *Journal of English Language and Literature Teaching*, 5(2). <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c7e6/332dd7d6b6680202f510c082fc64b8bc28e3.pdf>
- Paciencia, M. (2024). Reading Proficiency of Grade One Pupils in the Selected South District Schools, Division of Guihulngan City. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE)*, 1(10), 39-49. <https://risejournals.org/index.php/imjrise/article/view/694>

- Pajor, A. (2023, December 14). *The role of oral language development in reading proficiency*. IMSE Journal. <https://journal.imse.com/the-role-of-oral-language-development-in-reading-proficiency/>
- Putri, D. S., & Melani, M. (2022). The Comparison Between Male and Female Students' Reading Comprehension at IAIN Bukittinggi. *Indonesian Journal of Learning Studies (IJLS)*, 2(1), 1-9. <https://dmi-journals.org/ijls/article/view/40>
- Rianto, A. (2021). Examining gender differences in reading strategies, reading skills, and English proficiency of EFL University students. *Cogent Education*, 8(1), 1993531. <https://tinyurl.com/52ucya59>
- Son, A. P., Tinapay, A. O., Tirol, S. L., Samillano, J. H., & Cortes, J. A. L. (2022). Reading Proficiency Level of Grade 2 Learners in the Case of Modular Distance Learning: A Literature. <https://tinyurl.com/54usk2kw>
- Spencer, M., & Wagner, R. K. (2018). The comprehension problems of children with poor reading comprehension despite adequate decoding: A meta-analysis. *Review of educational research*, 88(3), 366-400. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654317749187>
- Tomas, M. J. L., Villaros, E. T., & Galman, S. M. A. (2021). The perceived challenges in reading of learners: Basis for school reading programs. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(5), 107-122. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2021.95009>
- UNICEF. (2022). UNICEF: Only a third of 10-year-olds globally are estimated to be able to read and understand a simple written story. *UNICEF Bulgaria*. <https://tinyurl.com/528nkj23>
- Van Voorhis, F. L., Maier, M. F., Epstein, J. L., & Lloyd, C. M. (2013). The impact of family involvement on the education of children ages 3 to 8: A focus on literacy and math achievement outcomes and social-emotional skills. *mdrc*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED545474>