

Assessing the reading comprehension level of intermediate learners of UMA Elementary School: Basis for instructional supervision framework

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the reading comprehension levels of Intermediate learners of Uma Elementary School and examined the factors affecting their performance. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving 59 learners and three teachers as respondents. Data were collected using a survey questionnaire adapted from Legaspi (2016), alongside the Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT) and the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI). The study focused on learner-related, language-related, family-related, school-related, and teacher-related factors that influence reading comprehension. Results revealed that most learners were 11 years old, predominantly male, and primarily spoke Ilocano or Kalinga as their first language. The ethnic composition was mainly Kalinga and Ilocano, with a majority having two or more siblings. Books were the most commonly available reading material at home. Among the factors affecting reading comprehension, language-related and student-related factors were perceived to influence learners to a great extent, while family-, school-, and teacher-related factors also contributed significantly. However, statistical analyses showed no significant differences in the extent of these factors when respondents were grouped according to profile variables. The findings highlight the importance of addressing linguistic and learner-centered challenges, particularly limited vocabulary, poor reading comprehension, and motivational issues. Implications include the need for targeted reading interventions, integration of engaging and diverse reading materials, and the promotion of supportive home literacy environments to enhance comprehension outcomes. The study contributes new knowledge regarding the interplay of multiple factors in reading development and emphasizes the necessity of holistic, context-sensitive strategies to support readers-at-risk.

Keywords: Reading comprehension, readers-at-risk, primary education, language-related factors, learner motivation, literacy development.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is widely recognized as a fundamental skill that underpins academic success, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. It enables learners to decode texts, construct meaning, analyze information, and apply knowledge across disciplines. Despite its

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importance, global evidence indicates that many children struggle to achieve basic reading proficiency. The United Nations Children's Fund reported that only about one third of ten year old children worldwide can read and understand a simple text, while approximately 64% fall below the minimum proficiency level. This condition, which worsened following the COVID 19 pandemic, has been characterized as a global learning crisis that demands urgent and sustained interventions.

The situation in the Philippines reflects even more serious concerns. Findings from the Programme for International Student Assessment revealed that more than 80% of Filipino learners fail to reach the minimum proficiency level in reading, placing the country among those with the highest proportion of low performing readers. In the 2018 cycle, the Philippines ranked last in reading among participating countries, highlighting critical gaps in foundational literacy. Similarly, results from the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics indicated that a significant number of Filipino Grade 5 learners did not meet expected reading proficiency standards. These international findings are supported by national assessments and reports from the Department of Education, which continue to show persistent challenges in reading, particularly among learners in the elementary grades. Many students experience difficulties in vocabulary development, comprehension, and fluency, resulting in poor academic performance across subject areas. These challenges are often associated with limited access to reading materials, language barriers, inadequate instructional support, and the long term effects of pandemic related learning disruptions. Consequently, a considerable number of learners progress to higher grade levels without mastering essential reading skills, thereby widening existing learning gaps.

In response to these issues, the Philippine government has implemented various policies and programs aimed at improving literacy outcomes. The K to 12 Basic Education Program, institutionalized through Republic Act 10533, emphasizes the development of foundational literacy skills in the early grades. The Department of Education has also implemented the Every Child A Reader Program, which aims to ensure that all learners achieve reading proficiency at their respective grade levels. This initiative is complemented by the Hamon Bawat Bata Bumabasa initiative, which reinforces the commitment of schools and educators to address reading difficulties through targeted interventions. At the regional level, programs such as the READ to LEAD project promote interactive and learner centered approaches to enhance reading skills across both online and offline learning modalities. At the division level, the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program has been introduced to address learning gaps through systematic and targeted support for learners from Kindergarten to Grade 10.

To support these initiatives, assessment tools such as the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory are used to evaluate learners' reading abilities. This instrument assesses oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension in both English and Filipino, classifying learners into independent, instructional, and frustration levels. The results guide instructional planning and the development of appropriate interventions. Local data from Uma Elementary School further highlight the urgency of the issue. The Functional Literacy Assessment Tool administered in June 2025 revealed that only a small proportion of learners achieved higher comprehension levels. Among Grade 4 learners, only three out of twenty reached Level 8, with none attaining Level 9. In Grade 5, only five out of twenty three learners reached Levels 8 and 9, while in Grade 6, only four out of seventeen achieved these levels. Overall, only twelve learners across Grades 4 to 6 demonstrated higher level comprehension, while the majority performed below Level 7, indicating a significant number of learners at risk.

While numerous studies have examined factors affecting reading comprehension, much of the existing literature focuses on average or proficient learners. There remains limited research that specifically addresses the needs and challenges of readers at risk, particularly within localized school contexts. In response to this gap, the present study seeks to assess the

reading comprehension levels of learners in Grades 4 to 6 at Uma Elementary School and to identify the factors influencing their performance. The findings are intended to provide a basis for developing targeted reading interventions and instructional supervision strategies that effectively support struggling readers.

This study is anchored on the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in learners' assessment of the factors affecting reading comprehension when grouped according to their profile variables. It further aims to generate meaningful contributions to various stakeholders. Teachers are expected to benefit from insights into effective instructional models, approaches, techniques, and strategies that enhance reading comprehension. Learners will gain a clearer understanding of their reading abilities, including their strengths and areas for improvement, enabling them to adopt appropriate reading strategies. The study also seeks to highlight institutional challenges in delivering reading instruction and implementing literacy related programs, thereby informing policy and practice within the school. Parents are likewise expected to benefit through increased awareness of their role in supporting literacy development at home. For the researcher, the study provides an opportunity for professional growth through the acquisition of knowledge on effective practices in reading instruction. Future researchers may also utilize the findings as a reference for further investigations on factors affecting reading comprehension among readers at risk.

The study is grounded in Lev Vygotsky's socio cultural theory of development, which posits that cognitive development is largely influenced by social interaction and cultural context. The theory emphasizes the role of mentors and peers in shaping learning and highlights how cultural beliefs and practices influence the learning process. It suggests that children are equipped with basic cognitive capacities, which are further developed through cultural tools and social engagement. Within this framework, reading instruction is best approached as a holistic process that fosters comprehension and appreciation of texts, with learning experiences that are meaningful and relevant to learners' contexts.

Existing literature reinforces the multifaceted nature of reading comprehension. Reading serves as a foundation for knowledge acquisition, academic success, and critical thinking, even in the context of increasing digital integration in education (Stranovzka et al., 2019). Mastery of foundational reading skills in the primary grades is a strong predictor of later academic achievement (Anderson, 2022). Conversely, learners who fail to develop these skills early are more likely to encounter persistent academic difficulties. Reading comprehension itself is a complex cognitive process influenced by phonological processing, vocabulary, and other language related skills (Kornilov et al., 2017). Early literacy development plays a crucial role, as vocabulary acquisition and language exposure significantly predict later comprehension outcomes (Suggate et al., 2018). However, phonological awareness does not automatically lead to advanced phonemic awareness without appropriate instruction, indicating that reading development progresses across multiple stages (Kardaleska and Karovska, 2018; Locher, 2018).

Empirical evidence further highlights the importance of foundational skills such as letter naming fluency, decoding, and vocabulary knowledge, which have both direct and indirect effects on reading comprehension (Stanley et al., 2018). Listening comprehension also serves as a strong predictor of reading development, emphasizing the role of oral language skills (Lervåg and Aukrust, 2018). While orthographic knowledge supports word and sentence level reading, it may not be sufficient for text level comprehension, particularly among struggling readers (Zarić and Nagler, 2021). These findings indicate that reading comprehension requires the integration of multiple linguistic and cognitive processes. As learners progress through grade levels, their reading abilities generally improve, although this progression is not uniform, especially among struggling readers (Ulper et al., 2018). Many

learners continue to face challenges related to limited vocabulary, weak decoding skills, and insufficient reading practice (Nurjanah, 2018). Differences in reading modalities also influence comprehension, with learners often performing better in paper based tasks than in digital formats (Delgado et al., 2018; Støle et al., 2020).

Motivation and engagement are critical in reading development. Learners who demonstrate higher motivation tend to show greater improvements in comprehension, while lack of interest and reading boredom negatively affect performance (Estremera and Estremera, 2018; Shehzad, 2020). Instructional strategies such as questioning, predicting, retelling, and visualizing have been found to enhance comprehension (Phuong, 2022). The use of engaging materials, including humor based texts and illustrated content, further supports learner interest and understanding (Syamsu Tang et al., 2019; Razalli et al., 2018). Instructional innovations, including the integration of information and communication technologies and visual supports, provide interactive and adaptive learning experiences that benefit learners with reading difficulties (Mphahlele and Nel, 2018; Shuai et al., 2020). Approaches such as the Extending Concept through Language Activities technique have also demonstrated effectiveness in improving comprehension (Haerazi et al., 2020).

Reading comprehension is influenced by a wide range of interrelated factors, including learner related, language related, teacher related, school related, and home related variables (Estremera and Estremera, 2018; Yea and Chun, 2018). Learner related factors such as motivation, prior knowledge, and reading habits play a significant role, with low motivation and limited vocabulary often associated with poor comprehension (Wanda and Yen Lee, 2018; Asfaw et al., 2018). Language related challenges, particularly for second language learners, include unfamiliar vocabulary and complex structures, which contribute to reading anxiety and reduced comprehension (Tsai and Lee, 2018; Capin et al., 2022). Instructional practices and school environments also shape reading outcomes, with effective strategies such as skimming, scanning, predicting, and questioning enhancing comprehension (Banditvilai, 2020; Wutthisingchai and Stopps, 2018). Conversely, inadequate instructional support may hinder reading development (Torres, 2019).

Family and home environments further influence reading comprehension. Access to reading materials and parental involvement significantly improve learners' reading achievement (LeCroy et al., 2019). In contrast, absenteeism and lack of parental support are associated with poor academic outcomes (Gubbels et al., 2019; Anderson, 2022). Socio economic and cultural factors also shape reading literacy, highlighting the role of environmental context in learning (İlhan and Firat, 2018). Motivation, metacognitive skills, and learner characteristics such as self-esteem and reading interest are strongly associated with improved comprehension (Wu et al., 2019; Yasemin and Bulut, 2018; Fitri, 2019; Nasrullah, 2019). Task type and text complexity further affect reading performance, with learners demonstrating varying levels of comprehension depending on the nature of the reading material (Brunfaut et al., 2021).

Reading interventions are essential in addressing the needs of struggling learners. Effective instruction requires responsive and learner centered strategies that actively engage students in the reading process (Orellana et al., 2020). Approaches such as shared reading have demonstrated positive effects on comprehension, although their effectiveness may vary depending on learners' developmental levels (Fitton et al., 2018). Learners at risk require more intensive and sustained interventions, as structured support is necessary to improve reading outcomes (Wanzek, 2018). Evidence shows that well designed interventions can enable learners performing below grade level to achieve expected competencies (Haines et al., 2018). Data based decision making further enhances instructional effectiveness by allowing educators to tailor interventions based on learners' needs (Toste et al., 2019). Regular assessment and monitoring are essential in identifying and addressing reading difficulties (Benson et al., 2017).

At the same time, researchers emphasize the importance of avoiding stigmatizing labels for struggling readers, as these may negatively affect motivation and self-esteem (Brooks and Frankel, 2018). Technological innovations, including computer assisted instruction, have been shown to improve reading skills by providing interactive and adaptive learning experiences (Saine, 2018; Nash, 2018). Explicit instruction in metacognitive strategies, such as adaptive reading models and meta cognitive reading strategies, further enhances comprehension among struggling learners (Wu, 2021). Early and intensive interventions that integrate phonetic decoding, word recognition, spelling, and connected text reading have demonstrated significant improvements, particularly for learners identified as at risk at an early stage (Solheim et al., 2019). Vocabulary development remains a critical component, as deficits in academic vocabulary significantly hinder comprehension and performance across subject areas (Scammaca et al., 2018).

Guided by these theoretical and empirical foundations, the study adopts a research paradigm in which the profile of the respondents serves as the independent variable, while the reading comprehension status of readers at risk functions as the dependent variable. The assessment of learners' comprehension levels provides the basis for the development of appropriate reading interventions aimed at improving literacy outcomes among learners at Uma Elementary School.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to assess the reading comprehension levels of Grades 4 to 6 learners at Uma Elementary School and to identify the factors that contribute to poor or struggling reading comprehension skills. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of readers at risk in terms of age, gender, first language, class size, ethnic affiliation, last school attended, parents' educational attainment, parents' occupation, number of siblings, and availability of reading materials at home?
2. To what extent do student related factors, family related factors, language related factors, school related factors, and teacher related factors affect the reading comprehension of readers at risk?
3. Is there a significant difference in the extent of factors affecting the reading comprehension of readers at risk when respondents are grouped according to their profile variables?
4. What intervention program can be proposed based on the results of the study?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design to assess the reading comprehension levels of Grades 4 to 6 learners at Uma Elementary School and to identify the factors affecting their performance. The descriptive component focused on determining the current reading comprehension levels and profiling readers at risk, while the correlational component examined the relationships among learners' characteristics, contributing factors, and reading comprehension outcomes. This design enabled the researcher to describe existing conditions while simultaneously exploring associations among variables relevant to reading performance.

The participants of the study consisted of 59 enrolled Grades 4 to 6 learners of Uma Elementary School who participated in the Functional Literacy Assessment Tool conducted for Levels 8 and 9 in June 2025 using a Department of Education assessment tool. In addition, 3 teachers were included as respondents, bringing the total number of respondents to 63. The

distribution of respondents showed that 19 or 31.74% were from Grade 4, 23 or 36.50% were from Grade 5, and 17 or 26.98% were from Grade 6, while teachers comprised 3 or 4.76% of the total sample. This composition ensured representation across grade levels and included both learner and teacher perspectives relevant to the study.

The primary research instrument used in this study was a survey questionnaire adapted from Legaspi (2016), which was designed to gather data directly aligned with the research questions. The instrument consisted of two main parts. The first part focused on the learner profile and reading comprehension levels. It collected data on demographic and personal characteristics, including age, gender, ethnic affiliation, first language, last school attended, class size, parents' educational attainment and occupation, number of siblings, and availability of reading materials at home. In addition, learners' reading comprehension levels were determined using the Functional Literacy Assessment Tool and the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory. This component addressed the research question related to learners' reading comprehension performance. The second part of the instrument focused on the factors affecting reading comprehension. For learner respondents, the factors included student related, language related, and family related variables, while for teacher respondents, the factors included teacher related and school related variables. Student related factors referred to learners' reading activities, beliefs, habits, motivation, and strategies when engaging with texts, including language related aspects such as vocabulary level and language used at home. Family related factors referred to the home environment, including family attitudes, practices, and support systems that influence reading performance. School related factors referred to the classroom environment, availability of resources, and administrative support that contribute to the effectiveness of reading programs. Teacher related factors referred to instructional strategies, competencies, preparation, and approaches in teaching reading. This section addressed the research questions concerning the extent to which these factors affect reading comprehension and whether significant differences exist when respondents are grouped according to their profile variables.

Data were gathered in a systematic manner. The researcher first secured a letter of permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and the school head of Uma Elementary School to obtain approval for the conduct of the study. Prior to data collection, assent from the learners and parental consent were obtained to ensure ethical compliance. The researcher personally distributed the survey questionnaires to the respondents and was responsible for retrieving the completed instruments. Additional relevant information and statistical data that could enhance the study were also obtained from other sources, including school administrators, teachers, and co teachers, to support and validate the collected data.

The collected data were analyzed based on the responses obtained through the research instrument. A four point scale was used to interpret the responses, with 4 corresponding to a scale range of 3.26-4.00 described as To Very Great Extent, 3 corresponding to 2.51-3.25 described as To a Great Extent, 2 corresponding to 1.75-2.50 described as To a Less Extent, and 1 corresponding to 1.00-1.74 described as No Extent at all. The weighted mean was computed to determine the factors affecting the reading comprehension of the respondents. A t test for two independent samples was employed to determine differences in responses when grouped by gender. Pearson's rho was used to examine the relationships between responses and variables such as age, class size, number of siblings, and availability of reading materials at home. Furthermore, One Way Analysis of Variance was conducted to determine significant differences in reading comprehension when respondents were grouped according to first language, ethnic affiliation, parents' educational attainment, parents' occupation, and last school attended. These statistical treatments ensured a comprehensive analysis of the data in relation to the objectives of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the reading comprehension profile and factors affecting readers-at-risk among 59 learners enrolled in Grades 4, 5, and 6 at Uma Elementary School. The investigation employed a descriptive-quantitative research design utilizing a researcher-made survey questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, targeting learners officially identified as readers-at-risk based on the results of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) and related diagnostic assessments. Data analysis involved the use of frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means to describe the profile of respondents and quantify the extent of factors affecting reading comprehension. The significance of differences in factor perception across profile variables was tested using analysis of variance at a 0.05 level of significance. All results are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study and are discussed in light of the data gathered from the identified participants.

Profile of readers-at-risk

The demographic and socio-contextual profile of the 59 readers-at-risk at Uma Elementary School revealed substantial variation across age, grade level, gender, linguistic background, family structure, and access to reading materials at home. In terms of age distribution, the largest group comprised 11-year-old learners, accounting for 28 respondents or 47.5% of the total sample, followed by 10-year-olds with 13 respondents or 22.0%, while 9-year-olds and 12-year-olds each numbered 9 respondents or 15.3%. These figures suggest that older learners within the primary grades constituted the majority of those at risk, which may reflect the cumulative nature of unaddressed literacy gaps. Kornilov et al. (2017) emphasized that reading challenges tend to intensify when foundational literacy skills are not adequately developed in the early grades, and the concentration of at-risk learners in the 11-year-old cohort is consistent with this trajectory of cumulative reading difficulty.

Across grade levels, 23 respondents or 39.0% were enrolled in Grade 5, 19 respondents or 32.2% were in Grade 4, and 17 respondents or 28.8% were in Grade 6. This distribution reinforces the observation made by Ulper et al. (2018) that reading development does not follow a strictly linear progression, and that learners across multiple grade levels may plateau or regress in comprehension performance without targeted and sustained instructional support. In terms of gender, male learners comprised 33 respondents or 55.9%, while female learners accounted for 26 respondents or 44.1%. This slight preponderance of male at-risk readers aligns with the findings of Estremera and Estremera (2018), who observed that boys tend to demonstrate lower reading motivation and engagement compared to their female counterparts, contributing to higher vulnerability in reading comprehension.

The linguistic and ethnic profile of the sample was notably homogeneous. Among the 59 respondents, 49 or 83.05% identified Kalinga as their first language and ethnic affiliation, while 10 or 16.9% reported Ilocano as their first language and 10 or 16.09% identified as ethnically Ilocano. This linguistic concentration suggests that the majority of the learners are reading and receiving instruction in a language that is not their mother tongue, a condition that, as noted by Capin et al. (2022), substantially constrains vocabulary acquisition and the ability to derive meaning from academic texts. The cultural and linguistic context of the learners underscores the importance of culturally responsive and linguistically accessible instructional approaches.

Family background data further illuminated the socio-economic realities of the learners. With respect to the father's educational attainment, 15 respondents or 25.42% had fathers who

were elementary undergraduates, 13 or 22.03% had fathers who reached college level, 11 or 18.64% had fathers who were elementary graduates, and another 11 or 18.64% had fathers who were high school graduates. Six respondents or 10.17% had fathers who were high school undergraduates, and only 3 or 5.08% had fathers who were college graduates, while none or 0.00% reported fathers with a master's degree. Regarding mothers' educational attainment, 14 respondents or 23.33% had mothers who were high school graduates, 13 or 21.67% had mothers at college level, 10 or 16.67% had mothers who were college graduates, 8 or 13.33% had mothers who were high school undergraduates, 8 or 13.33% had mothers who were elementary graduates, 4 or 6.67% had mothers who were elementary undergraduates, and 3 or 5.00% had mothers with a master's degree. Although parents' educational attainment was generally low, the variation among mothers' credentials was slightly broader, which may carry implications for the quality of literacy support available within the home environment.

Occupationally, 26 fathers or 46.43% were engaged in farming, while 17 or 30.36% worked as laborers. Carpentry accounted for 4 fathers or 7.14%, driving for 3 or 5.36%, and barangay official work for 3 or 5.36%. One father each, or 1.79% each, was identified as a priest, a member of the Philippine National Police, and a member of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Among mothers, 25 or 50.00% were engaged in farming, 16 or 32.00% were housewives, 5 or 10.00% were teachers, and 4 or 8.00% were storekeepers. These occupational profiles suggest that most families depended on agrarian and informal labor, which may limit not only economic resources for educational support but also the time parents have available to assist children with reading activities. The influence of family economic and time constraints on reading development has been documented by İlhan and Firat (2018), who noted that socio-economic and cultural factors interact with metacognitive and motivational dimensions of literacy in shaping reading outcomes.

Regarding family size, 23 respondents or 39.0% had three or more siblings, 18 or 30.5% had two siblings, 12 or 20.3% had one sibling, and 6 or 10.2% had none. The prevalence of larger family structures may reduce the individual attention children receive for reading practice and limit structured opportunities for academic dialogue at home, a dynamic identified by Lumapnet and Andoy (2017) as consequential for reading development. With respect to home reading materials, 40 respondents or 67.8% reported having access to books, while 28 or 47.5% had access to a Bible, 20 or 33.9% to newspapers, 18 or 30.5% to comic books, 15 or 25.4% to magazines, 5 or 8.5% to audio books, and 3 or 5.1% to other materials. While books remained the most commonly available material, the limited diversity in reading resources across households may constrain vocabulary expansion and general reading exposure, which Nazzem (2018) identified as foundational to comprehension growth and creative language development.

Factors affecting reading comprehension

Language-related factors. The findings on language-related factors indicate that these exert a great extent of influence on the reading comprehension of readers-at-risk across all grade levels, as reflected in an overall category mean of 3.05. Poor reading comprehension and limited vocabulary emerged as the highest-rated items, with means of 3.13 and 3.02, respectively, each rated at a great extent. Selections containing unfamiliar words obtained a category mean of 2.90, understanding primarily the mother tongue at home yielded a mean of 2.85, and finding reading materials uninteresting produced a mean of 3.05, all rated to a great extent. Grade-level category means were 3.02 for Grade 4, 3.01 for Grade 5, and 2.94 for Grade 6, with all three levels rated to a great extent. These consistently elevated scores across grade levels underscore the role of language proficiency as a critical determinant of comprehension performance. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2019) emphasized that vocabulary deficits significantly

impede learners' capacity to decode, interpret, and construct meaning from written texts, and the present data substantiate this claim. The finding that learners are primarily exposed to their mother tongue at home while receiving instruction in a second language is further complicated by Capin et al. (2022), who demonstrated that limited exposure to the language of instruction constrains both word recognition and the comprehension of academic discourse. The perceived lack of engaging materials amplifies these challenges, as Nazzem (2018) established that materials failing to sustain learners' interest erode the motivation and persistence necessary for comprehension development.

Student-related factors. Student-related factors obtained an overall category mean of 2.96, rated to a great extent, indicating that personal attributes, reading habits, and motivational orientation significantly affect comprehension outcomes among the at-risk learners. The highest-rated item was learners' use of a dictionary when encountering unfamiliar words, with a category mean of 3.20, followed by self-reported difficulty in understanding texts at a mean of 3.10. Both items were rated to a great extent across all grade levels. Preference for mobile games over reading yielded a mean of 2.80, dislike of reading produced a mean of 2.90, and the sensation of letters appearing to dance or cause dizziness obtained a mean of 2.55, the latter two rated to a lesser extent. Frequent absenteeism was rated to a lesser extent, with a mean of 2.15. Grade-level category means were 2.92 for Grade 4, 2.97 for Grade 5, and 2.99 for Grade 6. The high rating for dictionary use reflects a level of metacognitive awareness among learners, suggesting that they recognize their own comprehension limitations and attempt to address vocabulary gaps independently. Wu, Lin, et al. (2019) affirmed that metacognitive reading strategies, including the monitoring of understanding and the strategic use of reference tools, are essential for sustained reading development. The preference for mobile games, while moderately rated, reinforces the observation by Estremera and Estremera (2018) that intrinsic motivation and reading engagement interact dynamically to influence comprehension outcomes. The relatively lower ratings for absenteeism and visual disturbance indicate that, while these challenges are present, they do not constitute the primary drivers of reading difficulty, consistent with Duong's (2019) finding that learner personality and attendance are contributory but not overriding determinants of reading performance. Fitton et al. (2018) further established that interventions addressing both cognitive and affective dimensions of reading yield meaningful improvements for at-risk learners, a perspective that the present findings strongly corroborate.

Family-related factors. Family-related factors registered an overall category mean of 2.71, rated to a great extent, affirming the significance of the home environment in shaping reading comprehension among readers-at-risk. The highest-rated item was motivation derived from observing siblings read at home, with a category mean of 3.05, rated to a great extent. Sharing school experiences with family members obtained a mean of 2.90, also to a great extent. Engagement in household chores before completing reading assignments yielded a mean of 2.80, to a great extent. Taking care of siblings and having no time for assignments produced a mean of 2.65, rated to a lesser extent, while having parents who cannot read obtained a mean of 2.15, likewise rated to a lesser extent. Grade-level category means were 2.70 for Grade 4, 2.73 for Grade 5, and 2.70 for Grade 6. The strong influence of sibling reading behavior on learners' motivation underscores the role of peer modeling within the family unit, a dynamic affirmed by Lumapnet and Andoy (2017), who demonstrated that sibling and parental involvement in reading activities positively affects both oral and silent reading performance. The lesser impact of parental illiteracy suggests that other motivational and environmental mechanisms may partially compensate for the absence of literate parental guidance, a finding consistent with İlhan and Firat (2018), who proposed that socio-cultural factors interact with metacognitive and motivational skills to shape literacy trajectories.

Household responsibilities also emerged as a competing demand on learners' time, highlighting the balance that students from low-income agrarian families must navigate between domestic obligations and academic engagement. LeCroy et al. (2019) identified supportive home literacy practices as critical contributors to academic achievement, and the present findings affirm that even moderate home-based support, including family conversations about school experiences, plays a meaningful role in sustaining reading engagement.

School-related factors. School-related factors yielded an overall category mean of 2.76, rated to a great extent, indicating that the physical and material dimensions of the school environment substantially affect the reading comprehension of at-risk learners. The absence of a functional library obtained a category mean of 2.55, rated to a lesser extent. The lack of engaging reading materials in the library produced a mean of 2.70, and the unavailability of suitable reading materials in the classroom obtained a mean of 2.95, both rated to a great extent. Uncomfortable classroom size yielded a mean of 2.85, also to a great extent. Grade-level category means were 2.71 for Grade 4, 2.76 for Grade 5, and 2.81 for Grade 6, with a consistent pattern of slightly higher means in the higher grades. The lesser impact attributed to the absence of a fully functional library suggests that learners can still engage in reading activities through alternative means; however, the restricted diversity of available texts limits independent reading opportunities and vocabulary exposure, as documented by Torres (2019), who linked limited access to reading materials with constrained reading development. Conversely, the high ratings for the absence of classroom-appropriate materials and overcrowded conditions reflect how the immediate instructional environment shapes learners' engagement and comprehension. Banditvilai (2020) emphasized that classroom conditions, including spatial arrangements and seating comfort, are critical for effective reading instruction and sustained learner attention, a finding that the present results support. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2019) further established that learners are more likely to engage with and comprehend texts when materials are relevant, culturally accessible, and visually stimulating, reinforcing the need for schools to deliberately curate a diverse and appealing selection of reading resources.

Teacher-related factors. Teacher-related factors obtained an overall category mean of 2.80, rated to a great extent, affirming that instructional practices and teacher engagement significantly influence reading comprehension outcomes at Uma Elementary School. The highest-rated item was the provision of interesting reading materials by teachers, with a category mean of 3.20 and a rating of "to a very great extent" in Grade 5 and "to a great extent" in Grades 4 and 6. Allowing learners to read books every day yielded a category mean of 3.10, rated to a great extent across all grades. The teacher's failure to address students with reading difficulties obtained a mean of 2.65, and the item on teacher absenteeism produced a mean of 2.15, both rated to a lesser extent. Boredom during reading lessons was rated to a lesser extent in Grades 4 and 5 but reached a great extent in Grade 6, contributing to a category mean of 2.75. Grade-level category means were 2.79 for Grade 4, 2.82 for Grade 5, and 2.78 for Grade 6. The elevated ratings for the provision of engaging materials and the integration of daily reading into classroom routines reflect instructional practices that directly support literacy development. Syamsu Tang et al. (2019) and Razalli et al. (2018) both affirmed that engaging, culturally relevant, and visually stimulating reading materials enhance comprehension and sustain learner motivation, findings mirrored by the strong ratings observed in the present study. The regularity of daily reading exposure is likewise supported by Orellana et al. (2020), who established that structured and frequent text interaction fosters the development of fluency, decoding ability, and comprehension strategies. The lesser influence of teacher absenteeism and inattention to struggling readers suggests that teachers at the school generally maintain consistent attendance and provide support to at-risk learners, an orientation that Benson et al. (2017) identified as essential to multi-method assessment and the effective remediation of learning difficulties. The emergence of boredom as a more prominent concern in Grade 6 points

to a developmental gap in instructional differentiation, as Shehzad (2020) and Phuong (2022) documented that older primary learners require varied and stimulating pedagogical strategies to sustain reading interest.

Summary of factors affecting reading comprehension

Across all five factor categories, language-related factors emerged as the most influential, registering the highest overall mean of 3.05, rated to a great extent. Student-related factors followed with a mean of 2.96, while school-related and teacher-related factors each obtained a mean of 2.81, and family-related factors yielded the lowest overall mean at 2.71, though all five categories were consistently rated to a great extent. These results collectively affirm that reading comprehension among at-risk learners is shaped by a multidimensional constellation of forces that operate simultaneously across linguistic, personal, familial, institutional, and instructional domains. Kornilov et al. (2017) and Suggate et al. (2018) similarly identified vocabulary deficits and limited early language exposure as robust predictors of reading difficulty, and the primacy of language-related factors in the present study strongly corroborates this theoretical position. The convergence of student motivation, family support, school resources, and teacher practices further reflects Gilakjani and Sabouri's (2019) argument that reading comprehension is fundamentally shaped by an interplay of cognitive, social, and environmental determinants.

Significant difference in the extent of factors affecting reading comprehension

The analysis of significant differences in the extent of factors affecting reading comprehension according to profile variables revealed that none of the examined variables produced statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level of significance. Across all five factor categories, the probability values for all profile variables exceeded the threshold of $p = 0.05$. For age, probability values ranged from 0.345 for language-related factors to 0.421 for school-related factors. Gender yielded values between 0.287 and 0.315 across categories. First language produced values from 0.198 to 0.210, while class size generated values between 0.398 and 0.425. Ethnic affiliation produced values ranging from 0.372 to 0.392. Last school attended yielded values between 0.437 and 0.451. Parents' educational attainment generated values from 0.298 to 0.310. Parents' occupation produced values between 0.336 and 0.348. Number of siblings yielded values ranging from 0.402 to 0.415. Availability of reading materials at home generated values from 0.257 to 0.269. In all instances, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected, indicating that none of the profile variables significantly differentiated how learners perceived the impact of any of the five factor categories on their reading comprehension.

These results carry important theoretical and practical implications. The non-significance of age and grade level across all categories reinforces the observation that reading challenges among at-risk learners are consistent throughout Grades 4 to 6, rather than being concentrated in any particular developmental stage. Nurjanah (2018) and Ulper et al. (2018) both documented that reading difficulties tend to persist across the primary years when systemic and sustained literacy support is absent, and the uniformity of perceptions in the present sample is consistent with this trajectory. The non-significance of gender suggests that both male and female learners encounter comparable obstacles in reading development, corroborating the position of Gilakjani and Sabouri (2019) that cognitive, linguistic, and environmental factors exert a stronger influence on reading outcomes than gender-based differences. The absence of significant differences by first language and ethnic affiliation

further indicates that learners from both Ilocano and Kalinga backgrounds experience the reading challenges described in the survey similarly, suggesting that the barriers to comprehension are systemic rather than language-specific or ethnically bounded. This finding is consistent with Kornilov et al. (2017) and Tsai and Lee (2018), who established that vocabulary limitations, text complexity, and restricted reading exposure pose comparable challenges regardless of linguistic and cultural background. Similarly, the non-significance of family-related variables, including parental education, parental occupation, number of siblings, and availability of reading materials at home, reinforces the conclusion that reading risk in the sample is not attributable to any singular socio-economic characteristic but is rather a broadly shared condition. Lumapnet and Andoy (2017) and LeCroy et al. (2019) emphasized that the mere availability of resources does not automatically translate into improved reading outcomes; structured engagement, motivation, and guided literacy interaction are equally essential determinants. The non-significance of school- and teacher-related variables across all demographic categories further underscores the systemic nature of reading challenges at Uma Elementary School, as learners' perceptions of instructional support and school resources did not vary meaningfully by any profile characteristic. As Orellana et al. (2020) noted, reading comprehension challenges among at-risk populations are rarely confined to isolated subgroups but are instead broadly distributed across the school community, requiring universally applicable and comprehensively designed interventions.

The converging results across all statistical tests affirm that the reading comprehension difficulties experienced by the 59 readers-at-risk at Uma Elementary School are shaped by a shared and pervasive set of factors that transcend demographic boundaries. Language-related factors, with an overall mean of 3.05, constituted the most potent domain of influence, while student-related factors, school-related factors, teacher-related factors, and family-related factors each contributed meaningfully to the reading challenges identified. The uniformity of these challenges across age, gender, language, ethnicity, and socio-economic background strengthens the case for comprehensive, school-wide literacy interventions rather than targeted demographic remediation. The findings directly address the objectives of the study by characterizing the readers-at-risk profile, quantifying the extent of multiple categories of influencing factors, and establishing that these challenges are equitably distributed across the learner population. These results contribute to the growing body of literature on literacy development in multilingual and underserved primary school contexts, and they reinforce the argument advanced by Gilakjani and Sabouri (2019) that sustainable gains in reading comprehension require holistic interventions integrating vocabulary enrichment, culturally responsive materials, structured family engagement, and evidence-based instructional strategies. The findings presented in this chapter provide the empirical foundation upon which the subsequent chapter develops targeted, data-driven recommendations and program-level interventions designed to address the identified reading challenges of learners at Uma Elementary School.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the reading comprehension challenges of learners identified as readers-at-risk in Grades 4 to 6 at Uma Elementary School, with the aim of characterizing their profile and determining the extent to which language-related, student-related, family-related, school-related, and teacher-related factors influence their reading performance. The findings collectively affirm that reading comprehension difficulties among this population are multifaceted and pervasive, shaped by an interconnected set of linguistic, cognitive, motivational, familial, and instructional forces that operate simultaneously and reinforce one another. Language-related factors emerged as the most influential domain, with an overall

mean of 3.05 rated to a great extent, driven primarily by limited vocabulary, poor reading comprehension, exposure to unfamiliar words in reading selections, reliance on the mother tongue at home, and the perceived lack of interest in available reading materials. Student-related factors followed with an overall mean of 2.96, also rated to a great extent, with comprehension difficulties, strategic dictionary use, and motivational challenges standing out as particularly prominent contributors. School-related and teacher-related factors each obtained an overall mean of 2.81, while family-related factors registered the lowest overall mean at 2.71, though all five categories were consistently rated to a great extent, underscoring the universality and depth of the challenges encountered by the learners.

The analysis of profile variables revealed that despite differences in age, gender, first language, ethnic affiliation, class size, last school attended, parental educational attainment, parental occupation, number of siblings, and availability of reading materials at home, no statistically significant differences were found in how learners perceived the extent of these factors at the 0.05 level of significance. All probability values across every profile variable and factor category exceeded 0.05, leading to the non-rejection of the null hypothesis in all instances. This finding carries substantial significance, as it establishes that reading comprehension challenges among the identified readers-at-risk are not confined to any particular demographic subgroup but are instead broadly and equitably distributed across the entire learner population. The uniformity of these perceptions across linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic boundaries reinforces the conclusion that the barriers to reading comprehension at Uma Elementary School are systemic in nature, requiring interventions that are comprehensive and universally applicable rather than narrowly targeted at isolated groups.

Taken together, these findings contribute new knowledge to the understanding of reading comprehension difficulties in multilingual and underserved primary school contexts by demonstrating that it is the integration of linguistic, cognitive, motivational, familial, and instructional factors, rather than any single determinant, that collectively shapes reading outcomes among at-risk learners. This holistic understanding carries direct implications for educational practice and policy. To address language-related challenges, teachers are strongly encouraged to implement explicit vocabulary instruction and reading exercises that expose learners to a variety of texts, thereby expanding word knowledge and reducing the anxiety associated with encountering unfamiliar language in academic materials. Schools, for their part, should create engaging reading programs that integrate learners' interests through mechanisms such as reading competitions, storytelling sessions, and interactive reading corners, which have been shown to sustain motivation and foster deeper engagement with texts.

The role of the family in supporting reading development must also be given deliberate institutional attention. Parents and guardians should be guided in establishing supportive home reading environments that promote regular reading practice and meaningful dialogue about academic content. This guidance may be delivered through structured parental workshops or home reading schedules facilitated by the school, particularly given the finding that family motivation, including the modeling of reading behavior by siblings, was among the most influential family-related factors identified in the study. To address school-level deficiencies, schools must ensure the availability of functional libraries stocked with diverse and engaging reading materials, as well as comfortable and adequately sized classroom settings that permit individualized teacher attention and guided reading activities.

The improvement of instructional quality is equally essential to addressing the reading challenges documented in this study. Continuous teacher training on evidence-based reading instruction, differentiated strategies for struggling readers, and the integration of information and communication technology tools can meaningfully enhance both teaching quality and learner engagement. Complementing this professional development, schools should implement

structured intervention programs for readers-at-risk that combine phonics instruction, fluency development, comprehension strategies, and vocabulary enrichment within a coherent and sequenced framework. Such programs, when grounded in diagnostic data such as those generated by the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, are well-positioned to deliver targeted support that addresses the specific competency gaps of individual learners.

Finally, the present study acknowledges the boundaries of its cross-sectional and descriptive design and recognizes that the findings, while informative, represent a single point-in-time portrait of reading challenges at one school. Future studies are encouraged to explore the effectiveness of targeted reading intervention programs designed specifically for readers-at-risk across different grade levels, employing longitudinal research designs to track the sustainability and magnitude of improvements over time. Additionally, future research may productively examine the influence of family engagement programs on reading motivation and academic achievement, including the impact of parental reading workshops and structured home reading schedules, to generate a richer understanding of how home-based support can be systematically cultivated as a complement to school-based interventions. Addressing these research directions will deepen the theoretical and empirical foundation for literacy development initiatives in contexts similar to that of Uma Elementary School, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of ensuring that all primary learners achieve the reading competencies necessary for sustained academic success.

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