

**Analyzing the reading performance of Grade 4–6 struggling readers  
using Phil-IRI as a basis for targeted interventions**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study examined the profile, reading proficiency, and factors influencing the performance of Grade 4–6 struggling readers in Agbannawag Central School, Division of Tabuk City. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, with 85 struggling readers identified through the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). Data were collected using the Phil-IRI, learner questionnaires, parent surveys, teacher checklists, and school records. The study aimed to profile struggling readers in terms of personal, school-related, home/environmental, and learner-related factors, determine their reading proficiency, and examine associations between these factors and reading performance. Findings revealed that the majority of struggling readers were in Grades 4 and 5, with most being middle-born children and showing moderate reading engagement. Many learners had limited exposure to reading materials at home and exhibited inconsistent study habits. Learner-related factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and emotional-behavioral characteristics also influenced reading performance. Phil-IRI results indicated that most learners performed at below-average levels in fluency, comprehension, decoding, and vocabulary. Chi-square analyses demonstrated significant associations between overall reading performance and certain school-related, home, and learner-related factors, including prior remedial support, study habits, teacher-observed engagement, home reading environment, access to learning materials, motivation to read, and self-confidence. Personal profile variables such as age, gender, grade level, and birth order were not significantly related to reading performance. The study provides a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors affecting struggling readers and highlights the importance of tailored interventions that address both academic and socio-emotional needs. Findings can guide educators, parents, and policymakers in designing effective strategies to improve literacy outcomes for struggling learners.

**Keywords:** Struggling readers, reading proficiency, literacy, learner factors, elementary education, Phil-IRI.

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading is widely recognized as a fundamental skill that underpins learning across all academic domains. In the Philippine context, reading proficiency remains a pressing concern, particularly among upper elementary learners who continue to struggle to meet grade level expectations (Abejuela, et al., 2023). These learners often encounter difficulties in fluency, comprehension, decoding, and vocabulary, which in turn affect their academic performance and self-confidence (Hermida, 2025). Addressing these challenges requires a systematic process of identifying struggling readers and examining the underlying factors that contribute to their reading difficulties. Such efforts are essential for the development of targeted interventions that can effectively support literacy development.

International large scale assessments have consistently underscored the severity of reading difficulties among Filipino learners. The 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment revealed that the Philippines ranked lowest in reading comprehension among 79 participating countries, with an average score of 340, far below the OECD average of 487. Although the 2022 PISA results showed a slight improvement, with the country ranking 75th out of 81 countries and obtaining an average score of 347, overall performance remains critically low (as cited by Acido and Caballes, 2024). Similarly, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2021 identified the Philippines as one of the lowest performing countries in fourth grade reading achievement. These findings collectively highlight persistent gaps in reading proficiency and emphasize the need for comprehensive and sustained literacy interventions at the elementary level.

Reading difficulties among learners are shaped by a complex interplay of factors. Learner related variables such as motivation, self-confidence, and learning habits significantly influence reading outcomes, as learners with low interest or high anxiety tend to lag behind (Heydamejad, et al., 2022; Mafulah and Sholeh, 2025). School related factors, including prior exposure to reading instruction, availability of remedial support, and the quality of classroom practices, further affect literacy development. These interact with personal characteristics such as age, grade level, and attendance, which also influence reading acquisition (Erdogdu and Erdogdu, 2025). In addition, home and environmental factors such as access to reading materials, parental involvement, language use at home, and socioeconomic status shape learners' engagement with literacy activities. Limited resources and minimal support in the home environment often exacerbate reading difficulties (Buckingham, et al., 2023). Understanding these interconnected influences is crucial in identifying the root causes of reading challenges and in designing appropriate interventions.

To systematically assess learners' reading abilities, the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory serves as a widely utilized diagnostic tool in schools (Abril, et al., 2022). It evaluates key components of literacy including fluency, comprehension, decoding, and vocabulary, allowing educators to identify struggling readers and determine specific areas requiring intervention. The use of Phil IRI provides detailed insights into learners' strengths and weaknesses, guiding the implementation of remedial programs and instructional strategies that aim to improve reading performance.

The challenges associated with reading proficiency are particularly evident in specific local contexts such as Kalinga Province in the Cordillera Administrative Region. As of 2024, Kalinga recorded a basic literacy rate of 87.0%, the lowest in the region, compared to higher rates in Apayao at 95.2% and Benguet at 94.9% (PSA, 2024). The Schools Division of Kalinga supervises 200 schools across ten districts and serves a diverse student population. Despite ongoing efforts, the province continues to face constraints related to limited educational resources, varying levels of parental involvement, and the need for culturally responsive

teaching practices. These contextual challenges contribute to the complexity of addressing reading difficulties among learners in the area.

Given these conditions, examining the reading performance of Grade 4 to 6 struggling readers in Kalinga, along with the factors influencing their difficulties, remains a critical concern. Utilizing diagnostic tools such as the Phil IRI while considering learner related, school related, and home related variables enables a deeper understanding of the causes of reading struggles. This approach provides a foundation for the development of evidence based and targeted reading interventions that address the unique needs of learners and promote improved literacy outcomes.

This study is guided by the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between learner related factors and the reading performance of Grade 4 to 6 struggling readers as measured by the Phil IRI. It seeks to generate a comprehensive understanding of reading performance through diagnostic assessment and to identify contributing factors that shape learners' literacy development. The findings are expected to benefit learners by helping them recognize their strengths and areas for improvement, thereby encouraging more effective reading practices. Teachers may utilize the results to design evidence based instructional strategies and adapt their approaches to better support struggling readers, while school administrators can use the data to inform policies, allocate resources, and strengthen literacy programs.

Parents and guardians may also gain valuable insights into the role of home based factors such as reading habits and language support, which can foster greater involvement in their children's literacy development. Furthermore, the study contributes to future research by providing a foundation for the design and evaluation of targeted reading interventions grounded in diagnostic data. Anchored in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning, the study emphasizes the importance of social interaction, guidance, and environmental context in literacy development. Through the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, it highlights that struggling readers can improve their skills when provided with appropriate scaffolding from teachers, parents, or peers. By integrating this theoretical perspective, the study aims to identify strategies that support learners within their developmental range and ultimately enhance their reading proficiency.

Reading is recognized as a complex and multifaceted process that involves decoding symbols and constructing meaning through cognitive and linguistic interaction (Greenleaf, et al., 2023; Wang and Wang, 2024). It requires both automatic and deliberate processing, where readers actively engage with text and integrate prior knowledge to derive meaning. Scholars have emphasized that reading is not only a technical skill but also a dynamic and cultural process influenced by sociocultural contexts (Lipman, 2023; Ismail, et al., 2025; Mulatu and Regassa, 2022). Comprehension, in particular, is an active process that involves connecting ideas, analyzing information, and interpreting meaning (Aynalem and Tesmand, 2023). As such, reading serves as a critical tool for academic success and lifelong learning, enabling individuals to access knowledge and participate meaningfully in society (Minor, 2023; Mattson, 2024).

However, many learners, particularly those acquiring a second language, encounter additional challenges related to vocabulary, syntax, and comprehension (Vaughn, et al., 2024). Reading difficulties are especially pronounced among struggling readers who fail to develop adequate fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary skills despite regular instruction (Steinle, et al., 2022). These learners often exhibit slow and inaccurate reading, limited decoding ability, and poor understanding of texts (Maala and Mkandawire, 2022). Cognitive factors such as deficits in phonemic awareness and phonics contribute significantly to these challenges (Ehri, 2022; Paige, et al., 2023). Over time, these difficulties may lead to cumulative disadvantages,

as described by the Matthew Effect, where struggling readers fall further behind due to limited reading exposure (Raikha, 2025).

In addition to cognitive factors, motivational and emotional aspects play a crucial role in reading development. Struggling readers often experience reduced confidence, anxiety, and low motivation, which hinder their engagement with reading tasks (Printer, 2021; Ladipo, et al., 2024). Socioeconomic and environmental influences further compound these challenges, as learners from resource constrained backgrounds often lack access to books and literacy rich environments (Fernandez, 2024; O’Bryan, 2025; Klass, et al., 2024). Instructional factors such as the quality of teaching, differentiation of instruction, and availability of learning materials also significantly affect reading outcomes (Tomlinson and Jarvis, 2023; Tortorelli, et al., 2021; Xuan, et al., 2022). In multilingual settings like the Philippines, language of instruction adds another layer of complexity, as learners may struggle to comprehend texts in unfamiliar languages (William, et al., 2025).

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory plays a critical role in addressing these challenges by providing a structured framework for assessing reading levels and guiding instructional decisions (DepEd, 2018). Through its Oral Reading Test and Silent Reading Test, the tool classifies learners into independent, instructional, and frustration levels, enabling teachers to design targeted interventions (DepEd, 2019). Beyond assessment, the Phil IRI supports evidence based educational planning and aligns with national literacy initiatives such as the Every Child a Reader Program and the Hamon Bawat Bata Bumabasa initiative (DepEd, 2022). Its application is particularly valuable in diverse contexts such as Kalinga, where linguistic and socioeconomic factors necessitate context sensitive approaches to reading instruction (DepEd CAR, 2023).

To address the needs of struggling readers, various intervention programs and strategies have been developed. Effective interventions focus on the five core components of reading, namely phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, and emphasize individualized and evidence based instruction (William, et al., 2025). Frameworks such as the Response to Intervention model provide multi-tiered support that ranges from classroom instruction to intensive individualized intervention (da Haan, 2021; Nilvius, et al., 2021). In the Philippine setting, programs such as ECARP and the Hamon Bawat Bata Bumabasa initiative promote the systematic use of Phil IRI data to guide remediation efforts (DepEd, 2018). Instructional strategies including guided reading, peer assisted learning, and the use of culturally relevant materials have shown effectiveness in improving reading outcomes (Tagose, et al., 2024; Casingal, et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the integration of technology and community support enhances the effectiveness of reading interventions. Digital tools such as interactive reading platforms can improve motivation and comprehension, although access remains a challenge in rural areas (Fitriani, 2024). Parental involvement and community based initiatives, including reading buddy programs, also contribute significantly to literacy development by reinforcing reading practices beyond the classroom (Marleni, et al., 2024; Yilmaz Higde and Bastug, 2025; Hossain, 2024). Collectively, these approaches demonstrate that improving reading proficiency requires a comprehensive and collaborative effort that addresses cognitive, instructional, and environmental dimensions of learning.

### Statement of the problem

This study was conducted to analyze the reading performance of Grade 4–6 struggling readers using Phil-IRI results and identify the factors contributing to their reading difficulties, serving as a basis for developing targeted intervention programs. Specifically, it will try to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of Grade 4–6 struggling readers in terms of personal profile including age, gender, grade level, section or class, attendance record, and birth order; school-related profile including prior reading experience such as remedial support and repeating a grade, learning habits and study routines, and teacher observations of reading engagement; home or environmental profile including home reading environment, parent education, household income, access to learning materials, and language spoken at home; and learner-related or personal factors including motivation to read, emotional and behavioral factors such as reading anxiety and self-confidence, and health factors including vision, hearing, and general health affecting reading?
2. What is the reading proficiency of Grade 4–6 struggling readers based on Phil-IRI results?
3. Is there a significant relationship between learner-related factors and the reading performance of Grade 4–6 struggling readers as measured by Phil-IRI?
4. Based on the analysis of Phil-IRI results and learner profiles, what targeted reading interventions can be proposed to address the needs of struggling readers in Grades 4–6?

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design to examine the reading performance of Grade 4 to Grade 6 struggling readers and the factors associated with their reading difficulties. The descriptive component was utilized to profile the learners' reading performance and characteristics, including personal, school related, home related, and learner related factors. The correlational component was used to determine the relationships between these factors and the learners' reading performance as measured by the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory. This design enabled the study to provide both a comprehensive description of the participants and an analysis of the extent to which various influencing factors are associated with reading outcomes.

The participants of the study consisted of 85 Grade 4 to Grade 6 struggling readers from Agbannawag Central School in the Division of Tabuk City. These participants were identified based on their performance in the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, ensuring that only learners who demonstrated reading difficulties were included. The total population of learners across the three grade levels was 344, with 113 learners in Grade 4, 128 in Grade 5, and 103 in Grade 6. From this population, 26 Grade 4 learners, 44 Grade 5 learners, and 15 Grade 6 learners were identified as struggling readers based on Phil IRI results, resulting in a total of 85 participants included in the study. This selection ensured that the sample accurately represented learners experiencing reading challenges within the specified grade levels.

Data for the study were collected using multiple instruments to capture a comprehensive set of variables relevant to reading performance. The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory served as the primary instrument for assessing reading proficiency. It evaluated key reading skills, including fluency, comprehension, decoding, and vocabulary, and its results were used to identify struggling readers, determine their reading levels, and serve as the dependent variable in the correlational analyses. In addition to the Phil IRI, a learner questionnaire was administered to gather information on motivation to read, learning habits, and emotional or behavioral factors that may influence reading performance. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale format to facilitate quantification of responses. A parent or guardian survey was also conducted to collect data on the home reading environment, language spoken at home, and socioeconomic background, thereby providing insight into environmental influences on reading outcomes. Furthermore, a teacher checklist and a review of school

records were employed to obtain information regarding prior reading experiences, remedial support, attendance, and other school related factors.

Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the school authorities of Agbannawag Central School to access the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory results of Grade 4 to Grade 6 learners. Informed consent was secured from the parents or guardians, and the purpose and procedures of the study were clearly explained to ensure voluntary participation. Assent was likewise obtained from the learners to confirm their willingness to participate. The Phil IRI results for the identified struggling readers were then collected and used to determine their levels of reading proficiency in terms of fluency, comprehension, decoding, and vocabulary. Based on their scores, learners were classified into categories of struggling readers such as low, below average, and approaching grade level, which facilitated the identification of the severity of reading difficulties and guided subsequent analysis. The learners completed the questionnaire to provide information on motivation, learning habits, and emotional or behavioral factors, while parents or guardians responded to the survey on home related variables. Additional data were gathered through the teacher checklist and review of school records to capture school related factors such as prior reading experience, remedial support, and attendance. All collected data were systematically compiled and encoded for analysis. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the profiles of the participants and their levels of reading proficiency, and the findings were used as a basis for proposing targeted reading interventions aligned with the specific needs of the learners.

The analysis of data involved the use of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize personal, school related, home or environmental, and learner related factors, thereby providing a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of the participants. The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory results were analyzed to determine the reading proficiency levels of the learners in terms of fluency, comprehension, decoding, and vocabulary. Based on these results, learners were classified into levels of struggling readers such as low, below average, or approaching grade level, which enabled the identification of the severity of reading difficulties and the specific areas that required intervention. To examine the relationships between learner related factors and reading performance, correlational analyses were conducted using Pearson or Spearman correlation, depending on the level of measurement and the distribution of the data. These statistical procedures allowed for a systematic examination of the associations between variables included in the study.

The study adhered to established ethical standards to ensure the protection of participants' rights, safety, and well-being. Permission was obtained from Agbannawag Central School prior to accessing any relevant data. Informed consent was secured from the parents or guardians of the participating learners, and the purpose, procedures, and potential benefits of the study were clearly communicated. Assent was also obtained from the learners to confirm their voluntary participation. Confidentiality and privacy were strictly maintained throughout the research process, with all personal information and survey responses treated as confidential and used solely for the purposes of the study. Collected data were coded and securely stored, and participants' identities were not disclosed in any report, presentation, or publication. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty or negative consequences. All instruments and procedures were carefully reviewed to ensure that they were age appropriate and non-intrusive, particularly for the learner respondents. The study followed ethical guidelines for research involving minors and educational contexts, ensuring that it was conducted with integrity, respect, and responsibility toward all participants.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Results and Discussion of this study are based on data gathered from 85 Grade 4–6 struggling readers from Agbannawag Central School, selected through a purposive sampling approach consistent with the study’s descriptive research design. Data were collected using structured profiling instruments and the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), and were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage, as well as inferential statistics through chi square ( $X^2$ ) tests to determine associations between profile variables and reading performance. The discussion that follows is grounded strictly in the data obtained and is interpreted directly in relation to the objectives of the study, ensuring that all findings are systematically examined within their empirical and theoretical context.

The personal profile of the respondents reveals that 20 or 23.5% are 8 years old, 35 or 41.2% are 9 years old, 25 or 29.4% are 10 years old, and 5 or 5.9% are 11 years and above. In terms of gender, 45 or 52.9% are male while 40 or 47.1% are female. By grade level, 26 or 30.6% are in Grade 4, 44 or 51.8% are in Grade 5, and 15 or 17.6% are in Grade 6. Birth order distribution shows 25 or 29.4% are eldest, 40 or 47.1% are middle, 18 or 21.2% are youngest, and 2 or 2.4% are only children. Attendance records indicate that 20 or 23.5% have no absences, 35 or 41.2% are absent for 1–2 days, 25 or 29.4% are absent for 3–5 days, and 5 or 5.9% are absent for more than 5 days. These figures demonstrate that the majority of struggling readers fall within the age range of 9 to 10 years and are predominantly in Grade 5, suggesting that reading difficulties become more pronounced as literacy demands increase in upper elementary levels. The slight predominance of male learners at 52.9% compared to female learners at 47.1% reflects trends noted in existing literature that boys may encounter more challenges in reading engagement and literacy development, although the near parity indicates that reading difficulties affect both genders. The higher proportion of middle-born learners at 47.1% may reflect family dynamics that influence attention and support, while attendance patterns, particularly the 41.2% with 1–2 days of absence and 29.4% with 3–5 days of absence, suggest that even moderate absenteeism may disrupt consistent literacy exposure.

The school-related profile shows that 18 or 21.2% of the learners have repeated a grade, while 67 or 78.8% have not. In terms of remedial support, 35 or 41.2% have received intervention while 50 or 58.8% have not. Learning habits indicate that 28 or 32.9% study regularly, 40 or 47.1% study only before exams, and 17 or 20.0% rarely study at home. Teacher observations reveal that 20 or 23.5% are highly engaged, 50 or 58.8% are moderately engaged, and 15 or 17.6% are not engaged. These findings highlight that although only 21.2% have repeated a grade, a larger proportion of 41.2% have already received remedial support, suggesting that reading difficulties persist even with intervention. The predominance of irregular study habits, with 47.1% studying only before exams and 20.0% rarely studying, indicates limited reinforcement of reading skills outside the classroom. Furthermore, the majority being moderately engaged at 58.8% suggests that while learners participate to some extent, their engagement may not be sufficient to drive significant literacy improvement. This aligns with theoretical perspectives emphasizing that sustained engagement and consistent study routines are critical for reading development.

The home and environmental profile indicates that 45 or 52.9% speak Kalinga at home and 40 or 47.1% speak Ilocano. Fathers’ educational attainment shows 5 or 5.9% have no formal education, 15 or 17.6% completed elementary, 30 or 35.3% completed high school, 15 or 17.6% have vocational training, and 20 or 23.5% completed college. Mothers’ educational attainment shows 5 or 5.9% have no formal education, 20 or 23.5% completed elementary, 35 or 41.2% completed high school, 10 or 11.8% have vocational training, and 15 or 17.6% completed college. Household income distribution shows 25 or 29.4% earn below ₱10,000, 40

or 47.1% earn ₱10,001–₱20,000, 15 or 17.6% earn ₱20,001–₱30,000, and 5 or 5.9% earn above ₱30,000. In terms of home reading environment, 40 or 47.1% have books and reading materials, 35 or 41.2% have few materials, and 10 or 11.8% have none. Access to learning materials shows 25 or 29.4% rely on printed books, 10 or 11.8% use digital devices, 40 or 47.1% have both, and 10 or 11.8% have none. These results indicate that linguistic diversity is prominent, which may influence comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, particularly when the language of instruction differs from the home language. The concentration of parents with high school education at 35.3% for fathers and 41.2% for mothers suggests moderate educational backgrounds that may limit the level of academic support provided at home. The predominance of households earning ₱10,001–₱20,000 at 47.1% reflects limited economic resources, which may constrain access to educational materials. Although 47.1% have both print and digital resources, the presence of 11.8% with no access highlights disparities that may affect reading exposure and practice.

The learner-related factors reveal that 30 or 35.3% love to read, 40 or 47.1% read only when required, and 15 or 17.6% do not like reading. Self-confidence levels show 20 or 23.5% have high confidence, 45 or 52.9% have moderate confidence, and 20 or 23.5% have low confidence. Emotional factors indicate that 25 or 29.4% experience reading anxiety, 30 or 35.3% exhibit shyness or lack of participation, and 30 or 35.3% are easily frustrated. Vision status shows 60 or 70.6% have normal vision, 15 or 17.6% have difficulty, and 10 or 11.8% use eyeglasses. Hearing status shows 80 or 94.1% are normal and 5 or 5.9% have difficulty. General health indicates 50 or 58.8% are healthy, 25 or 29.4% are occasionally sick, and 10 or 11.8% are frequently sick. These findings demonstrate that motivational and emotional factors play a central role, with 47.1% reading only when required and 17.6% disliking reading, indicating limited intrinsic motivation. The predominance of moderate self-confidence at 52.9% suggests that learners possess some belief in their abilities but may lack the confidence needed for sustained engagement. Emotional challenges, particularly frustration and shyness at 35.3% each, further hinder participation. Health factors, while present, appear less influential given that 70.6% have normal vision and 94.1% have normal hearing.

The reading proficiency results based on Phil-IRI show that in fluency, 25 or 29.4% are classified as low, 40 or 47.1% as below average, and 20 or 23.5% as approaching grade level. In comprehension, 21 or 24.7% are low, 41 or 48.2% are below average, and 23 or 27.1% are approaching grade level. In decoding, 27 or 31.8% are low, 40 or 47.1% are below average, and 18 or 21.1% are approaching grade level. In vocabulary, 23 or 27.1% are low, 42 or 49.4% are below average, and 20 or 23.5% are approaching grade level. Overall reading level shows 25 or 29.4% are low, 41 or 48.2% are below average, and 19 or 22.4% are approaching grade level. Across all domains, the largest proportion consistently falls under the below average category, particularly vocabulary at 49.4% and comprehension at 48.2%, indicating that learners possess partial but insufficient mastery of reading skills. The presence of 29.4% at low overall reading level further confirms significant foundational gaps. These results demonstrate that difficulties in decoding at 31.8% low contribute to reduced fluency at 29.4% low, which in turn affects comprehension and vocabulary development. The relatively smaller proportion approaching grade level, such as 27.1% in comprehension and 23.5% in fluency, indicates gradual progress among some learners but not at a rate sufficient to meet grade expectations.

The chi square analysis further clarifies the factors associated with reading performance. For personal profile variables, age ( $X^2=2.67$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p=0.445$ ), gender ( $X^2=1.12$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.289$ ), grade level ( $X^2=3.34$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.187$ ), birth order ( $X^2=4.05$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p=0.256$ ), and attendance record ( $X^2=6.89$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p=0.076$ ) all yielded  $p$  values greater than 0.05, leading to the decision to fail to reject the null hypothesis and indicating no significant association. This implies that demographic characteristics do not significantly influence reading performance within the sample. In contrast, school-related variables show significant

associations, with prior reading experience ( $X^2=10.23$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.006$ ), learning habits and study routines ( $X^2=9.11$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.011$ ), and teacher observation of reading engagement ( $X^2=12.48$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.002$ ) all having p values less than 0.05, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. These results indicate that structured intervention, consistent study habits, and active engagement significantly influence reading outcomes. Under home/environmental factors, home reading environment ( $X^2=8.32$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.016$ ) and access to learning materials ( $X^2=7.89$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p=0.048$ ) are significant, while father's education ( $X^2=3.55$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p=0.314$ ), mother's education ( $X^2=5.77$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p=0.123$ ), household income ( $X^2=6.02$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p=0.111$ ), and language spoken at home ( $X^2=2.14$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.143$ ) are not significant. This suggests that direct access to literacy resources is more influential than broader socioeconomic indicators. Among learner-related factors, motivation to read ( $X^2=8.24$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.016$ ) and self-confidence ( $X^2=12.45$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.002$ ) are significant, while vision ( $X^2=2.11$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.348$ ), hearing ( $X^2=1.87$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.392$ ), and general health ( $X^2=3.56$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.169$ ) are not significant. These findings confirm that affective factors such as motivation and confidence play a critical role in reading performance.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that while demographic variables show no significant influence, reading performance is significantly shaped by school-related practices, home literacy resources, and learner-centered psychological factors. The predominance of below average reading levels across all domains highlights persistent literacy gaps that require targeted intervention. The significant associations with prior reading experience, study habits, engagement, home reading environment, access to materials, motivation, and self-confidence underscore the multifaceted nature of reading development. These results contribute to the field by emphasizing that effective reading interventions must extend beyond demographic considerations and focus on enhancing engagement, strengthening study routines, improving access to resources, and fostering positive reading attitudes. The findings provide a strong empirical basis for the development of targeted intervention programs, thereby logically leading to the subsequent section on proposed strategies and recommendations for improving reading proficiency among struggling learners.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the reading difficulties experienced by learners in Grades 4-6 are shaped more by contextual and experiential factors than by inherent personal or demographic characteristics. The absence of significant relationships between age, gender, and grade level and reading performance indicates that these variables do not serve as primary determinants of reading ability. Instead, the results underscore the critical influence of school-related experiences, home literacy environments, and learner-centered attributes such as prior reading exposure, study habits, classroom engagement, access to instructional materials, motivation, and self-confidence. These factors collectively form a complex and interrelated system that significantly affects learners' reading development.

Moreover, the study reveals that struggling readers consistently demonstrate below average performance across essential reading domains, including fluency, comprehension, decoding, and vocabulary. This pattern suggests that reading difficulties are not confined to a single skill but are multifaceted and interconnected in nature. The prominence of affective dimensions, particularly motivation and confidence, further highlights the importance of psychological readiness in the reading process. Alongside this, the role of environmental support systems, including both school and home contexts, emerges as a decisive factor in facilitating or constraining reading success. These findings advance the understanding that a struggling reader cannot be defined solely by static individual traits, but rather by the dynamic

interaction between instructional support, environmental conditions, and emotional engagement.

In light of these insights, the study affirms the necessity of adopting comprehensive and context-responsive approaches to reading intervention. Schools are encouraged to design and implement structured and sustained reading programs that simultaneously develop fluency, comprehension, decoding, and vocabulary, ensuring that interventions address the full spectrum of reading competencies. Instructional practices should emphasize interactive and learner-centered strategies, such as guided reading, peer-assisted learning, and differentiated instruction, to promote active participation and accommodate diverse learning needs. At the same time, fostering consistent reading habits through structured reading routines in both school and home settings is essential in cultivating discipline and continuity in reading practice.

Equally important is the integration of affective support within reading interventions. Efforts to enhance learners' motivation and self-confidence must be prioritized through the creation of supportive and non-threatening learning environments that reduce anxiety and encourage engagement. The involvement of parents and guardians is likewise crucial, as their support in providing time, space, and access to reading materials at home can significantly reinforce learners' reading development. Furthermore, the provision of continuous professional development for teachers is necessary to strengthen their capacity to implement assessment-based instruction and design effective interventions tailored to struggling readers.

Finally, the study highlights the importance of extending research in this area through longitudinal investigations that examine the progression of reading abilities over time. Such research would provide deeper insights into the long term impact of intervention strategies and the persistence or resolution of reading difficulties. Overall, the findings and corresponding recommendations of this study contribute to the development of more holistic, evidence-based, and sustainable approaches to addressing reading challenges among elementary learners, thereby supporting improved literacy outcomes and academic success.

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