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Individualized reading intervention among fourth grade learners

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study utilized a Quasi-Experimental Design (specifically, a single-group pre-test/post-test approach) to evaluate the effectiveness of an Individualized Reading Intervention (IRI) in improving the reading performance of Fourth Grade learners. The study involved six (6) purposively selected participants (N=6) identified as being at the Frustration Reading Level. The IRI program served as the treatment, focusing on small-group remediation of foundational skills (phonics and decoding). The investigation sought to answer three key questions: the mean pre-test score, the mean post-test score, and the existence of a significant difference between them. The findings established a baseline mean pre-test score of 5.17, confirming severe reading deficits. Following the intervention, the mean post-test score significantly increased to 17.50. Statistical analysis using the T-Test for Dependent Samples yielded a P-value <0.05, confirming a significant difference in reading performance before and after the treatment.

Keywords: Individualized reading intervention, reading proficiency, frustration level, pre-test, post-test, quasi-experimental design, remediation.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is widely recognized as a gateway to learning, enabling individuals to acquire knowledge across various domains. This study focuses on improving individualized reading intervention among fourth grade learners by examining the underlying concepts, challenges, and strategies that influence reading development. It presents the foundational issues related to reading comprehension and performance, alongside the theoretical and empirical bases that guide the investigation. The discussion situates reading as a central academic skill and emphasizes the necessity of targeted interventions to enhance learners' comprehension abilities.

Reading is a fundamental skill that significantly influences learners' academic achievement and personal development. Global organizations such as UNESCO highlight literacy as a gateway to all forms of learning, underscoring its critical role in educational success. Poor reading skills hinder learners' ability to process information effectively, resulting in diminished academic performance and limited life opportunities. Within ASEAN member

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states, there has been an increasing emphasis on evidence based instructional practices that address the needs of struggling readers. Healy (2002) defines reading comprehension as the process of understanding written text, constructing meaning, and integrating content, reinforcing the importance of comprehension as the core of reading proficiency. Despite ongoing efforts to enhance reading instruction, the need for individualized intervention remains evident, particularly for learners who struggle to meet expected performance levels. This study contributes to the development of evidence based practices by exploring how varied strategies and intervention activities can improve reading outcomes among Grade 4 learners.

In the Philippine context, the Department of Education has prioritized literacy through initiatives such as the Every Child A Reader Program, with the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory serving as a key diagnostic tool to assess learners' reading levels. The Phil IRI determines whether learners perform at independent, instructional, or frustration levels, providing essential data for instructional planning. However, the COVID 19 pandemic posed significant challenges to reading development. Although self-learning modules ensured continuity of education, many learners did not independently engage with the materials, often relying on parental assistance. As a result, substantial learning gaps emerged, particularly in reading comprehension. These challenges are especially critical as learners transition to higher grade levels where comprehension becomes the primary focus of reading instruction. Jarrar (2014) emphasizes that remedial instruction is necessary to address such learning gaps, while Healy (2002) reiterates that comprehension involves constructing meaning from text, highlighting the urgency of addressing deficiencies in this area.

Reading comprehension remains a vital skill that enables learners to interpret and engage with written information effectively. Abaigar (2019) supports the effectiveness of intervention materials in enhancing learner competence, while Minoza (2019) found that learners demonstrate average levels of understanding when reading aloud, with more variability observed in silent reading performance. Barger and Zirkel (2009) emphasize the role of reading engagement in improving reading performance, suggesting that motivation and interaction with texts are essential components of literacy development. Furthermore, O'Connor (2005) highlights the positive influence of parental involvement on reading outcomes, while Hall and Moje (2008) underscore the importance of engaging learners through appropriate instructional methods and supportive reading environments. These findings collectively demonstrate that reading development is influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including engagement, instructional quality, and environmental support.

Complementary research also emphasizes the importance of listening comprehension and contextual learning in language development. Richard (2014), along with Brown (2014) and Kwak (2017), notes that pre listening and post listening activities enhance comprehension and retention, while Richards and Rodgers (2014) and Chen (2019) advocate for meaningful contexts to support language acquisition. These insights reinforce the interconnectedness of language skills and highlight the need for comprehensive instructional approaches that integrate multiple dimensions of literacy. Additionally, intervention approaches such as pull out programs using part to whole strategies have proven effective in developing phonemic awareness through structured and multisensory instruction (Joshi et al., 2002; Pindiprolu and Forbush, 2009; Rose and Zirkel, 2007; Woodward and Talbert Johnson, 2009).

Various intervention programs have been developed to support struggling readers, including the Aural Read Respond Oral Write program, AcceleRead and AcceleWrite, and Better Reading Support Partners. These programs emphasize individualized instruction, repeated practice, and structured engagement with texts. Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of targeted interventions, with Boulay et al. (2015) demonstrating significant improvements in reading fluency through leveled pull out programs, and Denton et al. (2006) highlighting the benefits of systematic instruction in phonological awareness and decoding.

Similarly, Nelson and Manset Williamson (2006) and Faggella Luby et al. (2007) found that explicit instruction yields greater improvements in reading performance compared to generalized approaches, contributing to increased self-efficacy and comprehension skills among learners.

Literacy development is further enhanced through collaborative and culturally responsive practices. Mallinson, Hudley, Strickling, and Figa (2011) describe literacy as a collaborative process that integrates cultural and linguistic knowledge, while Ladda and Jacobs (2015) emphasize the role of inquiry and real world connections in fostering meaningful learning. Parker (2012) highlights the value of critical literacy activities in promoting deeper comprehension and cultural awareness. These perspectives underscore the importance of creating engaging and inclusive learning environments that motivate learners to read and comprehend texts effectively.

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory serves as a crucial tool in assessing reading performance across three key areas, namely word recognition, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. It enables early identification of learners' difficulties, supports data driven instruction, and facilitates program evaluation within the education system. In this study, the Phil IRI is used to measure learners' reading performance before and after the implementation of explicit comprehension strategy instruction. The use of pretest and posttest assessments allows for the evaluation of intervention effectiveness, providing empirical evidence on the impact of targeted instructional strategies.

Reading intervention is defined as a structured set of activities designed to address specific learning difficulties. Tiered intervention frameworks categorize support based on learner needs, ranging from class wide strategies to intensive individualized instruction. Research indicates that early intervention is essential, as unresolved reading difficulties may extend to other domains and hinder overall academic progress (Raspin et al., 2019). Lovett (2015) and Wanzek and Vaughn (2016) further emphasize that consistent and targeted interventions significantly improve reading outcomes, highlighting the importance of sustained instructional support.

Explicit comprehension strategies play a central role in improving reading performance by making cognitive processes visible to learners. Strategies such as questioning, summarizing, visualizing, making connections, and inferring enable learners to actively engage with texts and construct meaning effectively. Rosenshine (2010) notes that explicit instruction enhances metacognitive awareness, allowing learners to monitor and adjust their comprehension strategies. These approaches not only improve understanding but also foster independent reading skills and confidence.

The conceptual framework of the study emphasizes the multidimensional nature of reading performance, which includes word recognition, language comprehension, fluency, and overall comprehension. The study adopts an input process output model, where learners' initial reading performance is assessed using the Phil IRI, followed by the implementation of individualized intervention strategies, and culminating in the evaluation of outcomes through post assessment. This framework highlights the systematic approach to addressing reading difficulties and underscores the expected improvement in learners' reading performance as a result of targeted interventions.

Statement of the problem

This research points to determine the effectiveness of individualized reading intervention in improving the reading performance of Grade 4 learners.

1. What is the main pre-test score before the implementation of the individualized reading intervention?
2. What is the main post-test after the implementation of the individualized reading intervention?
3. Is there a significant difference in the reading performance before and after the individualized reading intervention based on Phil-IRI scores?
4. What are the factors that influence the effectiveness of the individualized reading intervention for Grade IV learners?
5. What individualized reading interventions can be developed to improve the reading performance of Grade IV learners based on the identified Phil-IRI results?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodological framework employed in the study, encompassing the research design, research locale, population and sample, sampling technique, data collection instruments, data gathering procedures, and statistical treatment of data. The study utilized a quasi-experimental design, specifically employing a one-group pre-test post-test approach. This design was selected because it involves the application of a treatment, identified as the Individualized Reading Intervention, to an existing and non-randomly selected group of participants composed of struggling Grade IV learners. The effectiveness of the intervention was determined by comparing the learners' performance before the intervention, as measured through the pre-test, and after the intervention, as measured through the post-test, with particular attention given to the change in reading scores.

The study was conducted at Kabayan Central School located in Poblacion, Kabayan, Benguet during the School Year 2022-2023. The population of the study consisted of a total of nineteen (19) Grade 4 learners, comprising ten (10) boys and nine (9) girls. The participants were selected using purposive sampling. From this population, six learners were identified to receive the intervention, including four boys and two girls. This sample represented those learners who required the most focused instructional support, specifically those classified under the frustration reading level based on their initial Phil-IRI scores. The selection process ensured that the participants were those who demonstrated the greatest need for targeted reading intervention.

The study employed two primary data collection instruments to establish both a comprehensive diagnostic basis and a focused measure of intervention effectiveness. The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, commonly referred to as Phil-IRI, served as the initial diagnostic instrument. It was administered to screen the entire population of Grade IV learners and to determine their respective reading levels, categorized as independent, instructional, or frustration. The results of this assessment were used to identify the six participants and to determine their specific reading needs. In addition to this, a researcher-made 20-item reading test was utilized as the primary evaluation instrument for both the pre-test and post-test. This instrument was designed to assess two core skills targeted by the intervention, namely CVC pattern decoding and Dolch sight word recognition. The test was divided into two parts, with Part I consisting of 10 items focused on CVC pattern decoding and Part II consisting of 10 items focused on Dolch sight word recognition.

The data gathering procedure began with the researcher seeking formal permission from the school principal to conduct the study. Upon approval, the Phil-IRI Group Screening Test was administered as a pre-test to all 19 Grade 4 learners in the class. The results revealed that six learners scored below 14 out of 20 items, indicating that they were at the frustration level in reading comprehension. Learners who obtained scores of 14 and below in the pre-test subsequently underwent individually administered graded passages to further determine their

reading levels as frustration, instructional, or independent. The pre-test scores were systematically recorded, and the learners who scored 14 and below were selected to participate in the intervention. These learners underwent the reading program entitled "Journey to Mastery," which focused on explicit comprehension strategy instruction as part of the individualized reading intervention. Following the implementation of the intervention, a post-test was administered to measure changes in the learners' reading performance.

The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using both descriptive and inferential techniques. Descriptive statistics were employed to address specific aspects of the study, including the computation of the mean, which was used to determine the average reading performance of the learners in both the pre-test and post-test, and the standard deviation, which was used to assess the variability or dispersion of scores around the mean. For inferential analysis, a paired samples t-test was utilized to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test. The test was conducted at a 0.05 level of significance, and the computed p-value was found to be less than the alpha value, indicating statistical significance in the difference between the pre-test and post-test results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Results and Discussion section presents findings derived from six Grade 4 learners who were identified as needing reading intervention. The study employed a descriptive pre-test and post-test design using purposive sampling, with data collected through the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) comprehension assessment tool. Statistical analysis included descriptive measures such as frequencies, percentages, and score comparisons, as well as inferential analysis using a t-test to determine significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores. The discussion that follows is grounded in the data gathered and interprets the results in direct relation to the objectives of the study, particularly in assessing reading comprehension levels, identifying specific difficulties, evaluating intervention effectiveness, and examining influencing factors.

The pre-test results revealed that all six learners were categorized under the Frustration Reading Level, with raw scores ranging from 6 to 8 out of 20 and corresponding percentage scores of 30 %, 35 %, and 40 %. Specifically, Pupil 1 obtained a score of 6 or 30 % and exhibited difficulty identifying the main idea under literal comprehension, while Pupil 2 scored 8 or 40 % and struggled with understanding the sequence of events, also under literal comprehension. Pupil 3 recorded a score of 6 or 30 % and demonstrated difficulty making inferences, which falls under inferential comprehension, while Pupil 4 obtained a score of 7 or 35 % and showed difficulty identifying cause and effect, also under inferential comprehension. Pupil 5 scored 8 or 40 % and struggled with recalling details under literal comprehension, whereas Pupil 6 obtained a score of 7 or 35 % and exhibited difficulty summarizing, which involves both literal and inferential comprehension. All learners being classified at the Frustration Level indicates that their scores, ranging from 30 % to 40 %, fall significantly below the 58 % threshold required for independent or instructional comprehension. This pattern suggests that the learners were unable to comprehend grade-level texts independently or with minimal guidance, highlighting substantial deficits in both literal and higher-order comprehension skills. These findings are consistent with Valencia and Wixson (2020), who emphasized that learners at the frustration level experience significant barriers to engaging with text, and Shanahan (2019), who noted that such learners require intensive and targeted instructional interventions.

The analysis of comprehension difficulties further demonstrates that learners exhibited varied but critical weaknesses across comprehension domains. Learners 1, 2, and 5 displayed difficulties in literal comprehension, including identifying main ideas, sequencing events, and recalling explicit details, which are foundational reading skills. Learners 3 and 4 showed deficits in inferential comprehension, such as making inferences and identifying cause-and-effect relationships, which require deeper cognitive processing and integration of prior knowledge. Learner 6 demonstrated difficulty summarizing, which reflects combined challenges in both literal and inferential comprehension. These findings indicate that the learners required differentiated instructional approaches that address both basic and advanced comprehension processes, reinforcing the necessity of scaffolded and explicit teaching strategies.

Following the implementation of targeted reading interventions, the post-test results showed substantial improvement in all six learners. Pupil 1 improved to a score of 15 or 75 % and was categorized at the Instructional Level, while Pupil 2 achieved a score of 16 or 80 %, also at the Instructional Level. Pupil 3 reached a score of 18 or 90 % and attained the Independent Level, while Pupil 4 improved to a score of 15 or 75 % and was likewise categorized at the Instructional Level. Pupil 5 obtained a score of 18 or 90 % and reached the Independent Level, and Pupil 6 achieved the highest score of 19 or 95 %, also classified at the Independent Level. The absence of any learner remaining at the Frustration Level signifies a complete shift in reading performance categories, with three learners at the Instructional Level and three learners at the Independent Level. The Instructional Level scores of 75 % and 80 % indicate that learners can comprehend texts with teacher support, while the Independent Level scores of 90 % and 95 % demonstrate the ability to comprehend texts with minimal or no assistance. This marked improvement reflects the effectiveness of the intervention strategies in addressing the specific comprehension difficulties identified during the pre-test phase.

A direct comparison of pre-test and post-test scores further confirms the magnitude of improvement. Pupil 1 improved from 6 to 15, resulting in a score increase of 9, while Pupil 2 improved from 8 to 16, reflecting an increase of 8. Pupil 3 demonstrated a substantial improvement from 6 to 18, yielding a gain of 12, and Pupil 4 improved from 7 to 15, corresponding to an increase of 8. Pupil 5 progressed from 8 to 18, resulting in a gain of 10, while Pupil 6 improved from 7 to 19, also achieving an increase of 12. These improvements, ranging from 8 to 12 points, indicate consistent and significant gains across all learners. The transition from scores of 30 % to 40 % in the pre-test to 75 % to 95 % in the post-test reflects a dramatic increase in comprehension performance, demonstrating that learners were able to comprehend a substantially larger portion of the text after the intervention. This universal improvement across all participants provides strong empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of the reading intervention program.

The perceived factors influencing the effectiveness of individualized reading intervention were also examined, with all indicators receiving a weighted mean of 4.00, interpreted as Strongly Influential based on the scale of 3.25–4.00. Instructional strategies, particularly the use of individualized reading intervention, obtained a weighted mean of 4.00, indicating unanimous agreement on its critical role. The home environment, including the availability of reading materials and parental involvement, also received a weighted mean of 4.00, emphasizing the importance of home support in reinforcing reading development. Similarly, the school environment, including a supportive classroom, time allocation, and availability of resources, was rated with a weighted mean of 4.00, highlighting the significance of institutional support. Learner-related factors such as motivation, attention span, and reading habits also obtained a weighted mean of 4.00, indicating their substantial influence on reading outcomes. These findings align with Guthrie and Klauda (2020), who emphasized the role of instructional strategies and engagement, Mol and Bus (2019), who highlighted the importance

of home literacy environments, and Jiang and Grabe (2021), who underscored the influence of cognitive and learner-related factors in reading development.

The analysis of identified reading difficulties and corresponding interventions further demonstrates that the implemented strategies were well aligned with the learners' needs. Pupil 1, with a score of 6, received guided reading with questioning conducted 3x/week using Leveled Storybook A to address difficulty in identifying the main idea. Pupil 2, with a score of 8, was provided graphic organizers or story maps 3x a week using short narratives and sequencing cards to address sequencing difficulties. Pupil 3, with a score of 6, engaged in think-aloud strategies and predicting activities 3x a week using picture books with implicit meanings to develop inferential comprehension. Pupil 4, with a score of 7, received cause-and-effect worksheets and discussions 3x a week using informational texts. Pupil 5, with a score of 8, participated in debate and discussion of texts with critical thinking prompts 3x a week using editorials and persuasive essays to develop critical comprehension skills. Pupil 6, with a score of 7, was provided retelling strategies and paragraph shrinking 3x a week using non-fiction articles and news excerpts to improve summarizing skills. The alignment of intervention strategies with specific comprehension difficulties supports the principle of differentiated instruction and highlights the effectiveness of targeted, skill-based interventions. These findings are supported by O'Reilly and McNamara (2019), who emphasized the complexity of inferential and critical comprehension, and Kintsch (2021), who underscored the need for explicit instruction in developing higher-order comprehension skills.

The inferential statistical analysis further confirmed the effectiveness of the intervention. The computed t-value of -3.994 and p-value of .001 indicate that the difference between pre-test and post-test scores is statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value of .001 is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores is rejected, leading to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. This result indicates that the observed improvements in reading comprehension are not due to chance but are attributable to the intervention implemented. Furthermore, the calculated effect size of 0.9 indicates a large effect, signifying that the magnitude of the intervention's impact is substantial. These findings are consistent with the studies of Joshi et al. (2002) and Rose and Zirkel (2007), which emphasized the effectiveness of systematic instruction in improving reading performance among struggling readers.

In synthesis, the findings of the study demonstrate that all six Grade 4 learners initially performed at the Frustration Reading Level with scores ranging from 30 % to 40 %, indicating significant comprehension difficulties across literal, inferential, and critical domains. Following the implementation of targeted and individualized reading interventions, all learners showed marked improvement, with post-test scores ranging from 75 % to 95 % and corresponding shifts to Instructional and Independent Reading Levels. The consistent score gains ranging from 8 to 12 points, the statistically significant difference indicated by a t-value of -3.994 and p-value of .001, and the large effect size of 0.9 collectively confirm the effectiveness of the intervention. Additionally, the perceived influence of instructional strategies, home environment, school environment, and learner-related factors, all with a weighted mean of 4.00, underscores the importance of a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to reading intervention. These results contribute to the field by providing empirical evidence supporting the use of individualized, data-driven reading interventions and highlight the necessity of sustained, collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, and learners. The findings provide a strong foundation for the subsequent section, which will focus on conclusions and recommendations aimed at sustaining and scaling effective reading intervention practices.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide clear evidence of the effectiveness of individualized reading strategies in improving the reading comprehension skills of Grade IV learners, as demonstrated by the marked increase in mean scores from the pre-test to the post-test. The implementation of the "Journey to Mastery" reading program resulted in substantial gains among the six learners who initially performed below the expected level, with a mean pre-test score of 5.17 indicating a frustration reading level. Following the intervention, the mean post-test score increased to 17.5, reflecting a significant improvement in comprehension performance. This improvement was further substantiated by the results of the paired samples t-test, which revealed a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores at $p < .05$, thereby confirming the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing learners' reading abilities.

Beyond the measurable improvement in test scores, the study also identified several key factors that contributed to the success of the reading intervention. Instructional strategies that emphasized explicit comprehension processes, along with supportive home and school environments, played a critical role in facilitating learners' progress. Additionally, learner-specific characteristics, including individual differences in engagement and readiness, were found to influence the extent of improvement. These findings underscore the importance of adopting a multifaceted approach to reading instruction that considers both instructional quality and contextual support systems.

While the results highlight the positive impact of the individualized reading program, it is important to recognize the limitations of the study, particularly the relatively small sample size of six participants. This constraint limits the generalizability of the findings and suggests the need for further investigation involving larger and more diverse groups of learners. Future research may also explore the role of additional variables, such as teacher training and learner engagement, in shaping the effectiveness of reading interventions, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of factors that support literacy development.

In light of the findings, the study emphasizes the importance of implementing individualized reading strategies within school settings, particularly for learners identified at the frustration reading level. Schools are encouraged to adopt structured reading programs that focus on explicit comprehension strategies, including questioning, visualizing, making inferences, and activating prior knowledge, to enhance students' reading proficiency. Equally important is the provision of professional development opportunities for teachers to ensure the effective delivery of these strategies in the classroom. Regular assessment practices should also be institutionalized to identify struggling readers and monitor their progress over time, enabling timely and targeted interventions.

Furthermore, the study highlights the critical role of parental involvement in supporting learners' reading development. Schools should actively engage parents by providing them with appropriate resources and practical strategies that can be applied at home to reinforce reading skills. The availability of diverse and engaging reading materials in both libraries and classrooms is likewise essential, as it encourages consistent reading practice and fosters a positive reading culture. Establishing well-resourced school libraries and classroom reading corners can significantly contribute to sustained learner engagement.

Finally, the study advocates for a holistic approach to reading development that addresses not only cognitive and instructional dimensions but also learners' health, well-being, and background knowledge. Effective collaboration among teachers, parents, and support personnel such as reading specialists and counselors is vital in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Through such coordinated efforts, schools can more

effectively respond to the diverse needs of learners and promote continuous improvement in reading comprehension, thereby contributing to overall academic success.

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