

**Factors affecting reading comprehension among junior high school struggling readers:
Basis for enhanced school-wide reading program**

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ABSTRACT

The current study focused on the variables contributing to the comprehension problems of students in junior high schools and their linkages with academic success in core classes. More specifically, the study analyzed the role of socio-cultural, environmental, educational, and cultural elements that might have caused reading problems and determined whether reading comprehension was associated with academic achievement. To conduct an investigation, the researcher used a descriptive research design and gathered information using surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation methods. According to the findings, the educational variable played the most prominent role, followed by environmental, cultural, and socio-cultural elements. Thus, it can be assumed that the effects of educational, environmental, cultural, and socio-cultural variables on reading comprehension are rather high. As a result, the study shows that it is essential to ensure proper teaching methods, feedback, learning environment, cultural background, and social support to develop reading comprehension and analytical skills. Based on the obtained findings, it would be appropriate to develop a framework for reading intervention that will incorporate classroom methods, group learning, culturally sensitive material, parental engagement, and community-level initiatives.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Struggling Readers, School-Wide Reading Program.

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INTRODUCTION

The ability to read and comprehend is essential for students' success at school because they are important prerequisites of learning in general. Being able to read texts means having the possibility to learn new information and participate actively in the learning process and do well at school. In fact, reading is an essential human skill that was used by people to comprehend their ever-changing world throughout history. From the moment people invented writing till today, it became a necessary tool used to interpret the world around us. The process of reading can be defined as complex and includes the interaction between an author and his/her readers.

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Successful reading is not only about decoding words but encompasses fluency, comprehension, and strategic behaviors. Fluency reading entails accurate, rapid, and meaningful oral reading that enables the reader to read with appropriate voice and make few mistakes (Turna & Güldenöglü, 2019). Nevertheless, comprehension is the ultimate purpose of reading, in which readers are expected to identify various linguistic components, including letters, syllables, and words, and make sense out of their combination. In this regard, phonological awareness, analysis, and word recognition skills are crucial for fluent and meaningful reading (Gedik & Akyol, 2022). Effective comprehension allows readers to organize information, think deeply, and link textual information with their background knowledge, ultimately improving their cognitive growth, problem-solving skills, and overall academic achievement, especially in multilingual environments where vocabulary is of vital importance (Masrai et al., 2022).

Even though the critical nature of reading comprehension skills is acknowledged, many students still find it difficult to comprehend what they read, despite several literacy programs being introduced through educational reforms. This makes it hard for them to perform academically well in subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. There have been several global and national studies showing that students have trouble comprehending texts, with The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2023) highlighting that many learners do not reach the benchmark standards when it comes to reading. In addition, the Department of Education in the Philippines acknowledges that Filipino learners have difficulty reading and has launched the National Reading Program.

There are many aspects influencing reading problems, but these are not caused by any one factor. These include socio-cultural, environmental, educational, and cultural issues. Factors such as family history, language use, and parents' level of participation in their children's learning activities play a vital role in literacy. Children who come from a socio-culturally deprived background, where reading materials and other literacy support programs are scarce, tend to have a tough time developing proficient reading skills. As per UNESCO (2021), socio-economic status and culture continue to determine the literacy outcomes among students in developing nations.

Other factors include environmental factors like access to learning materials, school infrastructure, and support systems within the community. Students who grow up in print-rich environments and receive quality instruction fare better than their peers who do not receive adequate learning resources. Besides, other factors in education that affect reading include instructional methodologies, lesson planning, and teachers' expertise in the subject matter. Instructional methods like differentiated instruction and comprehension strategies have been shown to greatly enhance learners' reading skills (Kim & Pilcher, 2021). Lastly, grammar knowledge is one of the essential components for successful reading comprehension because it allows learners to convey meaning effectively (Ceneciro et al., 2023; Chavez et al., 2024; Alqahtani, 2022).

The cultural background of the student also influences his/her interaction with the text. If the learning material takes into account the culture and experiences of the learner, the effectiveness of his/her comprehension will be improved. Otherwise, the cultural context that differs from that of the learner can negatively impact his/her comprehension skills. Therefore, the use of contextualized and culturally-responsive instruction is critical for enhancing the quality of learning. Nevertheless, although many studies have been conducted in this area, a number of issues still require attention because little is known about the interaction of these factors.

At the local level, students continue to encounter problems when it comes to reading, specifically with inadequate preparation on how to read academic books, which negatively impacts their results in class (De-la-Peña & Luque-Rojas, 2021). The presence of these issues

necessitates the need to study reading comprehension abilities not just from a cognitive perspective but also as a function of different influencing variables.

Considering the diverse factors that affect reading comprehension skills, it is important to understand how these variables interact and affect the performance of students in class. It would be important to know the variables that have the most significant effect on academic performance and the least impact. Furthermore, it would also be beneficial to compare the differences in the effects based on the grouping of students, either by gender or by grade.

Given these issues, it becomes necessary to create comprehensive reading intervention programs by combining social support mechanisms with methods applied within the classroom itself. Doing so will not only cover the cognitive elements but will take into account other variables that may affect students' reading comprehension ability and lead to improved academic performance in the long run.

Therefore, the objectives of this study include identifying the degree of influence of the socio-cultural, environmental, educational, and cultural elements on students' reading comprehension abilities, determining which have the most and least degree of influence on reading comprehension, comparing these elements based on students' gender and grade level, and developing a contextual reading intervention program.

Statement of the Problem

The performance of students in academics is greatly affected by their reading and comprehension abilities. Despite the development of numerous education programs, students are still encountering problems with reading and comprehending literature that affects their performance in essential subjects. Reading problems among students can be attributed to several factors including socio-cultural, environmental, and educational issues. It is therefore necessary to identify these causes of reading problems and comprehend how they affect students' academic performance.

This study aims to address the following specific problems:

1. What is the level of influence of socio-cultural, environmental, educational, and cultural factors on students' reading comprehension?
2. Which among these factors has the greatest and least influence on reading comprehension?
3. Is there a significant difference in the influence of these factors when grouped according to sex and grade level?
4. How can a reading intervention program that integrates social support systems and classroom-based strategies be designed to improve students' reading comprehension?

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was adopted in this study to systematically describe and analyze the variables that influence the reading comprehension of junior high school students. This research design enabled the researcher to obtain detailed information concerning the socio-cultural background, learning environment, and educational background of the students without manipulating any variables. The design provided an opportunity to understand the existing situation and determine areas where interventions may be implemented. The descriptive aspect of the study was specifically utilized to gather information regarding the socio-cultural background, learning environment, and educational background of the students through the use of surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation techniques.

The participants of the study were the students currently enrolled in Junior High School at Socbot National High School, with parental consent, and the teachers of the same institution who were currently teaching English or Filipino in Junior High School. To determine the appropriate sample size, the researcher utilized Slovin's Formula, which is a statistical method commonly applied in educational research to estimate a representative sample from a defined population while maintaining an acceptable margin of error. The utilization of this formula ensured that the number of respondents was sufficient to generate reliable and generalizable findings, as supported by Ellen (2020).

To collect the necessary information from the respondents for the study entitled "Factors Influencing the Reading Comprehension among Struggling Readers in Junior High Schools: Bases for Enhanced School-Wide Reading Program," two self-designed survey questionnaires were administered, namely the Student Reading Factors and Proficiency Questionnaire (SRFPQ) and the Teacher Observation Questionnaire (TOQ). The development of these instruments considered the nature of the research problem and objectives and underwent content validation through expert panel evaluation. The SRFPQ was specifically designed to measure the socio-cultural, environmental, and educational influences contributing to difficulties in the reading comprehension skills of the respondents, as well as their level of proficiency in reading. The instrument consisted of four major sections. The first section focused on socio-cultural factors associated with the family's reading environment, parental participation in the child's education, peer interaction and reading practices, and other cultural concerns. The second section dealt with environmental factors such as classroom conditions, access to instructional materials, study areas, and facilities available within the school. The third section examined educational factors including instructional methodologies, opportunities for reading exercises, and English or Filipino teaching styles. The fourth section focused on self-assessment of reading proficiency, which included understanding, analyzing, and evaluating texts using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. On the other hand, the TOQ was intended to gather information from English and Filipino teachers handling Junior High School students regarding the problems encountered in reading, factors affecting students' performance, and their general classroom performance related to reading comprehension. The TOQ included parts that addressed teachers' observations regarding commonly occurring reading difficulties such as poor vocabulary, difficulty identifying main ideas, and inability to make inferences. It also included factors affecting reading performance, existing interventions and social support mechanisms for struggling readers, and teachers' recommendations.

Prior to the conduct of the data gathering process, permission to undertake the study was first secured from the principal of the school where the research was conducted. Upon approval of the request, the researcher coordinated with the assigned teachers or academic coordinators to identify the respondents and determine the schedule for answering the questionnaires. Informed consent was then obtained from all respondents before the administration of the research instruments to ensure that the participants fully understood the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of the information they would provide. The research instruments were distributed either through printed copies or online platforms. During the data collection process, the researcher explained the proper procedure for completing the questionnaires and remained available to answer questions raised by the respondents without influencing their response patterns. Sufficient time was likewise provided for the completion of the questionnaires. After all responses had been gathered, the researcher organized and prepared the collected data for analysis. The gathered information was analyzed in relation to the objectives of the study, particularly those concerning the factors affecting reading comprehension in relation to social and academic performance.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the conduct of the study. Written consent was first obtained from the school principal to formally authorize the conduct of the research. The researcher collaborated with teachers in identifying the respondents while ensuring that no undue pressure or coercion was imposed upon them. Before administering the questionnaires, informed consent was sought from every respondent, accompanied by a clear explanation of the objectives of the research study. Any questions or concerns raised by the respondents were properly clarified. Confidentiality was strictly maintained throughout the entire data collection process, and the anonymity of the respondents was preserved at all times. Instructions for answering the questionnaires were delivered neutrally by the researcher, and respondents were given sufficient time to accomplish the instruments without being subjected to any form of influence. Furthermore, all collected data were utilized solely for purposes directly related to the study and were intended to be destroyed upon completion of the research.

To quantify the data gathered in the study, a Four Point Scale was utilized. The scale range of 3.25 – 4.00 was interpreted as Strongly Agree, 2.50 – 3.24 as Agree, 1.75 – 2.49 as Disagree, and 1.00 – 1.74 as Strongly Disagree. Statistical treatment of the data was conducted through the use of One-way Analysis of Variance. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to compute the variance and facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the data as part of the statistical computation process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This Results and Discussion section is grounded in the data gathered from 43 student respondents and 8 teacher respondents, as reflected in the sex profile showing 22 male students, 21 female students, 4 male teachers, and 4 female teachers. The study employed a descriptive quantitative approach using survey-based data from junior high school students and teachers, with responses analyzed through frequency, percentage, mean, area mean, total average weighted mean, ANOVA, and post hoc analysis. The results are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of identifying the socio-cultural, environmental, educational, and cultural factors affecting reading comprehension among junior high school students, while maintaining the exact statistical values and descriptive interpretations reported in the original data.

The profile of the respondents shows that among the student respondents, 22 were male, representing 49.00%, while 21 were female, representing 51.00%. Among the teacher respondents, 4 were male and 4 were female, each representing 50.00%. This distribution indicates that the responses were drawn from both male and female participants, reducing the likelihood that the results were influenced by sex-based imbalance. In terms of grade level, the student respondents were distributed across Grade 7, Grade 8, Grade 9, and Grade 10, with 10 respondents each from Grade 7, Grade 8, and Grade 9, each representing 24.39%, and 11 respondents from Grade 10, representing 26.83%. The teacher respondents were equally distributed across Grade 7, Grade 8, Grade 9, and Grade 10, with 2 teachers per grade level, each representing 25.00%. This distribution suggests that the data captured perspectives across the junior high school grade levels, with only a slight increase in the number of Grade 10 student respondents. Such representation strengthens the contextual relevance of the findings because the study considered reading comprehension factors across different grade levels rather than limiting the analysis to a single year level.

For the student respondents, the total average weighted mean for the factors affecting reading comprehension was 2.80, described as Agree. This indicates that the socio-cultural, environmental, educational, and cultural factors were generally perceived to influence reading comprehension, although the level of agreement suggests that these influences were moderate

rather than maximized. This supports the view that reading comprehension is shaped by multiple interacting conditions, including instruction, environment, family support, community literacy practices, language, and cultural exposure. Since the total average weighted mean was only 2.80, the findings imply that reading comprehension support among junior high school students is present but not yet fully optimized.

Among the student responses, Educational Factors obtained the highest area mean of 3.16, described as Agree. This result indicates that school-based instruction, teacher support, feedback, reading programs, and assessment practices were perceived as the strongest contributors to reading comprehension among the four dimensions. The item "My teachers explain reading materials in a way that is easy to understand" obtained the highest mean of 3.44, described as Strongly Agree, with responses of 22 under SA, equivalent to (88), 15 under A, equivalent to (45), 4 under D, equivalent to (8), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). This suggests that students strongly recognized the role of teacher explanation in helping them understand reading materials. The item "School programs and activities (e.g., reading clubs) support my reading skills" obtained a mean of 3.39, described as Strongly Agree, with 21 responses under SA, equivalent to (84), 16 under A, equivalent to (48), 3 under D, equivalent to (6), and 1 under SD, equivalent to (1). This shows that school programs were also viewed as important supports for reading development. Similarly, "Teachers provide feedback that helps improve my reading comprehension" obtained a mean of 3.37, described as Strongly Agree, with 23 responses under SA, equivalent to (92), 13 under A, equivalent to (39), 2 under D, equivalent to (4), and 3 under SD, equivalent to (3). The item "Reading assessments and exercises challenge me to improve my comprehension" obtained a mean of 3.29, described as Strongly Agree, with 20 responses under SA, equivalent to (80), 15 under A, equivalent to (45), 4 under D, equivalent to (8), and 2 under SD, equivalent to (2). These findings indicate that students regarded teacher explanation, feedback, reading programs, and assessment activities as important instructional supports. However, the area mean of 3.16, though favorable, still falls under Agree, suggesting that educational support remains open to further strengthening.

Other educational indicators also reflected positive but less intense agreement. "Teachers encourage me to connect what I read to real-life situations" obtained a mean of 2.90, described as Agree, with 12 responses under SA, equivalent to (48), 15 under A, equivalent to (45), 12 under D, equivalent to (24), and 2 under SD, equivalent to (2). "Classroom activities encourage me to read and analyze texts critically" obtained a mean of 2.88, described as Agree, with 14 responses under SA, equivalent to (56), 9 under A, equivalent to (27), 17 under D, equivalent to (34), and 1 under SD, equivalent to (1). "I am given enough time to practice reading and complete comprehension exercises" obtained a mean of 2.85, described as Agree, with 9 responses under SA, equivalent to (36), 17 under A, equivalent to (51), 15 under D, equivalent to (30), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). These results suggest that while students generally acknowledged the presence of instructional support, areas such as critical text analysis, real life connection, and sufficient reading practice require continued improvement. The findings are consistent with the understanding that reading comprehension develops not only through explanation but also through repeated practice, contextualization, and higher order engagement with texts.

Environmental Factors obtained an area mean of 2.76, described as Agree. The items "The classroom environment is conducive to learning and reading" and "Classroom seating and facilities support my ability to read and learn effectively" both obtained the highest mean of 2.98, described as Agree. For the first item, responses consisted of 13 under SA, equivalent to (52), 16 under A, equivalent to (48), 10 under D, equivalent to (20), and 2 under SD, equivalent to (2). For the second item, responses consisted of 13 under SA, equivalent to (52), 15 under A, equivalent to (45), 12 under D, equivalent to (24), and 1 under SD, equivalent to (1). These results suggest that students generally perceived their classroom environment, seating, and

facilities as supportive of reading, although not at a strongly agreeable level. “Availability of quiet and well-lit places helps me concentrate on reading” obtained a mean of 2.80, described as Agree, with 13 responses under SA, equivalent to (52), 11 under A, equivalent to (33), 13 under D, equivalent to (26), and 4 under SD, equivalent to (4). “Noise and distractions at home or school affect my ability to focus on reading” obtained a mean of 2.76, described as Agree, with 9 responses under SA, equivalent to (36), 18 under A, equivalent to (54), 9 under D, equivalent to (18), and 5 under SD, equivalent to (5). These results reveal that while supportive spaces exist, distractions and environmental limitations continue to affect reading concentration.

Additional environmental findings show that “Access to libraries, reading centers, or learning resources in my school/community supports my reading skills” obtained a mean of 2.71, described as Agree, with 8 responses under SA, equivalent to (32), 16 under A, equivalent to (48), 14 under D, equivalent to (28), and 3 under SD, equivalent to (3). “Exposure to digital learning tools (computers, tablets, internet) enhances my reading comprehension” obtained a mean of 2.59, described as Agree, with 7 responses under SA, equivalent to (28), 18 under A, equivalent to (54), 8 under D, equivalent to (16), and 8 under SD, equivalent to (8). “My home environment provides enough support and resources for studying and reading” obtained a mean of 2.51, described as Agree, with 8 responses under SA, equivalent to (32), 14 under A, equivalent to (42), 10 under D, equivalent to (20), and 8 under SD, equivalent to (9). These findings imply that although environmental supports are present, access to reading resources, digital tools, and home-based study support may not be equally sufficient for all learners. The results underscore the need to improve both school and home environments in order to strengthen reading comprehension development.

Cultural Factors obtained an area mean of 2.66, described as Agree. The highest item in this dimension was “Learning about my culture through reading motivates me to read more,” with a mean of 2.78, described as Agree, based on 10 responses under SA, equivalent to (40), 15 under A, equivalent to (45), 13 under D, equivalent to (26), and 3 under SD, equivalent to (3). “Reading materials in my native language help me understand and retain information better” obtained a mean of 2.76, described as Agree, with 9 responses under SA, equivalent to (36), 13 under A, equivalent to (39), 19 under D, equivalent to (38), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). “Exposure to diverse cultures through reading helps me relate and understand texts better” obtained a mean of 2.71, described as Agree, with 10 responses under SA, equivalent to (40), 12 under A, equivalent to (36), 16 under D, equivalent to (32), and 3 under SD, equivalent to (3). These results indicate that cultural content, native language materials, and multicultural exposure contribute to reading motivation and comprehension, but their effects remain moderate.

The items “Differences between school language and home language sometimes make it difficult to understand reading materials” and “Cultural norms in my school or community influence my interest in reading” both obtained a mean of 2.63, described as Agree. The first item recorded 9 responses under SA, equivalent to (36), 13 under A, equivalent to (39), 14 under D, equivalent to (28), and 5 under SD, equivalent to (5). The second item recorded 11 responses under SA, equivalent to (44), 10 under A, equivalent to (30), 14 under D, equivalent to (28), and 6 under SD, equivalent to (6). These findings indicate that language differences and cultural norms remain relevant to reading comprehension and interest. Meanwhile, “Cultural stories, myths, or folk literature improve my comprehension and interest in reading” obtained the lowest mean of 2.46, described as Disagree, with 5 responses under SA, equivalent to (20), 16 under A, equivalent to (48), 13 under D, equivalent to (26), and 7 under SD, equivalent to (7). This result suggests that cultural stories, myths, or folk literature were not

perceived by students as strongly improving comprehension and reading interest, which may point to the need for better selection, integration, and instructional use of culturally relevant texts.

Socio-Cultural Factors obtained the lowest area mean of 2.61, described as Agree. The highest item in this dimension was “My family values education and reading as important for success,” with a mean of 2.80, described as Agree, based on 12 responses under SA, equivalent to (48), 14 under A, equivalent to (42), 10 under D, equivalent to (20), and 5 under SD, equivalent to (5). “My parents/guardians encourage me to read books or other learning materials at home” obtained a mean of 2.78, described as Agree, with 8 responses under SA, equivalent to (32), 19 under A, equivalent to (57), 11 under D, equivalent to (22), and 3 under SD, equivalent to (3). “Family discussions or story telling help me understand and interpret reading materials” obtained a mean of 2.71, described as Agree, with 15 responses under SA, equivalent to (60), 5 under A, equivalent to (15), 15 under D, equivalent to (30), and 6 under SD, equivalent to (6). These findings indicate that family values, parental encouragement, and family discussion contribute to reading comprehension, but their overall strength remains moderate rather than highly supportive.

Other socio-cultural indicators further show that “Cultural norms in my community promote literacy and learning activities” obtained a mean of 2.59, described as Agree, with 5 responses under SA, equivalent to (20), 20 under A, equivalent to (60), 10 under D, equivalent to (20), and 6 under SD, equivalent to (6). “I am encouraged to participate in reading-related activities outside school” obtained a mean of 2.54, described as Agree, with 8 responses under SA, equivalent to (32), 11 under A, equivalent to (33), 17 under D, equivalent to (34), and 5 under SD, equivalent to (5). “My friends and classmates support and motivate each other to read” obtained a mean of 2.51, described as Agree, with 6 responses under SA, equivalent to (24), 14 under A, equivalent to (42), 16 under D, equivalent to (32), and 5 under SD, equivalent to (5). The lowest item was “I have access to books, newspapers, or reading materials within my community,” with a mean of 2.37, described as Disagree, based on 3 responses under SA, equivalent to (12), 17 under A, equivalent to (51), 13 under D, equivalent to (26), and 8 under SD, equivalent to (8). This finding identifies community access to reading materials as a major limitation. Overall, the socio-cultural results suggest that family, peers, and community support systems exist but are not yet strong enough to provide consistent reinforcement for reading comprehension development.

The ANOVA results for student responses as to sex show that the between groups SS was 1.37, df was 3, MS was 0.46, and F was 2.19, while the within groups SS was 4.85, df was 23, and MS was 0.21, with a total SS of 6.22 and total df of 26. The computed F-value of 2.19 was lower than the F critical value of 3.03 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This means that the four factors did not differ significantly in their influence on reading comprehension when grouped according to sex. Although mean differences existed across the factors, the differences were not statistically meaningful at the 0.05 level of significance.

The ANOVA results for student responses as to grade level show that the between groups SS was 1.33, df was 3, MS was 0.44, and F was 2.59, while the within groups SS was 3.92, df was 23, and MS was 0.17, with a total SS of 5.25 and total df of 26. The computed F-value of 2.59 was lower than the F critical value of 3.03 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that the four factors did not differ significantly in their influence on reading comprehension when grouped according to grade level. The result suggests that students across grade levels experienced the influence of socio-cultural, environmental, educational, and cultural factors in a statistically comparable manner.

For the teacher respondents, the total average weighted mean was 3.32, described as Strongly Agree. This indicates that teachers strongly perceived socio-cultural, environmental,

educational, and cultural factors as affecting the reading comprehension of junior high school students. Among the four dimensions, Educational Factors obtained the highest area mean of 3.78, described as Strongly Agree. The items “Classroom activities encourage critical thinking and comprehension of texts” and “Teachers provide constructive feedback that improves students’ reading skills” both obtained the highest mean of 3.88, described as Strongly Agree. For both items, responses consisted of 7 under SA, equivalent to (28), 1 under A, equivalent to (3), 0 under D, equivalent to (0), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). These results show that teachers strongly viewed classroom activities and constructive feedback as central to improving comprehension. “Teachers provide clear explanations of reading materials” and “Reading exercises and assessments challenge students to improve comprehension” both obtained a mean of 3.75, described as Strongly Agree. For both items, responses consisted of 6 under SA, equivalent to (24), 2 under A, equivalent to (6), 0 under D, equivalent to (0), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). “School programs such as reading clubs or workshops enhance students’ reading abilities” obtained a mean of 3.63, described as Strongly Agree, with 5 responses under SA, equivalent to (20), 3 under A, equivalent to (9), 0 under D, equivalent to (0), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). These results indicate that teachers considered instructional practices, feedback, assessment, and school programs as highly influential in reading comprehension development.

Environmental Factors ranked next among teacher responses, with an area mean of 3.30, described as Strongly Agree. “Noise and distractions in the classroom or school affect students’ focus on reading tasks” obtained the highest mean of 3.63, described as Strongly Agree, with 5 responses under SA, equivalent to (20), 3 under A, equivalent to (9), 0 under D, equivalent to (0), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). “Students are able to use quiet and well-lit spaces to complete reading activities” obtained a mean of 3.50, described as Strongly Agree, with 5 responses under SA, equivalent to (20), 2 under A, equivalent to (6), 1 under D, equivalent to (2), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). “The classroom environment is organized and conducive to reading and learning” obtained a mean of 3.38, described as Strongly Agree, with 3 responses under SA, equivalent to (12), 5 under A, equivalent to (15), 0 under D, equivalent to (0), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). “Availability of digital tools (computers, tablets) supports students’ reading comprehension” also obtained a mean of 3.38, described as Strongly Agree, with 5 responses under SA, equivalent to (20), 2 under A, equivalent to (6), 0 under D, equivalent to (0), and 1 under SD, equivalent to (1). “Students take advantage of school libraries, reading corners, or digital learning resources” obtained a mean of 2.63, described as Strongly Agree, with 1 response under SA, equivalent to (4), 4 under A, equivalent to (12), 2 under D, equivalent to (4), and 1 under SD, equivalent to (1). These results show that teachers strongly recognized the role of physical space, classroom organization, noise control, lighting, and resource use in reading comprehension.

Cultural Factors obtained an area mean of 3.43, described as Strongly Agree. “Cultural stories, folklore, or traditions help students engage with reading materials” and “Students show interest in reading materials that reflect their cultural background” both obtained a mean of 3.63, described as Strongly Agree, with 5 responses under SA, equivalent to (20), 3 under A, equivalent to (9), 0 under D, equivalent to (0), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). “Exposure to stories from diverse cultures positively influences students’ reading comprehension” obtained a mean of 3.50, described as Strongly Agree, with 4 responses under SA, equivalent to (16), 4 under A, equivalent to (12), 0 under D, equivalent to (0), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). “Students demonstrate better comprehension when reading materials are in their native language” obtained a mean of 3.25, described as Strongly Agree, with 4 responses under SA, equivalent to (16), 2 under A, equivalent to (6), 2 under D, equivalent to (4), and 0 under SD,

equivalent to (0). “Differences between home language and school language sometimes affect students’ comprehension” obtained a mean of 3.13, described as Agree, with 2 responses under SA, equivalent to (8), 5 under A, equivalent to (15), 1 under D, equivalent to (2), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). These findings suggest that teachers perceived culture, native language, and multicultural exposure as important influences on comprehension, while also recognizing that differences between home language and school language may still affect students’ understanding of reading materials.

Socio-Cultural Factors obtained an area mean of 2.78, described as Agree. The item “Students receive encouragement from family to engage in reading activities” obtained the highest mean of 3.50, described as Strongly Agree, with 4 responses under SA, equivalent to (16), 4 under A, equivalent to (12), 0 under D, equivalent to (0), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). “Family involvement positively affects students’ comprehension during classroom activities” obtained a mean of 3.13, described as Agree, with 2 responses under SA, equivalent to (8), 5 under A, equivalent to (15), 1 under D, equivalent to (2), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). “Students have access to reading materials at home or in their community” obtained a mean of 2.50, described as Agree, with 0 under SA, equivalent to (0), 4 under A, equivalent to (12), 4 under D, equivalent to (8), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). “Students discuss reading topics or share knowledge with peers” obtained a mean of 2.38, described as Agree, with 0 under SA, equivalent to (0), 3 under A, equivalent to (9), 5 under D, equivalent to (10), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). “Students demonstrate interest in reading activities due to cultural or community practices” also obtained a mean of 2.38, described as Agree, with 0 under SA, equivalent to (0), 3 under A, equivalent to (9), 5 under D, equivalent to (10), and 0 under SD, equivalent to (0). These results indicate that teachers acknowledged the influence of family encouragement and involvement, but also identified limitations in peer discussion, community practices, and access to reading materials.

The ANOVA results for teacher responses as to sex show that the between groups SS was 2.58, df was 3, MS was 0.86, and F was 0.91, while the within groups SS was 15.20, df was 16, and MS was 0.95, with a total SS of 17.78 and total df of 19. The computed F-value of 0.91 was lower than the F critical value of 3.24 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there was no significant difference among Socio-Cultural, Environmental, Educational, and Cultural factors in influencing students’ reading comprehension when analyzed according to sex. The result suggests that teacher perceptions of these factors were statistically consistent across sex groupings.

The ANOVA results for teacher responses as to grade level show that the between groups SS was 1.64, df was 3, MS was 0.547, and F was 3.94, while the within groups SS was 2.22, df was 16, and MS was 0.1388, with a total SS of 3.86 and total df of 19. The computed F-value of 3.94 was greater than the F critical value of 3.24 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there was a significant difference among Socio-Cultural, Environmental, Educational, and Cultural factors in influencing students’ reading comprehension when analyzed according to grade level. The result suggests that teacher perceptions differed significantly across the four factors, requiring further examination through post hoc analysis.

The post hoc summary as to grade level shows that the comparison between Educational and Socio-Cultural factors had a mean difference of 0.800, which was greater than the HSD (0.05) value of 0.659, and was therefore significant. This indicates that Educational Factors differed significantly from Socio-Cultural Factors in their influence on reading comprehension. Since Educational Factors had an area mean of 3.78 while Socio-Cultural Factors had an area mean of 2.78, the result suggests that instructional practices, teacher explanations, feedback, assessments, and school programs were perceived as more influential than family encouragement, peer interaction, home or community access to reading materials, and

community practices. This does not imply that socio-cultural factors are unimportant, but rather that their influence was statistically weaker than the educational dimension.

The remaining post hoc comparisons were not significant because their mean differences were lower than the HSD (0.05) value of 0.659. The comparison between Educational and Environmental factors had a mean difference of 0.475 and was not significant. The comparison between Educational and Cultural factors had a mean difference of 0.350 and was not significant. The comparison between Cultural and Socio-Cultural factors had a mean difference of 0.450 and was not significant. The comparison between Environmental and Socio-Cultural factors had a mean difference of 0.325 and was not significant. The comparison between Cultural and Environmental factors had a mean difference of 0.125 and was not significant. These results show that although variations existed among the factors, only the difference between Educational and Socio-Cultural factors reached statistical significance. The findings suggest that environmental and cultural factors operated at relatively comparable levels with educational and socio-cultural factors, except where educational support was clearly stronger than socio-cultural support.

Taken as a whole, the findings show that reading comprehension among junior high school students is influenced by multiple interrelated factors. Student responses yielded a total average weighted mean of 2.80, described as Agree, while teacher responses yielded a total average weighted mean of 3.32, described as Strongly Agree. Both groups recognized the role of socio-cultural, environmental, educational, and cultural factors, but teachers generally rated these influences more strongly than students. Educational Factors consistently emerged as the strongest dimension, with a student area mean of 3.16 and a teacher area mean of 3.78, while Socio-Cultural Factors consistently appeared as the weakest dimension, with a student area mean of 2.61 and a teacher area mean of 2.78. The ANOVA results showed no significant difference among the factors according to student sex, student grade level, and teacher sex, as reflected in F-values of 2.19, 2.59, and 0.91, all lower than their respective F critical values of 3.03, 3.03, and 3.24 at the 0.05 level of significance. However, teacher responses according to grade level showed a significant difference, with an F-value of 3.94 greater than the F critical value of 3.24 at the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The post hoc result confirmed that the significant difference occurred only between Educational and Socio-Cultural factors, with a mean difference of 0.800 exceeding the HSD (0.05) value of 0.659. These findings reinforce the importance of strengthening instructional practices while also improving family, peer, community, environmental, and cultural supports. Thus, the development of reading comprehension requires an integrated intervention framework that does not rely on classroom instruction alone, but also addresses the broader learning conditions that shape students' reading engagement, access, motivation, and comprehension.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that the various factors influencing the reading comprehension skills of junior high school students were present, although their strength and consistency were not sufficient to achieve optimum learning outcomes. The overall average mean score of 2.80, interpreted as "Agree," indicated that these factors moderately existed among the respondents. This suggests that while the identified factors contributed to facilitating reading comprehension, their effectiveness remained limited in fully enhancing students' understanding, interpretation, and critical engagement with texts. The results further imply that the current support systems and instructional practices associated with reading comprehension

require continuous improvement to ensure stronger and more meaningful learning experiences among learners.

Among the identified factors, educational aspects obtained the highest mean score of 3.16, signifying that educational practices and school-based interventions exerted the greatest influence on the development of students' reading comprehension skills. This finding emphasized the significant role of teachers, instructional approaches, reading programs, and classroom support in shaping students' literacy development. However, despite the relatively higher rating, the findings also demonstrated that educational interventions were still insufficient in addressing the needs of some students. Although teachers provided assistance and instructional guidance, these efforts were not always effective in improving students' comprehension of texts and higher order thinking skills. This indicates the need for further refinement of teaching strategies, classroom interventions, and reading programs to ensure that learners are more actively engaged and adequately supported in the reading process.

Environmental factors, with a mean score of 2.76, also contributed to the development of reading comprehension skills, although their influence remained moderate. The findings suggested that the students' surroundings and learning conditions did not consistently create positive experiences that encouraged reading development. This implies that the educational environment, including access to learning resources, supportive spaces, and opportunities for reading engagement, still requires enhancement to better support students' literacy growth. Likewise, cultural factors obtained a mean score of 2.66, indicating that culture had some influence on students' reading comprehension. Although students recognized that cultural elements could support understanding and interpretation of texts, these factors did not consistently increase students' interest in reading or strengthen their comprehension abilities. This finding demonstrated that culturally relevant materials and practices were not fully integrated into the learning process, thereby limiting their potential contribution to students' literacy development.

The study further revealed that socio-cultural factors received the lowest mean score of 2.61, highlighting the limited support students received from their homes and communities. This finding underscored the importance of family involvement, community participation, and social support in improving reading comprehension skills. The lack of sufficient encouragement, reading opportunities, and literacy related interactions outside the school environment negatively affected students' reading development. Overall, the study established that educational, environmental, cultural, and socio-cultural factors collectively influenced students' reading comprehension skills, yet none of these factors were sufficiently optimized to fully support learners in achieving higher levels of reading proficiency. The findings therefore emphasized the need for stronger collaboration among teachers, schools, families, and communities to create a more supportive and effective literacy environment for junior high school students.

In light of these findings, the study recommended the implementation of interventions aimed at strengthening the reading comprehension skills of learners, particularly in the areas of socio-cultural and cultural support which obtained the lowest ratings. Schools and communities should ensure that learners have easy access to books, magazines, and other reading materials both inside and outside the classroom through the establishment of libraries, reading corners, and reading clubs. Learners should also be encouraged to actively participate in discussions of books and literary works to enhance their critical analysis, interpretation, and comprehension skills. Furthermore, integrating local stories, folklore, myths, and culturally relevant materials into classroom instruction and community reading activities can increase students' engagement and deepen their understanding of texts while fostering appreciation for culture and lifelong literacy habits. Parents and guardians should likewise be informed and guided on effective ways to support their children's reading development at home through shared reading activities,

meaningful discussions, and continuous encouragement. In addition, schools and communities should strengthen partnerships with local institutions and organizations in organizing literacy related programs and activities that provide students with more opportunities to practice and improve their reading comprehension skills. Monitoring students' participation in reading activities beyond the school environment is also essential in identifying learners with limited exposure and providing them with additional assistance and support. Through these collective efforts, learners may develop stronger reading habits, improved comprehension skills, and greater confidence in engaging with various forms of texts.

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