

**Daily reading practices and foundational literacy among Grade 1 pupils:
A descriptive study in the Philippines**

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ABSTRACT

Early literacy provides the foundation for learning, making reading opportunities important in Grade 1. This study examined daily reading practices and literacy levels of Grade 1 pupils in elementary schools in Quirino, Isabela, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. A descriptive-normative survey design was used with 27 Grade 1 teachers from 19 schools through total population sampling. Data were gathered through a questionnaire, supported by interviews and documentary analysis, and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and weighted means. Daily reading practices were fully implemented ($M = 4.69$). Pupils demonstrated very high literacy in phonemic awareness ($M = 4.36$), letter-sound correspondence ($M = 4.74$), decoding and word recognition ($M = 4.48$), reading fluency ($M = 4.38$), vocabulary development ($M = 4.42$), and reading comprehension ($M = 4.49$). Teachers reported serious implementation challenges ($M = 3.66$), particularly limited reading spaces, learner attendance, training, and classroom distractions. It is recommended that schools strengthen reading resources and spaces while providing sustained professional development and home-school support to maintain daily reading practices.

Keywords: Daily reading practices, Grade 1 literacy, early reading, reading instruction, Philippines.

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INTRODUCTION

Learning to read is a foundational task during the transition to formal schooling. Early reading and writing abilities provide a basis for later academic learning, while weak foundational skills may persist into subsequent grade levels. Evidence from Philippine and international studies emphasizes the importance of systematic, contextualized, and sustained reading instruction in the early grades (Angeles et al., 2022; Librea et al., 2023; Khosa, 2022a).

Grade 1 learners need repeated opportunities to work with sounds, letters, words, sentences, and short texts. Systematic phonics instruction, for example, has been associated with improved acquisition of decoding skills (Ehri et al., 2001). Studies of early-grade classrooms likewise indicate that the quality and consistency of classroom reading practices are closely connected with literacy development (Khosa, 2022a; Ukumo & Berlie, 2024).

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Guided and shared reading can provide young learners with modeling, interaction, and supported practice, while independent reading can provide opportunities for learners to apply developing skills.

The need for sustained reading practice becomes more important in contexts where children have unequal access to books and literacy experiences outside school. Research has documented the effects of limited reading resources, constrained instructional time, large classes, and insufficient teacher preparation on early literacy instruction (Naidoo et al., 2014; Wildschut et al., 2016). In the Philippines, a systematic review similarly identified low reading literacy as a continuing concern among elementary pupils and pointed to the importance of appropriate interventions and instructional support (Librea et al., 2023). Localized and contextualized reading materials have also been reported as useful approaches for supporting Grade 1 reading development (Angeles et al., 2022; Repaso & Macalisang, 2024).

Within this context, daily reading practices may provide a practical school-based mechanism for giving beginning readers regular and structured exposure to literacy activities. Such practices may include guided oral reading, shared reading, phonics-based instruction, teacher read-alouds, paired or group reading, and independent reading. However, implementation can be affected by available resources, classroom conditions, learner attendance, teacher preparation, and family support.

The present study therefore examined the implementation of daily reading practices and the literacy levels of Grade 1 pupils in public elementary schools in Quirino, Isabela, during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it described the teachers' profile, determined the extent to which daily reading practices were implemented, assessed the reported literacy levels of pupils across six foundational domains, and identified the challenges encountered by teachers. Because the study used a descriptive design and teacher-reported measures, the findings are interpreted as evidence of implementation and reported literacy status rather than as proof of a causal effect of daily reading practices.

Statement of the problem

The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of daily reading practices in improving the literacy levels of Grade 1 pupils in public elementary schools in Quirino, Isabela, for School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, present position, latest performance rating, length in service, and level of in service training attended?
2. What daily reading practices are implemented in Grade 1 classrooms?
3. What is the level of literacy of Grade 1 pupils in terms of phonemic awareness, letter sound correspondence, decoding and word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension?
4. What challenges do teachers encounter in the implementation of daily reading practices in Grade 1 classrooms?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive-normative survey design. This design was used to describe prevailing instructional practices, reported pupil literacy levels, and challenges encountered by teachers in the existing school setting. It was appropriate for documenting the current status of daily reading practices without introducing an experimental treatment.

The study was conducted in the public elementary schools of Quirino District, Isabela, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. The thesis identified 19 public elementary schools

as represented in the study. Total population sampling was used, resulting in 27 Grade 1 teachers as respondents.

The respondents were predominantly experienced teachers. Ten (37.04%) had 11–15 years of service, 23 (85.19%) held Teacher 3 positions, and 25 (92.59%) had an Outstanding latest performance rating. All 27 respondents were female, and 26 (96.30%) were married. In terms of educational attainment, 15 (55.56%) were bachelor's degree graduates, five (18.52%) were MAED graduates, two (7.41%) were EdD/PhD graduates, and five (18.52%) had EdD/PhD units.

Three sources of data were used: a questionnaire checklist, unstructured interviews, and documentary analysis. The questionnaire contained four parts: respondent profile; extent of implementation of daily reading practices; level of Grade 1 literacy; and challenges encountered in implementing daily reading practices. The questionnaire was tried out among selected teachers in Solana, Cagayan, revised based on their suggestions and the research adviser's comments, and then administered to the respondents.

Permission to conduct the study was secured through the Schools Division Superintendent and school administrators. The researcher personally distributed and retrieved the questionnaires. Interviews were conducted to clarify selected responses, while relevant school records and inventories were consulted through documentary analysis.

Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the respondents' profile. Weighted means were used to summarize the extent of implementation, reported literacy levels, and challenges. A five-point scale was used. For implementation, 4.21–5.00 indicated Fully Implemented; for literacy, the same range indicated Very High; and for challenges, it indicated Very Serious. The study did not employ an experimental comparison, pretest-posttest analysis, or inferential test; consequently, the results do not establish a causal effect of daily reading practices on pupil literacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 27 Grade 1 teachers represented all 19 public elementary schools included in the study. The largest school-based group came from Quirino Central School, with five respondents (18.52%). Four schools contributed two respondents each, while the remaining schools contributed one respondent each. The respondents were generally experienced: the largest group had 11–15 years of service (37.04%). Most held Teacher 3 positions (85.19%) and had an Outstanding performance rating (92.59%). Participation in professional development was also reported at several levels, including international (nine mentions) and national (nine mentions) training.

Daily reading practices were reported as fully implemented overall, with an average weighted mean of 4.69. Shared reading obtained the highest mean (4.93), followed by paired or group reading (4.81). Phonics-based instruction and teacher read-aloud activities each obtained 4.70, guided oral reading obtained 4.67, and independent reading tasks obtained the lowest mean at 4.30. Although all practices were classified as fully implemented, the relatively lower mean for independent reading suggests that teacher-guided and interactive activities were more prominent than independent reading.

The weighted means for the daily reading practices were as follows: shared reading (4.93), paired or group reading (4.81), phonics-based instruction (4.70), teacher read-aloud activities (4.70), guided oral reading (4.67), and independent reading tasks (4.30). All were interpreted as fully implemented, with an overall weighted mean of 4.69.

The strong implementation of varied reading activities is consistent with literature emphasizing structured and systematic early reading instruction. Ehri et al. (2001) highlighted the contribution of systematic phonics instruction to reading acquisition, while studies of guided reading and teacher practices have emphasized the value of structured teacher support and learner engagement (Thage et al., 2021; Ukumo & Berlie, 2024). The prominence of shared and paired/group reading in the present study also suggests that teachers relied substantially on interactive forms of reading, which can provide modeling and opportunities for supported practice. However, the descriptive nature of the study means that the high implementation rating should not be interpreted as evidence that these practices independently caused the reported literacy levels.

Across all six literacy domains, pupils were rated at a very high level, with an overall mean of 4.48. Letter-sound correspondence received the highest domain mean (4.74), followed by reading comprehension (4.49), decoding and word recognition (4.48), vocabulary development (4.42), reading fluency (4.38), and phonemic awareness (4.36).

The weighted means for the six literacy domains were letter-sound correspondence (4.74), reading comprehension (4.49), decoding and word recognition (4.48), vocabulary development (4.42), reading fluency (4.38), and phonemic awareness (4.36). All were interpreted as very high, with an overall weighted mean of 4.48.

For phonemic awareness, the highest-rated indicator was the ability to change one sound in a word to make a new word (4.59), while segmenting short words into separate sounds obtained the lowest mean (4.07), although it remained in the high category. For letter-sound correspondence, naming uppercase letters correctly obtained the highest mean (4.85), while matching printed letters with their sounds obtained the lowest (4.63). In decoding and word recognition, reading simple CVC words obtained the highest mean (4.81), while breaking longer simple words into parts obtained the lowest (4.22). In reading fluency, finishing short passages within the expected time and showing better fluency with practiced materials both obtained 4.52; simple phrasing and expression was lowest at 4.04. Vocabulary development was highest for understanding simple Grade 1 words and grouping words into categories (both 4.56), while using new words during classroom activities was lowest at 4.07. For comprehension, answering simple wh-questions, identifying character feelings, and giving a simple conclusion each obtained 4.59, while identifying the main idea obtained 4.19.

These results indicate a generally strong reported foundation in the component skills required for beginning reading. The pattern is consistent with research emphasizing phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension as interconnected components of early literacy (Ehri et al., 2001; Eslick et al., 2020). The results also accord with Philippine studies emphasizing the importance of localized and contextualized reading support for young learners (Angeles et al., 2022; Repaso & Macalisang, 2024). Nevertheless, the lowest-rated indicators within each domain identify areas where continued practice may be useful, particularly segmentation, independent word analysis, expressive fluency, active vocabulary use, and identifying main ideas.

Despite the high reported implementation of reading practices, teachers reported serious challenges overall ($M = 3.66$). The most serious challenge was the lack of functional reading corners or space ($M = 4.15$), followed by inconsistent learner attendance ($M = 4.07$). Insufficient training on early literacy instruction and classroom noise or distractions both obtained 3.96. Limited parental support obtained 3.89, while limited copies of leveled or age-appropriate texts obtained 3.78.

The weighted means for the reported challenges were lack of functional reading corners or space (4.15), inconsistent learner attendance (4.07), insufficient training on early literacy instruction (3.96), classroom noise and distractions (3.96), limited parental support (3.89),

limited copies of leveled or age-appropriate texts (3.78), and inadequate monitoring tools or assessment materials (3.74). The overall weighted mean was 3.66, interpreted as serious.

The findings show that high implementation does not mean that implementation is free from constraints. Resource availability, instructional space, teacher preparation, attendance, and family support remain important conditions for sustaining early literacy routines. This pattern is consistent with studies reporting the influence of resource limitations, teacher knowledge, classroom conditions, and home literacy environments on early reading instruction (Naidoo et al., 2014; Wildschut et al., 2016; Stoffelsma, 2019a). The finding concerning teacher training is also consistent with literature emphasizing the importance of pedagogical knowledge for systematic literacy instruction (Khosa, 2022b; Steinke & Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2019).

Taken together, the findings present a classroom context in which teachers reported frequent use of varied daily reading practices and very high levels of pupil literacy, while simultaneously identifying serious structural and instructional challenges. The coexistence of these findings is important. It suggests that teachers are implementing reading routines despite constraints involving space, attendance, training, resources, and classroom conditions.

The results support the value of maintaining structured daily opportunities for reading, but they do not by themselves demonstrate that daily reading practices produced the reported literacy levels. The evidence is based largely on teacher reports and weighted means rather than direct pupil assessment or an experimental design. Thus, the more defensible interpretation is that strong implementation and high reported literacy were observed together in the participating schools. Future research using direct reading assessments, classroom observations, and longitudinal or quasi-experimental designs could determine more precisely how changes in daily reading practices relate to changes in pupil literacy.

CONCLUSION

The study found that daily reading practices were fully implemented in the participating Grade 1 classrooms, with shared reading, paired or group reading, phonics-based instruction, teacher read-alouds, guided oral reading, and independent reading all receiving full-implementation ratings. The pupils were reported to have very high literacy across phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, decoding and word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension.

At the same time, teachers reported serious challenges, particularly inadequate reading spaces, inconsistent learner attendance, insufficient training, classroom distractions, limited parental support, and shortages of appropriate reading materials. These findings indicate that sustaining daily reading requires more than teacher effort; it also depends on supportive school conditions and home-school collaboration.

Schools may therefore strengthen reading corners and classroom reading resources, provide leveled and age-appropriate texts and monitoring tools, and sustain professional development focused on early literacy instruction and support for struggling readers. Teachers may continue varied reading routines while giving additional attention to lower-rated component skills such as sound segmentation, independent word analysis, expressive fluency, active vocabulary use, and identifying main ideas. Parents may be engaged in simple home-reading routines. Future studies should include direct pupil assessments, classroom observations, and longitudinal or quasi-experimental designs to examine changes in literacy more objectively and to investigate the relationship between daily reading practices and reading outcomes.

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