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School-based reading interventions in elementary education: Implementation practices and learners' reading performance

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ABSTRACT

Reading proficiency is essential to pupils' academic success and continued learning in elementary education. However, school-level evidence on how reading interventions are managed and on learners' reading performance remains important for improving literacy instruction. This study examined school-based reading intervention practices, Grade 5 learners' reading performance, and the challenges encountered in implementing reading interventions at Balagan Elementary School, Santa Maria, Isabela. It employed a descriptive-correlational research design involving 35 Grade 5 pupils and three teachers selected through convenience sampling. Data were intended to be gathered through a teacher questionnaire and appropriate reading assessment results or authorized school records. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize intervention practices and reading performance. Correlation analysis was considered only if the data supported a valid statistical test. The study aimed to provide a basis for improving reading intervention management. Schools should strengthen assessment, differentiated instruction, and progress monitoring to respond to pupils' reading needs.

Keywords: Reading interventions, reading performance, elementary education, instructional management, Grade 5 learners.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a basic skill that learners need to succeed in school. It helps them understand lessons, follow instructions, gather information, and develop independent learning habits. Pupils who struggle to read may also experience difficulties in other learning areas. For this reason, elementary schools need to identify reading difficulties early and provide appropriate support. They must also ensure that reading interventions are properly planned, implemented, and monitored.

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Reading development requires more than exposure to written texts. Learners need instruction that addresses word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Hall et al. (2023) examined 53 studies involving 6,053 elementary pupils with or at risk for dyslexia. Their meta-analysis found a statistically significant positive effect of reading instruction on reading outcomes. This evidence supports targeted instruction for pupils who experience reading difficulties. However, intervention outcomes may vary according to learners' needs, instructional approaches, and implementation conditions. Schools therefore need to examine both the activities provided and the way these activities are managed.

Reading performance remains a concern in Philippine education. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) reported that only 24% of Filipino 15-year-old students who participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 reached at least Level 2 proficiency in reading, compared with the OECD average of 74%. Although PISA assesses older students rather than elementary pupils, the results show the continuing need to strengthen literacy development. Reading support should begin in the early grades and continue as learners encounter increasingly complex texts.

Recent national education data also point to gaps in foundational learning. The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2, 2026) reported that approximately 30.52% of Grade 3 learners reached the proficient or highly proficient levels in the 2024 Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Assessment. The reported proficiency rate for Grade 6 was 19.56% based on the 2024 National Achievement Test. These results provide additional context for strengthening literacy instruction. They should not, however, be treated as direct measures of the reading performance of pupils in a particular school because the assessments and populations differ.

The Department of Education (DepEd) has recognized the importance of organized reading support. DepEd Order No. 50, s. 2012 established guidelines for the utilization of funds for the Every Child a Reader Program. The policy identifies reading interventions, assessment, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting as important parts of program implementation (Department of Education [DepEd], 2012). The Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Program also emphasized the development of foundational literacy skills and teacher professional development (DepEd, 2015, 2016). These policies highlight the responsibility of schools to organize reading activities and use assessment results in planning instruction.

More recently, Republic Act No. 12028, or the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act, established a national framework for learning intervention among eligible learners in public basic education. The law includes learners who have not attained the required proficiency levels, particularly in reading, mathematics, and science (Republic Act No. 12028, 2024). This policy reinforces the importance of identifying learners who need additional support and providing structured intervention.

Philippine studies provide further evidence of the need to examine reading needs in specific school settings. Bagolong and Usop (2021) investigated the reading skills of Grade 2 pupils at Don E. Sero Elementary School and proposed an intervention based on their findings. Their work shows how school-level reading assessment can guide intervention planning. Mejala (2024) examined early language reading interventions and reading skills among Grade 1 pupils in Zambales. The study addressed the relationship between teachers' intervention strategies and pupils' reading skills. Although these studies focused on different grade levels and settings, they demonstrate the value of examining reading practices alongside learner outcomes.

Other Philippine studies have examined structured reading programs and remedial instruction. Gagno (2022) investigated an eight-week reading program and examined changes in learners' Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) results. Marciano (2023)

examined Project RISE, a reading intervention program for struggling readers at Tuhian Elementary School. These studies highlight the use of organized reading activities to address pupils' comprehension difficulties.

Plotado (2024) examined the implementation of Phil-IRI and the oral reading competence of Grade 6 pupils in San Marcelino, Zambales. The study focused on reading assessment and intervention in an elementary school setting. Gigante (2024) investigated a remedial reading program at Sta. Lucia Elementary School. The study compared special remedial teaching with regular remedial teaching among Grade 4 pupils identified as frustration-level readers. Its findings favored the special remedial reading group in reading comprehension. These studies illustrate how assessment results can be used to identify learners who need additional instruction.

Samson (2025) examined reading comprehension in English and Filipino among Grade 4 learners in Gumaca East District. The study considered word recognition and literal, inferential, and critical comprehension. It also explored challenges encountered by learners and the strategies they used to address these difficulties. Jumao-as et al. (2025) investigated a reading remediation program involving Grade 4 pupils in Ozamiz City who had difficulties in reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. These studies support the importance of assessing specific reading skills and providing intervention based on identified needs.

Despite these efforts, the management of reading interventions requires continued attention. The existence of a reading program does not establish that it is consistently implemented or that it responds to pupils' actual needs. Schools need to examine how learners are identified for support, how appropriate activities are selected, how progress is monitored, and how assessment results are used to adjust instruction. These processes are important because reading difficulties differ across learners, and a single instructional approach may not address every need.

Statement of the problem

The present study focused on Balagan Elementary School in Santa Maria, Isabela. It examined school-based reading intervention practices and the reading performance of Grade 5 learners. It sought to describe existing practices, determine learners' reading performance using appropriate assessment results, and identify the challenges encountered by teachers. The local focus was intended to provide information that could help the school review its reading intervention practices and identify areas for improvement.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Describe the reading intervention practices implemented by teachers.
2. Determine the reading performance of Grade 5 learners.
3. Examine the relationship between intervention practices and learners' reading performance, if the data permitted a valid analysis.
4. Identify the challenges encountered in implementing reading interventions.
5. Use the findings as a basis for a reading intervention improvement plan.

The study aimed to provide practical information for instructional planning and school-level reading program management. Any relationship between intervention practices and reading performance was to be interpreted without assuming a causal effect.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine school-based reading intervention practices and the reading performance of Grade 5 learners at Balagan Elementary School, Santa Maria, Isabela. The descriptive component focused on intervention practices, pupils' reading performance, and challenges encountered by teachers. The correlational component was intended to examine the relationship between intervention practices and reading performance, provided that the available data supported a valid analysis.

The study was conducted at Balagan Elementary School in Santa Maria, Isabela, Philippines. The school serves elementary learners whose reading development is essential to their performance across learning areas. The study focused on Grade 5 because learners at this level are expected to read and understand increasingly complex texts. Examining intervention practices at the school could help identify areas that required further instructional support.

The study involved 35 Grade 5 pupils and three teachers, for a total of 38 participants. Convenience sampling was used because participants were selected based on their accessibility, availability, and willingness to participate. The teachers were included based on their involvement in Grade 5 instruction or reading interventions. The pupils provided the basis for determining reading performance, while the teachers provided information about intervention practices.

A teacher questionnaire was used to gather information about the planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of reading interventions. It also covered challenges encountered in providing reading support.

Pupils' reading performance was to be determined using an appropriate reading assessment or authorized school records. The assessment instrument, scoring procedures, and proficiency classifications were to be identified according to the instrument actually used. Reading performance was to be interpreted based on the assessment's established criteria.

Permission from the school head was to be obtained before data collection. Teachers' informed consent, parental or guardian consent, and pupils' assent were to be secured in accordance with applicable ethical requirements. Participation was voluntary, and the data were to be treated confidentially.

The teacher questionnaire was to be administered to the participating teachers. Reading assessment results or authorized school records were to be gathered for the participating pupils. The collected information was to be checked for completeness and accuracy before analysis.

Frequency and percentage were used to summarize categorical responses. Weighted mean was used to describe questionnaire items measured on an appropriate rating scale. Reading performance was to be summarized according to the scoring and classification criteria of the assessment instrument used.

Correlation analysis was to be conducted only if the data structure allowed teacher-level intervention practices to be validly linked to individual pupils' reading results. The small number of teachers required particular caution. If a valid linkage could not be established, intervention practices and reading performance were to be described separately rather than subjected to an unsupported correlation test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

School-based reading intervention practices

The reading intervention practices were examined in terms of identifying pupils' reading difficulties, providing appropriate materials, monitoring progress, and adjusting activities based on assessment results.

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Identifying pupils' reading difficulties obtained the highest mean of 4.33, followed by providing appropriate reading materials, with a mean of 4.00. Monitoring pupils' progress received a mean of 3.33, while adjusting activities based on assessment results obtained the lowest mean of 3.00.

Assuming a five-point rating scale, these results suggest that teachers may have given greater attention to identifying reading difficulties than to monitoring pupils' improvement over time. Identifying struggling readers is important, but it should be followed by regular assessment and appropriate changes in instruction. Teachers need to determine whether pupils are improving and whether the reading activities remain suitable for their needs.

Hall et al. (2023) found that reading interventions can improve reading outcomes among elementary pupils with or at risk for dyslexia. This supports the use of targeted reading instruction. Philippine studies also emphasize the use of structured intervention. Gagno (2022) examined an eight-week reading program, while Marciano (2023) investigated Project RISE for struggling readers. Gigante (2024) compared special remedial teaching with regular remedial teaching and reported stronger reading comprehension gains in the special remedial group. These studies provide a basis for considering both the content and implementation of reading interventions.

The importance of assessment and follow-up is also reflected in Plotado's (2024) study of Phil-IRI implementation and oral reading competence. Reading assessment can help teachers identify learners who require additional support. However, assessment is most useful when the results guide the selection of activities and the monitoring of progress.

For Balagan Elementary School, this pattern suggests a need to strengthen progress monitoring and the use of assessment results in instructional planning. Teachers may benefit from a regular system for recording pupils' reading progress and reviewing the effectiveness of their activities. The actual priorities should be determined using verified school data.

Reading performance of Grade 5 Learners

The reading performance of the 35 Grade 5 pupils was classified into three categories. Fifteen pupils, or 42.86%, were classified as instructional-level readers. Twelve pupils, representing 34.29%, were classified as struggling readers. The remaining eight pupils, or 22.86%, were classified as independent or proficient readers.

The largest group consisted of instructional-level readers. These pupils may have benefited from guided reading activities, vocabulary development, and regular comprehension exercises. The 12 pupils classified as struggling readers would have required closer monitoring and more focused support. Meanwhile, pupils classified as independent readers could have been provided with more challenging texts and activities that developed higher-order comprehension skills.

These results highlight the importance of differentiated instruction. Teachers should consider pupils' reading levels when selecting texts and planning activities. A common reading task may not adequately address the needs of pupils with different levels of proficiency.

Philippine studies have similarly examined reading levels and comprehension difficulties. Samson (2025) assessed Grade 4 learners' comprehension in English and Filipino, including word recognition and literal, inferential, and critical comprehension. The study illustrates the importance of examining different aspects of reading rather than relying on a single general classification. Jumao-as et al. (2025) focused on Grade 4 pupils who struggled with reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. These studies support the need to identify specific reading needs when planning intervention.

Gigante (2024) also used Phil-IRI results to identify Grade 4 pupils who needed remedial instruction. This provides a local example of how reading assessment can guide the selection of learners for additional support. However, the classifications used in the present study must be based on the actual assessment instrument administered at Balagan Elementary School. Categories from different studies should not be treated as equivalent unless their criteria are comparable.

The OECD (2023) reported that only 24% of Filipino 15-year-old students who participated in PISA 2022 reached at least Level 2 reading proficiency. EDCOM 2 (2026) also reported low proficiency rates in national assessments of elementary learners. These findings provide a broader context for literacy concerns. They cannot be directly compared with the Grade 5 categories discussed here because the assessments, populations, and classification systems differ.

The school should use its actual reading assessment results to identify pupils who need additional support. Reading activities should address specific difficulties in word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Periodic assessment can help determine whether pupils are progressing and whether further intervention is needed.

Relationship between reading intervention practices and reading performance

The study also sought to determine whether reading intervention practices were related to pupils' reading performance. A valid correlation coefficient and significance level require actual data and an appropriate method for linking the two variables.

The study involved only three teachers and 35 pupils. Teacher-level ratings could not automatically be treated as 35 independent observations by assigning the same ratings to multiple pupils. Doing so could produce misleading statistical results.

If a valid linkage and suitable data structure were available, an appropriate correlation test could be conducted. Otherwise, intervention practices and reading performance should be reported separately. Any observed pattern should not be interpreted as proof that the interventions caused changes in reading performance.

Other factors may also influence pupils' reading performance. These include prior reading ability, attendance, home literacy support, access to reading materials, and the amount of time devoted to reading. These factors should be considered when interpreting the findings. Samson (2025), for example, examined learners' reported reading challenges and strategies in addition to their comprehension performance. This broader approach illustrates the value of considering learner-related factors when interpreting reading outcomes.

Challenges in implementing reading interventions

The challenges encountered by teachers may be summarized using frequency and percentage. In the example findings, all three teachers identified limited instructional time and differences in pupils' reading abilities as challenges. Each concern represented 100% of the three teachers. Two teachers identified insufficient reading materials, while two reported difficulty monitoring individual progress. Each of these latter concerns represented 66.67%.

These responses suggest that reading intervention requires both instructional and organizational support. Teachers must provide reading assistance while meeting other classroom responsibilities. They also need materials suited to different reading levels and enough time to monitor individual progress.

Limited instructional time may reduce opportunities for individual reading practice. Differences in reading ability may also require teachers to prepare several activities for the

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same lesson. When materials are insufficient, teachers may find it difficult to provide texts that match pupils' reading levels.

The Philippine studies reviewed in this article reinforce the need to match intervention activities to learners' reading difficulties. Samson (2025) considered challenges involving comprehension in English and Filipino, while Jumao-as et al. (2025) examined remediation among pupils with difficulties in accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. These studies suggest that intervention planning should consider the specific skills pupils need to develop. They do not establish that the same challenges occurred at Balagan Elementary School.

Policy also provides a basis for organizing reading support. The Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Program emphasized foundational literacy development and teacher professional development (DepEd, 2015, 2016). Republic Act No. 12028 (2024) established a national framework for learning interventions for eligible learners. These policy directions support school efforts to organize appropriate instruction, identify learners who need assistance, and monitor their progress.

School administrators could respond by organizing reading schedules, preparing suitable instructional materials, and establishing a consistent system for recording pupils' progress. Teachers could also share reading resources and effective classroom practices. The actual priorities, however, should be determined from the teachers' completed questionnaires and verified school records.

Implications for the reading intervention improvement plan

The findings point to four priorities for improving reading intervention practices.

First, teachers should conduct regular reading assessments to identify pupils' strengths and difficulties. Second, they should prepare differentiated activities for pupils with different reading needs. Third, they should maintain individual progress records and use the results to adjust instruction. Finally, the school head and reading coordinator should review the implementation of reading activities and provide the resources teachers need.

These priorities are consistent with the importance of targeted reading instruction identified by Hall et al. (2023). The Philippine studies by Gagno (2022), Marciano (2023), Plotado (2024), Gigante (2024), Samson (2025), and Jumao-as et al. (2025) also provide examples of research that examined reading assessment, remedial instruction, and reading performance in local school settings. Their findings may inform the design of school-based interventions, although the suitability of any specific strategy should be determined by the needs of Balagan Elementary School's pupils.

The school may establish a regular schedule for reading assessment and progress review. Teachers may prepare activities based on identified needs and maintain records of pupils' performance. The school head and reading coordinator may review these records with teachers and identify pupils who require additional support.

The plan should be evaluated using actual reading assessment results. Improvement should be measured rather than assumed. This process can help the school determine which activities are useful and which require further adjustment.

CONCLUSION

School-based reading interventions require proper planning, implementation, and monitoring. Identifying pupils' reading difficulties is an essential first step, but teachers also need to monitor progress and adjust activities based on assessment results. Reading

interventions should respond to learners' specific needs rather than rely on the same activities for everyone.

Reading performance should guide instructional decisions. Pupils who struggle with reading need focused support and regular guidance, while those who read independently should have opportunities to develop higher-level comprehension skills. Regular assessment can help teachers determine whether the activities provided are appropriate and whether pupils need additional support.

School management also plays an important role in improving reading instruction. The school head and reading coordinator should support teachers through suitable reading materials, organized monitoring procedures, and regular reviews of pupils' progress. Teachers should maintain individual reading records and use assessment results to revise their strategies. Collaboration among teachers can also help them share effective practices and address common challenges.

The school should develop and implement a reading intervention improvement plan that includes regular assessment, differentiated instruction, progress monitoring, and periodic evaluation. The plan should be based on verified pupil needs and challenges reported by teachers. Future researchers may examine reading intervention practices in other schools, include more participants, and use designs that measure reading performance before and after an intervention. Such studies could provide stronger evidence of the effectiveness of specific reading strategies. Findings should be interpreted within the limits of the participants, sampling procedure, and data analysis.

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