

**ENGLISH READING HABITS AND COMPREHENSION LEVELS OF  
INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS IN SELECTED PRIVATE SCHOOLS: FOUNDATION  
FOR AN ENHANCED READING INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study examined the English reading habits and comprehension levels of 130 intermediate learners in selected private schools in Zambales during School Year 2024-2025. A quantitative-descriptive, causal-comparative, and correlational research design was employed, using a validated, researcher-designed questionnaire. The study explored reading habits in terms of motivation, environment, materials, and engagement, as well as comprehension across literal, inferential, and evaluative levels. Results revealed that most learners were 11 years old, female, in Grade 4, from families with a monthly income of P100,000 to P119,999, and had reading facilitators who were college graduates. Learners spent less than one hour reading at home daily, emphasizing the need for increased reading practice to improve skills. Learners demonstrated moderately evident reading habits, suggesting that while motivation and engagement are present, further development is necessary to enhance literacy. Comprehension skills were at a developing level, particularly in higher-order thinking. Grade level significantly influenced reading habits, with more complex expectations at higher levels promoting reading development. A weak correlation was found between reading habits and comprehension levels, indicating that the quality of reading practice, rather than frequency, is key to improving comprehension. An enhanced reading instructional program was developed to improve both reading habits and comprehension. It is recommended that teachers focus on providing quality reading experiences through guided sessions that emphasize strategies such as questioning and summarizing to improve learners' understanding. Principals and teachers are encouraged to pilot the program in select classrooms, collecting data on its effectiveness for potential wider implementation.

**Keywords:** English, Reading Habits, Reading Comprehension Levels, Intermediate Learners, Private Schools, Reading Instructional Program.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Reading habits play a crucial role in shaping comprehension skills, especially among intermediate learners who are building essential literacy foundations. Research on English reading habits of young learners highlights the significant relationship between reading habits and reading comprehension, showing that various factors—such as digital engagement and leisure reading—affect reading skills. Dewi (2024) found a significant correlation between reading habits and comprehension levels among eighth-grade learners, where frequent readers had better comprehension. Similarly, Vargas et al. (2024) discovered that leisure print reading positively impacted text comprehension, while digital academic reading was negatively associated, suggesting that traditional print reading may enhance comprehension skills, especially for younger learners. Farida et al. (2024) emphasized the relevance of digital tools in reading habits,

underscoring the need to understand digitalization's impact on learners' reading preferences and behaviors. Additionally, Sidupa (2024) noted that learners often favor comics over academic texts for leisure reading, potentially affecting their academic reading habits, while Hendarto and Mulyadi (2024) showed that supplementary English literature can increase independent reading, which enhances comprehension.

Moreover, reading motivation is a critical dimension that influences comprehension levels among learners. Research indicates that motivation significantly impacts reading proficiency and engagement, with motivated learners often demonstrating better comprehension and academic performance. Hartati et al. (2024) found that high reading motivation correlates with better reading compliance and lower work avoidance, while Kheang et al. (2024) argued that fostering intrinsic motivation enhances comprehension skills and sustains a lifelong interest in reading. Vaknin-Nusbaum and Tuckwiller (2022) also demonstrated that reading motivation positively affects school-based well-being and literacy achievements, indicating that motivation and emotional well-being are interconnected for effective learning. These findings collectively suggest that targeted strategies that cultivate motivation, alongside fostering traditional reading habits, can significantly enhance reading comprehension levels, supporting the need for an instructional program tailored to the needs of intermediate learners in selected private schools in Zambales.

While existing studies highlight the importance of reading habits and motivation in developing comprehension skills, there is limited research focusing specifically on how these factors interact among intermediate learners in the context of private schools in Zambales. Much of the current literature, such as that by Dewi (2024), Vargas et al. (2024), and Farida et al. (2024), addresses general trends in reading habits and their impact on comprehension or explores digital versus print reading preferences in diverse educational settings. However, few studies have examined how specific motivational strategies and reading behaviors can be leveraged to enhance reading comprehension in localized educational contexts, particularly within private school environments. This gap underscores the need for a focused investigation that considers the unique cultural, educational, and socio-economic dynamics of private school learners in Zambales, aiming to develop a tailored instructional program that addresses these specific needs and fosters improved reading comprehension skills.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study determined the English reading habits and comprehension levels of intermediate learners in selected private schools in Zambales during the School Year 2024-2025.

Specifically, it aimed to answer these questions:

1. How may the profile of the respondents be described in terms of:
  - 1.1. age;
  - 1.2. sex;
  - 1.3. grade level;
  - 1.4. monthly family income;
  - 1.5. highest educational attainment of reading facilitator; and
  - 1.6. daily number of hours spent reading at home?
2. How may the English reading habits of the respondents be described in terms of:
  - 2.1. reading motivation;
  - 2.2. reading environment;
  - 2.3. reading materials; and

2.4. reading engagement?

3. How may the English reading comprehension levels of the respondents be described in terms of:

3.1. literal comprehension;

3.2. inferential comprehension; and

3.3. evaluative comprehension?

4. Is there a significant difference between the English reading habits of the respondents and their profile when grouped accordingly?

5. Is there a significant correlation between the English reading habits of the respondents and their comprehension levels?

6. What enhanced reading instructional program can be proposed to improve the English reading habits and comprehension levels of intermediate learners?

### 3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study determined the English reading habits and comprehension levels of intermediate learners in selected private schools in Zambales during the School Year 2024-2025. Employing a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected, classified, summarized, and analyzed using percentages and means. The study's respondents comprised 130 intermediate learners, selected through universal sampling across four private schools to enable the formulation of generalizations or identification of patterns within the specific populations. A researcher-designed questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument, focusing on the English reading habits and reading comprehension levels of the respondents. Internal consistency was established using Cronbach's Alpha, demonstrating excellent reliability for the English reading habits ( $\alpha = 0.95$ ) and reading comprehension levels ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ). Hypotheses were tested using the Kruskal-Wallis Test and Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1. Profile of the Respondents

##### 4.1.1. Age

As shown in Table 1, the profile of the learner-respondents in terms of age. As reflected in the table, 4.62% of the learner-respondents were 12 years old, 48.46% of the learner-respondents were 11 years old, 19.23% of the learner-respondents were 10 years old, and 27.69 % of the learner-respondents were 9 years old.

**Table 1. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age**

Age	f	%
12 years old	6	4.62
11 years old	63	48.46
10 years old	25	19.23
9 years old	36	27.69
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.00</b>

This implies that the majority of the learner-respondents were in the age range of 9 to 11 years old, with 11-year-olds representing the largest group. This suggests that most learners in the study were at the typical age for their grade level, which may have a significant influence on their academic development and learning experiences. The smaller percentage of learners who were

either younger or older could indicate variations in grade progression, such as early or delayed entry into school.

The age distribution of the learner-respondents indicates that the majority were 11 years old, aligning with the typical age range for Grade 4 students in the Philippines. Research by Zenebe and Kebede (2024) has highlighted that age significantly influences reading behaviors and comprehension skills, suggesting that as learners mature, their engagement with texts deepens. This finding emphasizes the need for tailored reading interventions that consider the developmental stage of learners, particularly as they approach pivotal academic transitions.

#### 4.1.2. Sex

As shown in Table 2, the profile of the learner-respondents in terms of sex. As reflected in the table, 23.85% of the learner-respondents were males and 76.15% of the learner-respondents were females.

**Table 2. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Sex**

Sex	f	%
Male	31	23.85
Female	99	76.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.00</b>

This implies that the majority of the learner-respondents were females, representing a significant portion of the group compared to the males. This gender imbalance suggests that females may be more prevalent in the sample population, which could have implications for the study's findings, especially in areas where gender differences may influence learning behaviors, participation, or performance. The lower percentage of males may reflect broader trends in enrollment or engagement in the particular educational setting.

The predominance of female learners in this study reflects broader trends observed in educational research. Encinas-Martin and Cherian (2023) found that girls often outperform boys in reading and literacy skills, potentially due to increased motivation and societal encouragement. This underscores the importance of fostering reading skills among both genders while considering the distinct engagement levels that may vary. Targeted strategies that address these differences could promote a more balanced approach to literacy development across the classroom.

#### 4.1.3. Grade Level

As shown in Table 3, the profile of the learner-respondents in terms of grade level. As reflected in the table, 42.31% of the learner-respondents were grade 6, 10.00% of the learner-respondents were grade 5, and 47.69% of the learner-respondents were grade 4 levels.

**Table 3. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Grade Level**

Grade Level	f	%
Grade 6	55	42.31
Grade 5	13	10.00
Grade 4	62	47.69
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.00</b>

This implies that the learner-respondents were almost evenly distributed between Grade 4 and Grade 6, with a slightly higher percentage in Grade 4. The smaller representation of Grade 5 learners may suggest variations in class sizes or enrollment patterns at this level. This distribution indicates that the study encompasses learners at different stages of elementary education, allowing

for insights into the learning experiences and challenges faced by both upper and lower grade levels.

The findings show that the learners predominantly belonged to Grade 4, a crucial year in elementary education where students transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." Aisyah (2024) emphasizes the significance of this shift, as students begin to engage with more complex texts and use reading as a tool for acquiring knowledge across various subjects. Supporting reading development at this grade level is vital for academic success, highlighting the need for effective reading interventions tailored to Grade 4 learners.

#### 4.1.4. Monthly Family Income

As shown in Table 4, the profile of the learner-respondents in terms of monthly family income. As reflected in the table, 10% in the P120,000 and above bracket, 32.31% in the P100,000 to P119,999 bracket, 5.38% in the P80,000 to P99,999 bracket, 3.85% in the P60,000 to P79,999 bracket, 11.54% in the P40,000 to P59,999 bracket, 27.69% in the P20,000 to P39,999 bracket, and 9.23% in the P19,999 and below bracket.

**Table 4. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Monthly Family Income**

Monthly Family Income	f	%
P120,000 and above	13	10.00
P100,000 to P119,999	42	32.31
P80,000 to P99,999	7	5.38
P60,000 to P79,999	5	3.85
P40,000 to P59,999	15	11.54
P20,000 to P39,999	36	27.69
P19,999 and below	12	9.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.00</b>

This implies that the majority of the learner-respondents come from families with a monthly income within the mid-range brackets, particularly between P20,000 to P119,999. The significant proportion of learners in the P100,000 to P119,999 bracket suggests that a considerable number of learners belong to families with relatively higher financial means. However, there is also a notable percentage of respondents from lower-income families, particularly those earning P19,999 and below, which indicates economic diversity among the learners. This income variation may influence access to educational resources, learning support at home, and overall academic performance.

The majority of learner-respondents reported a monthly family income of P100,000 to P119,999, suggesting they come from relatively affluent backgrounds. Fernandez (2024) found that students from higher-income families typically demonstrate better reading performance due to increased access to literacy-rich environments. This finding indicates that while socioeconomic status can provide access to resources, it is important to understand how family dynamics and parental involvement in reading activities further influence learners' reading practices.

#### 4.1.5. Highest Educational Attainment of the Reading Facilitator

As shown in Table 5, the profile of the learner-respondents in terms of the highest educational attainment of their reading facilitators. As reflected in the table, 10.00% in the MA Graduate bracket, 75.38% in the College Graduate bracket, 12.31% in the High School Graduate bracket, and 2.31% in the Elementary Graduate bracket.

**Table 5. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Highest Educational Attainment of the Reading Facilitator**

<b>Highest Educational Attainment of the Reading Facilitator</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
MA Graduate	13	10.00
College Graduate	98	75.38
High School Graduate	16	12.31
Elementary Graduate	3	2.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.00</b>

This implies that the majority of the learner-respondents' reading facilitators are college graduates, suggesting that most facilitators have attained a higher level of education, which may positively impact the learners' reading development and support. The smaller percentages of facilitators with only high school or elementary education may indicate limited formal training in reading instruction for a few learners. The presence of facilitators with MA degrees reflects a higher level of academic qualification for a minority of the respondents, potentially contributing to more advanced instructional techniques for those learners.

Most reading facilitators in this study had completed their college education, which likely contributes to a more informed approach to facilitating reading activities. Dumlao (2024) highlights that the educational background of facilitators significantly impacts children's literacy development. Educated facilitators tend to employ more effective reading strategies, emphasizing the need for professional development to enhance parents' and facilitators' capabilities in supporting learners' reading growth.

#### **4.1.6. Number of Hours Spent Reading at Home**

As shown in Table 6, the profile of the learner-respondents in terms of the number of hours spent reading at home. As reflected in the table, 20.00% in the 4.0 hours and above hours bracket, 5.38% in the 3.0 to 3.9 hours bracket, 3.85% in the 2.0 to 2.9 hours bracket, 18.46% in the 1.0 to 1.9 hours bracket, and 52.31% in the less than 1.0 hour bracket.

**Table 6. Profile of the Respondents in terms of the Number of Hours Spent Reading at Home**

<b>Number of Hours Spent Reading at Home</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
4.0 hours and above	26	20.00
3.0 to 3.9 hours	7	5.38
2.0 to 2.9 hours	5	3.85
1.0 to 1.9 hours	24	18.46
less than 1.0 hour	68	52.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.00</b>

This implies that a significant majority of the learner-respondents spend less than one hour reading at home, indicating a potential concern regarding their reading habits and engagement with literature. The relatively small percentages of learners who read for 2 to 4 hours suggest that reading may not be prioritized in their home environment. The findings highlight the need for interventions to encourage reading at home, as increased reading time is often associated with improved literacy skills and academic performance. Additionally, fostering a culture of reading within families may enhance learners' reading proficiency and overall educational outcomes.



The data revealed that learners spent less than 1.0 hour reading at home daily, which raises concerns about the adequacy of reading practice outside the classroom. Saro et al. (2024) indicates that regular reading practice is crucial for developing reading fluency and comprehension. Insufficient reading time at home may hinder these skills, impacting learners' academic performance. Encouraging parents and reading facilitators to prioritize reading as a daily activity could foster a culture of literacy that extends beyond school, promoting significant strides in learners' reading development.

## 4.2. English Reading Habits of the Respondents

### 4.2.1. Reading Motivation

As shown in Table 7, the English reading habits of the learner-respondents in terms of reading motivation. As reflected in the table, a majority of the respondents had the general mean rating of 2.76 or “Moderately Evident”. It was observed that, “I choose English books that I find exciting and enjoyable” had the highest mean of 2.97 equivalent to “Moderately Evident.”

**Table 7. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the English Reading Habits of the Respondents in terms of Reading Motivation**

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	I like to read English books because they are fun and interesting.	2.55	Moderately Evident
2	I feel excited when I start a new English story or book.	2.74	Moderately Evident
3	I want to read more English books to learn new things and words.	2.83	Moderately Evident
4	I enjoy finishing English books to find out how the story ends.	2.60	Moderately Evident
5	I try to read more English books to find out how the story ends.	2.57	Moderately Evident
6	I choose English books that I find exciting and enjoyable.	2.97	Moderately Evident
7	I read English stories because they help me imagine new places and adventures.	2.78	Moderately Evident
8	I feel proud when I understand and talk about the English books I have read.	2.87	Moderately Evident
9	I ask for new English books from my teacher or parents when I finish reading the ones I have.	2.92	Moderately Evident
10	I like to join reading challenges or activities that make reading English fun.	2.88	Moderately Evident
<b>General Mean Rating</b>		<b>2.76</b>	<b>Moderately Evident</b>

This implies that the learner-respondents exhibit a moderate level of motivation when it comes to their English reading habits, as indicated by the general mean rating of 2.76. The higher mean score of 2.97 for the statement “I choose English books that I find exciting and enjoyable” suggests that learners are inclined to select reading materials that engage their interest, which is a positive sign for fostering a love of reading. However, the overall rating also indicates that there

may be room for improvement in cultivating stronger reading motivation among these learners. Enhancing their exposure to exciting and enjoyable reading materials could further boost their engagement and enthusiasm for reading in English.

The analysis conducted in the present study revealed that the learner-respondents exhibited moderately evident English reading habits, with a mean score of 2.76, indicating a moderate level of reading motivation. This finding aligns with the work of Adetayo et al. (2024), who emphasized that motivation plays a crucial role in the development of reading habits among students, suggesting that motivated readers are more likely to engage with texts consistently.

#### 4.2.2. Reading Environment

As shown in Table 8, the English reading habits of the learner-respondents in terms of reading environment. As reflected in the table, a majority of the respondents had the general mean rating of 3.03 or “Moderately Evident”. It was observed that, “I feel comfortable when my reading place has good light and is free from noise” had the highest mean of 3.18 equivalent to “Moderately Evident.”

**Table 8. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the English Reading Habits of the Respondents in terms of Reading Environment**

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	I read in a quiet place where I can focus on my English books.	2.86	Moderately Evident
2	I have a special spot at home, like a chair or corner, where I like to read English stories.	3.05	Moderately Evident
3	I see many English books around my classroom that I can choose from.	2.91	Moderately Evident
4	I like when my teacher or parents encourage me to read English books.	3.03	Moderately Evident
5	I read English books with my classmates during group activities in class.	3.00	Moderately Evident
6	I join reading time at school where we all read English books together.	3.13	Moderately Evident
7	I enjoy reading English stories with my family at home.	2.95	Moderately Evident
8	I use the school library to find English books that I want to read.	3.19	Moderately Evident
9	I feel comfortable when my reading place has good light and is free from noise.	3.18	Moderately Evident
10	I keep my favorite English books in a place where I can easily reach them when I want to read.	3.09	Moderately Evident
<b>General Mean Rating</b>		<b>3.03</b>	<b>Moderately Evident</b>

This implies that the learner-respondents perceive their reading environment as moderately supportive, as indicated by the general mean rating of 3.03. The higher mean score of 3.18 for the statement “I feel comfortable when my reading place has good light and is free from noise” suggests that learners recognize the importance of a conducive reading environment, which



enhances their comfort and focus during reading activities. However, the moderate rating indicates that there may still be some challenges in achieving an optimal reading setting. Addressing these environmental factors, such as providing adequate lighting and minimizing distractions, could further improve the learners' reading experience and overall literacy development.

In terms of the reading environment, the learner-respondents scored 3.03, demonstrating a moderate level of English reading habits. This is consistent with findings by Dacles (2024), who highlighted the significance of a supportive reading environment in fostering positive reading habits and enhancing literacy development among learners.

#### 4.2.3. Reading Materials

As shown in Table 9, the English reading habits of the learner-respondents in terms of reading materials. As reflected in the table, a majority of the respondents had the general mean rating of 2.76 or “Moderately Evident”. It was observed that, “I join reading time at school where we all read English books together” had the highest mean of 2.98 equivalent to “Moderately Evident.”

**Table 9. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the English Reading Habits of the Respondents in terms of Reading Materials**

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	I read in a quiet place where I can focus on my English books.	2.63	Moderately Evident
2	I have a special spot at home, like a chair or corner, where I like to read English stories.	2.83	Moderately Evident
3	I see many English books around my classroom that I can choose from.	2.88	Moderately Evident
4	I like when my teacher or parents encourage me to read English books.	2.65	Moderately Evident
5	I read English books with my classmates during group activities in class.	2.69	Moderately Evident
6	I join reading time at school where we all read English books together.	2.98	Moderately Evident
7	I enjoy reading English stories with my family at home.	2.58	Moderately Evident
8	I use the school library to find English books that I want to read.	2.78	Moderately Evident
9	I feel comfortable when my reading place has good light and is free from noise.	2.84	Moderately Evident
10	I keep my favorite English books in a place where I can easily reach them when I want to read.	2.74	Moderately Evident
<b>General Mean Rating</b>		<b>2.76</b>	<b>Moderately Evident</b>

This implies that the learner-respondents demonstrate a moderately evident engagement with reading materials, as indicated by the general mean rating of 2.76. The higher mean score of 2.98 for the statement “I join reading time at school where we all read English books together” suggests that learners appreciate collaborative reading experiences in a school setting. This

indicates that group reading activities are valued and likely contribute positively to their reading habits. However, the overall rating also points to the possibility that learners may not have extensive access to diverse reading materials outside of these group settings. To further enhance their reading engagement, it may be beneficial to encourage independent reading and provide a wider variety of reading materials for learners to explore both in and out of the classroom.

The learner-respondents' English reading habits yielded a mean score of 2.76 regarding reading materials. This supports the research conducted by Deodato (2024), which indicated that access to diverse and engaging reading materials is essential for promoting effective reading habits among students, as it encourages exploration and increases interest in reading.

#### 4.2.4. Reading Engagement

As shown in Table 10, the English reading habits of the learner-respondents in terms of reading engagement. As reflected in the table, a majority of the respondents had the general mean rating of 3.17 or "Moderately Evident". It was observed that, "I use the school library to find English books that I want to read" had the highest mean of 3.22 equivalent to "Moderately Evident."

**Table 10. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the English Reading Habits of the Respondents in terms of**

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	I read in a quiet place where I can focus on my English books.	3.20	Moderately Evident
2	I have a special spot at home, like a chair or corner, where I like to read English stories.	3.15	Moderately Evident
3	I see many English books around my classroom that I can choose from.	3.14	Moderately Evident
4	I like when my teacher or parents encourage me to read English books.	3.19	Moderately Evident
5	I read English books with my classmates during group activities in class.	3.17	Moderately Evident
6	I join reading time at school where we all read English books together.	3.16	Moderately Evident
7	I enjoy reading English stories with my family at home.	3.21	Moderately Evident
8	I use the school library to find English books that I want to read.	3.22	Moderately Evident
9	I feel comfortable when my reading place has good light and is free from noise.	3.12	Moderately Evident
10	I keep my favorite English books in a place where I can easily reach them when I want to read.	3.18	Moderately Evident
<b>General Mean Rating</b>		<b>3.17</b>	<b>Moderately Evident</b>

This implies that the learner-respondents exhibit a moderately evident level of reading engagement, as indicated by the general mean rating of 3.17. The higher mean score of 3.22 for the statement "I use the school library to find English books that I want to read" suggests that

learners actively seek out reading materials and utilize available resources to support their reading interests. This indicates a positive attitude towards reading and a willingness to explore different texts. However, the moderate rating also suggests that there may be room for improvement in encouraging even greater engagement with reading materials. Enhancing library access, promoting diverse reading options, and fostering a culture of independent reading could further strengthen learners' reading engagement and literacy development.

The learner-respondents scored 3.17 in reading engagement, indicating that their English reading habits were moderately evident. This finding echoes the work of Quinlan (2024), who found that reading engagement is a critical component of reading success, suggesting that engaged readers tend to perform better academically and develop stronger literacy skills.

#### 4.3. English Reading Comprehension Levels of the Respondents

As shown in Table 11, the English reading comprehension levels of the learner-respondents. As reflected in the table, a majority of the respondents had the general mean rating of 2.23 or "Developing Comprehension." It was observed that, "Literal Comprehension" had the highest mean of 2.48 equivalent to "Developing Comprehension."

**Table 11. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the English Reading Comprehension Levels of the Learner-Respondents**

Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
Literal	2.48	Developing Comprehension
Inferential	2.23	Developing Comprehension
Evaluative	1.99	Developing Comprehension
<b>General Mean Rating</b>	<b>2.23</b>	<b>Developing Comprehension</b>

This implies that the learner-respondents are in the early stages of developing their English reading comprehension skills, as indicated by the general mean rating of 2.23, which categorizes them as having "Developing Comprehension." The higher mean score of 2.48 for "Literal Comprehension" suggests that learners are better able to understand and recall basic information directly from the text. However, the overall rating indicates that there may be challenges in higher-order comprehension skills, such as inferential or analytical understanding. To enhance comprehension levels, targeted instruction that focuses on various reading strategies and promotes deeper engagement with texts may be beneficial in supporting learners' progression to more advanced comprehension skills.

The finding that the learner-respondents demonstrated developing English reading comprehension levels across the literal, inferential, and evaluative dimensions, with a mean score of 2.23, is consistent with the research conducted by Coraizaca et al. (2024). Their study emphasized that comprehension skills develop progressively, starting from literal comprehension (understanding the basic meaning of text) to more complex inferential and evaluative comprehension. Coraizaca et al. (2024) noted that learners at early stages of literacy often struggle with inferential and evaluative comprehension, which requires higher-order thinking skills. This developmental trend aligns with the current study's findings, suggesting that while the learners have a foundational understanding of text, their higher-level comprehension skills are still emerging.

#### 4.4. Difference Between the English Reading Habits of the Respondents and Their Profile

##### 4.4.1. Age

As shown in Table 12, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess the difference between age groups of the respondents. The Kruskal-Wallis Test results revealed no statistically significant difference in scores between the age groups ( $H(3) = .92, p = .821$ ) at the 5% level; thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. In conclusion, these findings suggest that age may have no effect on English reading habits.

**Table 12. Difference Between the English Reading Habits of the Respondents and Their Profile in terms of Age**

Groups	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	Decision
12 years old	.92	3	.821	Accept $H_0$
11 years old				(Not Significant)
10 years old				
9 years old				

This implies that age does not significantly influence the English reading habits of the learner-respondents, as evidenced by the Kruskal-Wallis Test results indicating no statistically significant differences among the age groups. The acceptance of the null hypothesis suggests that all age groups may engage in reading activities at similar levels, regardless of their age. This finding highlights the possibility that factors other than age—such as access to reading materials, reading motivation, or the home literacy environment—may play a more critical role in shaping learners' reading habits. Therefore, it may be beneficial to focus on these other influencing factors to enhance reading engagement and literacy skills across all age groups.

The finding that age did not have a significant impact on the learner-respondents' English reading habits is consistent with the research by Aslam et al. (2022), who argued that while age might play a role in reading development in younger children, by middle childhood, other factors such as reading environment and motivation are more influential in shaping reading habits. This suggests that age alone may not be a strong predictor of reading habits once basic literacy skills are established.

#### 4.4.2. Sex

As shown in Table 13, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess the difference between sex groups of the respondents. The Kruskal-Wallis Test results revealed no statistically significant difference in scores between the sex groups ( $H(1) = .117, p = .733$ ) at the 5% level; thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. In conclusion, these findings suggest that sex may have no effect on learner-respondents' English reading habits.

**Table 13. Difference Between the English Reading Habits of the Respondents and Their Profile in terms of Sex**

Groups	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	Decision
Male	.117	1	.733	Accept $H_0$
Female				(Not Significant)

This implies that sex does not significantly affect the English reading habits of the learner-respondents, as indicated by the Kruskal-Wallis Test results showing no statistically significant differences between the male and female groups. The acceptance of the null hypothesis suggests that both sexes engage in reading activities at comparable levels. This finding may indicate that factors such as personal interests, access to resources, or instructional methods might have a more substantial impact on reading habits than gender. Therefore, efforts to enhance reading engagement should consider these other variables rather than focusing solely on sex differences.

Similarly, the lack of a significant difference between the learner-respondents' sex and their English reading habits aligns with the findings of Deodato (2024), who found that while gender differences in reading achievement are often observed, reading habits do not significantly vary between boys and girls when controlling for other factors such as motivation and access to reading materials. This suggests that both male and female learners may engage with reading in similar ways when provided with equal opportunities.

#### 4.4.3. Grade Level

As shown in Table 14, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess the difference between the grade level groups of the respondents. The Mean Rank results revealed that the observed scores in the grade 6 group ( $MR = 74.24$ ) were higher than those in the grade 5 group ( $MR = 28.69$ ), and the grade 4 group ( $MR = 65.47$ ). Additionally, the Eta squared result indicated that the strength of the difference was medium ( $\eta^2 = .11$ ), suggesting a medium effect. Furthermore, the Kruskal-Wallis Test results revealed a statistically significant difference in scores between the grade level groups ( $H(2) = 15.39, p = .000$ ) at the 5% level; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. In conclusion, these findings suggest that grade level may have an effect on learner-respondents' English reading habits.

**Table 14. Difference Between the English Reading Habits of the Respondents and Their Profile in terms of Grade Level**

Groups	<i>MR</i>	<i>Eta squared</i> ( $\eta^2$ )	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Decision
Grade 6	74.24	.11	15.39	2	.000	Reject $H_0$
Grade 5	28.69	(Medium)				(Significant)
Grade 4	65.47					

This implies that grade level significantly influences the English reading habits of the learner-respondents, as evidenced by the higher mean rank scores observed in the grade 6 group compared to the grade 5 and grade 4 groups. The medium effect size indicated by the Eta squared value ( $\eta^2 = .11$ ) suggests that the differences in reading habits are meaningful and not due to chance. The results imply that as learners progress to higher grade levels, their engagement with reading may increase, possibly due to greater exposure to reading materials, enhanced reading strategies, and a deeper understanding of texts. Therefore, targeted instructional strategies that cater to the varying needs of different grade levels could further support the development of reading habits among learners.

The study's finding that grade level had a significant effect on learner-respondents' English reading habits supports the research of Magro-Malo (2024), who highlighted that as learners advance through grade levels, their reading habits and engagement with texts evolve. Higher grade levels often involve more complex reading materials and increased reading requirements, which can influence how students develop their reading habits over time.

#### 4.4.4. Monthly Family Income

As shown in Table 15, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess the difference between the monthly family income groups of the respondents. The Mean Rank results revealed that the observed scores in the P80,000 to P99,999 group ( $MR = 88.57$ ) were higher than those in the P120,000 and above group ( $MR = 28.69$ ), P100,000 to P119,999 group ( $MR = 72.99$ ), P60,000 to P79,999 group ( $MR = 37.80$ ), P40,000 to P59,999 group ( $MR = 55.30$ ), P20,000 to P39,999 group ( $MR = 74.75$ ), and the P19,999 and below group ( $MR = 62.25$ ). Additionally, the Eta

squared result indicated that the strength of the difference was large ( $\eta^2 = .14$ ), suggesting a large effect. Furthermore, the Kruskal-Wallis Test results revealed a statistically significant difference in scores between the monthly family income groups ( $H(6) = 22.76, p = .001$ ) at the 5% level; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. In conclusion, these findings suggest that monthly family income may have an effect on learner-respondents' English reading habits.

**Table 15. Difference Between the English Reading Habits of the Respondents and Their Profile in terms of Monthly Family Income**

Groups	MR	Eta squared ( $\eta^2$ )	H	df	p	Decision
P120,000 and above	28.69	.14 (Large)	22.76	6	.001	Reject $H_0$ (Significant)
P100,000 to P119,999	72.99					
P80,000 to P99,999	88.57					
P60,000 to P79,999	37.80					
P40,000 to P59,999	55.30					
P20,000 to P39,999	74.75					
P19,999 and below	62.25					

This implies that monthly family income significantly impacts the English reading habits of the learner-respondents, as indicated by the higher mean rank scores observed in the P80,000 to P99,999 income group compared to all other groups. The large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .14$ ) further supports the notion that family income plays a substantial role in shaping reading habits. Learners from families with higher incomes may have greater access to reading materials, educational resources, and supportive reading environments, contributing to more developed reading habits. Conversely, those from lower-income families may face barriers that hinder their engagement with reading. These findings suggest that addressing economic disparities could be essential in promoting equitable access to reading resources and enhancing reading engagement across different income groups.

The significant difference between the learner-respondents' monthly family income and their English reading habits is consistent with the findings of Zhang (2024), who demonstrated that socioeconomic status, including family income, significantly affects children's access to books, reading materials, and literacy resources, thereby influencing their reading habits. Families with higher incomes tend to provide more literacy-rich environments, contributing to stronger reading habits.

#### 4.4.5. Highest Educational Attainment of Reading Facilitator

As shown in Table 16, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess the difference between the highest educational attainment of reading facilitator groups of the respondents. The Kruskal-Wallis Test results revealed no statistically significant difference in scores between the highest educational attainment of reading facilitator groups ( $H(3) = 7.75, p = .052$ ) at the 5% level; thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. In conclusion, these findings suggest that the highest educational attainment of a reading facilitator may have no effect on learner-respondents' English reading habits.

**Table 16. Difference Between the English Reading Habits of the Respondents and Their Profile in terms of Highest Educational Attainment of Reading Facilitator**

Groups	H	df	P	Decision
MA Graduate	7.75	3	.052	Accept $H_0$



College Graduate

High School Graduate

Elementary Graduate

(Not Significant)

This implies that the highest educational attainment of reading facilitators does not significantly influence the English reading habits of the learner-respondents, as indicated by the Kruskal-Wallis Test results showing no statistically significant differences among the groups. The acceptance of the null hypothesis suggests that factors other than the educational background of reading facilitators may play a more critical role in shaping learners' reading habits. This finding highlights the importance of considering various elements, such as teaching methods, reading materials, and the overall reading environment, which may have a more substantial impact on fostering reading engagement among learners, regardless of their facilitators' educational qualifications.

The finding that the highest educational attainment of the learner-respondents' reading facilitators did not significantly impact their reading habits aligns with the research of Ybañez et al. (2024), who found that the quality of parental or facilitator involvement in reading is more critical than their educational background. It is the active engagement in reading activities that shapes children's reading habits, rather than the educational level of the facilitator.

#### 4.4.6. Number of Hours Spent Reading at Home

As shown in Table 17, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess the difference between the number of hours spent reading at home groups of the respondents. The Mean Rank results revealed that the observed scores in the 3.0 to 3.9 hours group ( $MR = 88.57$ ) were higher than those in the 4.0 hours and above group ( $MR = 39.48$ ), 2.0 to 2.9 hours group ( $MR = 37.80$ ), 1.0 to 1.9 hours group ( $MR = 57.58$ ), and the less than 1.0 hour group ( $MR = 77.90$ ). Additionally, the Eta squared result indicated that the strength of the difference was large ( $\eta^2 = .18$ ), suggesting a large effect. Furthermore, the Kruskal-Wallis Test results revealed a statistically significant difference in scores between the number of hours spent reading at home groups ( $H(6) = 26.21$ ,  $p = .000$ ) at the 5% level; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. In conclusion, these findings suggest that the number of hours spent reading at home may have an effect on learner-respondents' English reading habits.

**Table 17. Difference Between the English Reading Habits of the Respondents and Their Profile in terms of Number of Hours Spent Reading at Home**

Groups	<i>MR</i>	<i>Eta squared</i> ( $\eta^2$ )	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Decision
4.0 hours and above	39.48	.18 (Large)	26.21	6	.000	Reject $H_0$ (Significant)
3.0 to 3.9 hours	88.57					
2.0 to 2.9 hours	37.80					
1.0 to 1.9 hours	57.58					
less than 1.0 hour	77.90					

This implies that the number of hours spent reading at home significantly affects the English reading habits of the learner-respondents, as indicated by the higher mean rank scores observed in the 3.0 to 3.9 hours group compared to all other groups. The large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .18$ ) suggests that the time dedicated to reading at home plays a crucial role in shaping learners' reading engagement and proficiency. These findings indicate that learners who spend more time reading at home are likely to develop better reading habits, which may translate into improved literacy

skills. Consequently, promoting regular reading practices at home and providing support for families to encourage reading could be essential strategies in enhancing learners' overall reading experiences and outcomes.

The significant difference between the number of hours spent reading at home and the learner-respondents' reading habits is supported by the work of Stangeland et al. (2023), who found that the amount of time children spend on reading at home is directly linked to the development of consistent reading habits. More time devoted to reading at home increases exposure to texts, helping to cultivate stronger and more regular reading behaviors.

#### 4.5. Correlation Between the English Reading Habits of the Respondents and Their Comprehension Levels

As shown in Table 18, the correlation between English reading habits and comprehension levels of the learner-respondents by using the Spearman's Rho Correlation. It shows that the English reading habits of the learners had a *negatively weak non-significant correlation* with their reading comprehension levels in terms of literal ( $r = -.12, p = .172$ ), a *negatively weak non-significant correlation* with their reading comprehension levels in terms of inferential ( $r = -.14, p = .120$ ), a *negatively weak non-significant correlation* with their reading comprehension levels in terms of evaluative ( $r = -.13, p = .146$ ), and a *negatively weak non-significant correlation* with their overall English reading comprehension levels ( $r = -.14, p = .108$ ), at 5% significance level; thus, the null hypothesis was *accepted*. The negative correlation or inverse correlation implies that as the value of independent variable (learners' English reading habits) increased, the value of the dependent variable (learners' English reading comprehension levels) tended to decrease. Therefore, the result suggests that an increase in learners' English reading habits is associated with their lower English comprehension levels.

**Table 18. Correlation between the English Reading Habits of the Respondents and Their Comprehension Levels**

Dependent Variables	<i>R</i>	<i>p</i>	Interpretation	Decision
Literal	-.12	.172	Negative Weak Correlation	Accept $H_0$ (Not Significant)
Inferential	-.14	.120	Negative Weak Correlation	Accept $H_0$ (Not Significant)
Evaluative	-.13	.146	Negative Weak Correlation	Accept $H_0$ (Not Significant)
Overall	-.14	.108	Negative Weak Correlation	Accept $H_0$ (Not Significant)

This implies that there is a complex relationship between learners' English reading habits and their reading comprehension levels, as evidenced by the weak negative correlations observed across all measured dimensions. The non-significant correlations indicate that changes in reading habits do not correspond to meaningful changes in comprehension levels. Specifically, the negative association suggests that as learners engage in more reading activities, their comprehension levels do not necessarily improve; in fact, they may even decline slightly. This finding may point to the need for a more targeted approach to reading instruction, emphasizing not just the quantity of reading but also the quality and comprehension strategies employed during reading. It highlights the importance of fostering reading habits that encourage deeper engagement

with texts, rather than simply increasing the volume of reading, to enhance learners' comprehension skills effectively.

The weak negative, non-significant correlation between English reading habits and comprehension levels across the literal, inferential, and evaluative dimensions aligns with the findings of Yapp et al. (2021), who suggested that while time spent reading is generally associated with improved reading skills, the quality of reading practice, rather than the quantity, is what truly influences comprehension. This suggests that learners who read more frequently may not necessarily develop better comprehension unless they engage in meaningful, focused reading activities.

On a broader scale, the weak negative, non-significant correlation between English reading habits and overall comprehension levels supports the research by Kaban and Karadeniz (2021), who emphasized that comprehension is not solely dependent on reading habits but also on engagement with text, reading strategies, and cognitive skills. Their study indicated that a more engaged, thoughtful approach to reading contributes more significantly to comprehension than simply the frequency of reading, which could explain the weak correlation observed in the current study.

#### **4.6. An Enhanced Reading Instructional Program to Improve the English Reading Habits and Comprehension Levels of Intermediate Learners**

The Enhanced Reading Instructional Program addresses intermediate learners' reading challenges by fostering consistent habits, enhancing comprehension, and creating engaging, learner-centered environments. It promotes a love for reading through diverse materials, interactive activities, and personalized goals while integrating technology and redesigning spaces to support reading. Structured programs like book talks, reading clubs, and milestone recognitions motivate learners intrinsically and extrinsically. Teachers are equipped with professional development, tools, and strategies to tailor instruction and monitor progress effectively. Collaboration among school leaders, teachers, parents, and reading facilitators ensures the program's success, aiming to build proficient readers and critical thinkers prepared for academic challenges.

### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

1. Intermediate learners were predominantly 11 years old, female, in Grade 4, from families with a monthly income of P100,000 to P119,999, and had reading facilitators who were college graduates. Learners spent less than one hour reading at home daily, emphasizing the need for increased reading practice to improve skills.
2. Intermediate learners demonstrate moderately evident English reading habits, indicating that motivation and engagement in reading activities are present but could be further strengthened to improve literacy.
3. Intermediate learners exhibit developing English reading comprehension across literal, inferential, and evaluative levels, showing that higher-order comprehension skills are still emerging.
4. Intermediate learners' grade level significantly influences their reading habits, with more complex reading expectations at higher levels contributing to the development of their reading behaviors.

5. Intermediate learners show a weak correlation between reading habits and comprehension levels, suggesting that the quality of reading practice, rather than frequency, is key to improving comprehension skills.

6. An enhanced reading instructional program aimed at improving the English reading habits and comprehension levels of intermediate learners has been developed.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Intermediate learners should engage in a daily home reading program where they set personal reading goals and track their progress. Teachers can support this initiative by providing reading logs and regular check-ins to discuss their reading experiences and challenges.

2. Teachers should create a rewards system for intermediate learners that recognizes and celebrates their reading milestones, such as completing a certain number of books or participating in reading-related activities. This can enhance motivation and foster a love for reading.

3. Teachers should incorporate interactive reading sessions that focus on higher-order thinking skills. This could involve asking intermediate learners to summarize, predict outcomes, or analyze characters' motives in the texts they read, encouraging deeper comprehension.

4. School principals should ensure that the curriculum includes differentiated reading materials tailored to each grade level, allowing intermediate learners to progress at their own pace while being challenged appropriately based on their reading abilities.

5. Teachers should focus on developing quality reading experiences by providing guided reading sessions that emphasize comprehension strategies, such as questioning techniques and summarization skills, to help intermediate learners improve their understanding of the texts.

6. School principals and teachers should implement the enhanced reading instructional program as a pilot in select classrooms, collecting data on its effectiveness through assessments and feedback, and adjusting the program as needed based on the results before wider implementation.

7. Further studies should explore the impact of family involvement in reading activities on the reading habits and comprehension levels of intermediate learners, as understanding the role of the home literacy environment may provide insights into effective strategies for enhancing reading practices.

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