

**READING COMPREHENSION LEVELS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN
ENGLISH OF GRADE 6 LEARNERS: FOUNDATIONS FOR AN ENHANCED
READING COMPREHENSION PROGRAM**

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is a vital skill that significantly impacts academic performance. This study assessed the reading comprehension levels and academic performance in English of 535 Grade 6 learners from five public elementary schools in the Masinloc District, Schools Division of Zambales, during School Year 2024-2025. Using a quantitative-descriptive, causal-comparative, and correlational research design, the study utilized a validated researcher-designed questionnaire with high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha: .93 for reading comprehension and .92 for academic performance). The learners, primarily aged 11, female, and from low-income families, demonstrated instructional reading ability in literal and inferential comprehension but were at a frustration level in evaluative and applied comprehension. Their academic performance in written works, performance tasks, and quarterly assessments was rated as satisfactory. Significant differences were observed in reading comprehension based on age and time spent reading at home, while no significant differences were found concerning sex, monthly family income, or the educational attainment of reading facilitators. Additionally, a strong positive correlation was found between reading comprehension levels and academic performance in English, highlighting the critical link between literacy skills and academic success. These findings served as the foundation for the development of an Enhanced Reading Comprehension Program aimed at improving learners' reading skills and academic outcomes in English, addressing specific areas of difficulty, and fostering a supportive environment for literacy development.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension Levels, Academic Performance, English, Grade 6 Learners, Reading Comprehension Program.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a critical skill that significantly influences academic performance, particularly in English, where understanding texts is fundamental to success across various subjects. For Grade 6 learners, developing strong reading comprehension abilities is essential not only for academic achievement but also for building a foundation for future learning. This study seeks to investigate the correlation between reading comprehension levels and academic performance in English among Grade 6 learners, aiming to identify key factors that impact learners' abilities. By examining these relationships, the research aims to provide valuable insights for designing an enhanced reading comprehension program that addresses identified needs and supports improved educational outcomes.

Research on reading comprehension for Grade 6 learners highlights the significance of integrating modern pedagogical approaches and technologies to enhance comprehension skills. Arsyta (2024) found a significant correlation between learners' digital literacy competence and

their reading comprehension, particularly in recount texts, emphasizing the role of digital tools in fostering interactive and engaging learning experiences. Similarly, Holston (2024) underscored the importance of teacher effectiveness in improving literacy outcomes, reinforcing that effective instructional strategies are vital for long-term reading improvements. Fatimah et al. (2024) examined the RADEC learning model and discovered that structured approaches incorporating independent reading and collaborative discussions significantly enhance learners' reading comprehension. Moreover, Piñero and Cañedo (2024) identified challenges in basic reading comprehension among learners in the Central Philippines, noting difficulties in identifying main ideas and details, which resulted in many learners being classified at the frustration level. These studies collectively highlight that while digital literacy and structured teaching strategies play crucial roles, reading comprehension interventions must be tailored to address learners' varying levels of proficiency.

In exploring instructional strategies, researchers have identified several effective techniques for enhancing comprehension. Kawi (2024) demonstrated that the KWL technique significantly improved literal reading comprehension among seventh-grade learners, reinforcing the effectiveness of structured reading strategies. Sari (2024) examined the Numbered Heads Together technique and reported similar positive effects, suggesting that interactive and collaborative approaches contribute to comprehension improvements. Additionally, Nugrahawati (2024) explored the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in enhancing inferential reading skills, emphasizing its potential in providing personalized feedback and interactive reading platforms. Meanwhile, Ebadi et al. (2024) investigated the role of Computerized Dynamic Assessment (CDA) in improving inferential comprehension, revealing that digital assessment tools help identify gaps and strengthen learners' skills through real-time feedback. These findings suggest that a combination of traditional strategies, interactive learning techniques, and AI-driven tools can provide comprehensive support for improving reading comprehension.

Beyond elementary education, researchers have also examined comprehension at higher levels of learning. List and Campos-Oaxaca (2023) explored evaluative reading comprehension among higher education learners, finding that those with stronger comprehension skills produced more insightful research critiques. Their study aligns with the findings of Galora-Moya and Pillaga-Riofrio (2024), who demonstrated that visualization strategies significantly enhance reading comprehension in secondary school learners. Additionally, Suwarsiki (2024) highlighted the effectiveness of the KWL Plus strategy in improving comprehension among eighth graders, revealing notable increases in post-test scores. In a related study, Putra (2024) examined the correlation between motivation and reading comprehension, concluding that higher motivation levels positively influence comprehension abilities. Collectively, these studies reinforce the necessity of diverse instructional methods, motivation-enhancing strategies, and visualization techniques to improve reading comprehension at different educational levels.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study determined the reading comprehension levels and academic performance in English of Grade 6 learners in Masinloc District, Schools Division of Zambales during the School Year 2024-2025.

Specifically, it aimed to answer these questions:

1. How may the profile of the learners be described in terms of:

1.1. age;

- 1.2. sex;
 - 1.3. monthly family income;
 - 1.4. highest educational attainment of reading facilitators; and
 - 1.5. daily number of hours spent reading at home?
2. How may the reading comprehension levels in English of the learners be described in terms of:
 - 2.1. literal comprehension;
 - 2.2. inferential comprehension;
 - 2.3. evaluative comprehension; and
 - 2.4. applied comprehension?
3. How may the academic performance in English of the learners be described in terms of:
 - 3.1. written works;
 - 3.2. performance tasks; and
 - 3.3. quarterly assessment?
4. Is there a significant difference between the reading comprehension levels in English of the learners and their profile when grouped accordingly?
5. Is there a significant correlation between the reading comprehension levels of the learners and their academic performance in English?
6. What enhancement program can be proposed for reading comprehension to improve the academic performance in English of Grade 6 learners.

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study determined the reading comprehension levels and academic performance in English of Grade 6 learners in Masinloc District, Schools Division of Zambales during the School Year 2024-2025. A quantitative-descriptive research design was employed, with data collected, classified, summarized, and analyzed using percentages and means. The study involved 535 Grade 6 learners came from five public elementary school, utilizing total population sampling to involve all Grade 6 learners of the identified schools. A researcher-designed questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool, targeting dimensions of the reading comprehension levels and academic performance in English of Grade 6 learners. The instrument demonstrated excellent reliability, as confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha values for the reading comprehension levels of the learners ($\alpha = 0.93$) and academic performance in English of the learners ($\alpha = 0.92$). Statistical analyses, including the Kruskal-Wallis Test and Spearman Rho Correlation, were used to test the study's hypotheses.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Profile of the Learners

4.1.1. Age

Table 1*Profile of the Learner in terms of Age*

| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 13 years old | 38 | 7.10 |
| 12 years old | 133 | 24.86 |
| 11 years old | 364 | 68.04 |

As shown in Table 1, the profile of the learners in terms of age. As reflected in Table No. 11, 7.10% of the learners were 13 years old, 24.86% were 12 years old, and 68.04% were 11 years old.

This implies that the majority of the learners are 11 years old, indicating that they are at the typical age for their grade level, which suggests a relatively uniform age distribution among the learners. The fact that 68.04% of respondents are 11 years old could reflect standard progression through the grade levels without significant delays or accelerations. The smaller percentages of 12- and 13-year-old learners (24.86% and 7.10%, respectively) may suggest a minority of learners who are either older due to factors such as late school entry or grade repetition, or perhaps younger learners who entered school earlier or advanced more quickly than their peers.

The present study found that the majority of the learner-respondents were 11 years old, which echoes the findings of Butler et al.'s (2021) previous study, where younger learners, particularly those around the ages of 10 to 12, showed limited engagement in independent reading. In Butler et al.'s (2021) work, it was suggested that this age group often begins to face increasing academic demands, yet struggles with sustaining motivation for reading outside of school. This pattern aligns with the current study's observation that many of these learners spend less than an hour reading at home, indicating a need for stronger home reading support and age-appropriate interventions.

4.1.2. Sex

Table 2*Profile of the Learners in terms of Sex*

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| Male | 235 | 43.93 |
| Female | 300 | 56.07 |

As shown in Table 2, the profile of the learners in terms of sex. As reflected in Table No. 12, 43.93% of the learners were males and 56.07% were females.

This implies that there is a slightly higher representation of female learners among the respondents, with 56.07% being females compared to 43.93% males. This may suggest that females are either more actively engaged in the academic environment or that they were more available or willing to participate in the study. The relatively balanced distribution, however, indicates that both sexes are fairly equally represented, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of gender-related trends in the study's findings.

The finding that most of the learner-respondents was female aligns with Cekiso et al.'s (2022) previous study, which also highlighted a trend of higher reading engagement among female learners compared to their male counterparts. In Cekiso et al.'s (2022) study, girls were shown to consistently outperform boys in reading comprehension and exhibit a stronger preference for reading as a leisure activity. This correlation between sex and reading behavior is reinforced by

the present study, where females made up the majority of the respondents, suggesting that gender differences in reading habits remain a notable factor in literacy development.

4.1.3. Monthly Family Income

Table 3

Profile of the Learners in terms of Monthly Family Income

| Monthly Family Income | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| P120,000 and above | 50 | 9.35 |
| P100,000 to P119,999 | 44 | 8.22 |
| P80,000 to P99,999 | 50 | 9.35 |
| P60,000 to P79,999 | 68 | 12.71 |
| P40,000 to P59,999 | 82 | 15.33 |
| P20,000 to P39,999 | 102 | 19.07 |
| P19,999 and below | 139 | 25.98 |

As shown in Table 3, the profile of the learners in terms of monthly family income. As reflected in Table No. 13, 9.35% of the learners are in the P120,000 and above bracket, 8.22% in the P100,000 to P119,999 bracket, 9.35% in the P80,000 to P99,999 bracket, 12.71% in the P60,000 to P79,999 bracket, 15.33% in the P40,000 to P59,999 bracket, 19.07% in the P20,000 to P39,999 bracket, and 25.98% in the P19,999 and below bracket.

This implies that the majority of the learners come from families with lower to middle-income brackets, with 25.98% of respondents belonging to households earning P19,999 and below per month and 19.07% in the P20,000 to P39,999 bracket. This suggests that a significant portion of the learners may face financial constraints, which could affect their access to educational resources and opportunities. The relatively smaller percentages of learners in higher income brackets indicate that a minority of learners may have access to more financial resources, which could contribute to disparities in learning experiences and outcomes. The distribution of income levels highlights the need for educational support that considers socioeconomic diversity among learners.

In both the present study and Nadeem et al.'s (2021) previous work, family income emerged as a critical factor influencing learners' reading habits. The current study found that most learners belonged to families with a monthly income of P19,999 or less, a demographic which Nadeem et al. (2021) also identified as facing challenges in accessing reading materials and creating conducive environments for learning. Nadeem et al.'s (2021) findings further emphasized that lower-income families often struggle to provide sufficient reading resources, directly affecting learners' engagement with reading activities at home, which is similarly reflected in the current study's findings.

4.1.4. Highest Educational Attainment of Reading Facilitators

Table 4

Profile of the Learners in Terms of the Highest Educational Attainment of Reading Facilitators

| Length of Service | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| EdD/PhD/DPA/DBA Graduate | 23 | 4.30 |
| MA Graduate | 83 | 15.51 |
| College Graduate | 312 | 58.32 |
| High School Graduate | 73 | 13.64 |
| Elementary Graduate | 44 | 8.22 |

As shown in Table 4, the profile of the learners in terms of the highest educational attainment of reading facilitators. As reflected in Table No. 14, 4.30% of the reading facilitators were EdD/PhD/DPA/DBA graduates, 15.51% were MA graduates, 58.32% were college graduates, 13.64% were high school graduates, and 8.22% were elementary graduates.

This implies that the majority of the reading facilitators have attained a college degree, with 58.32% being college graduates, indicating that most facilitators possess a solid educational foundation to support learners' reading development. However, the presence of 13.64% high school graduates and 8.22% elementary graduates as reading facilitators suggests that a notable portion of facilitators may have limited formal training in education, which could potentially affect the quality and effectiveness of the reading support provided. The relatively small percentage of EdD/PhD/DPA/DBA graduates (4.30%) and MA graduates (15.51%) suggests that advanced qualifications among reading facilitators are less common, which might indicate a need for professional development programs to enhance facilitators' pedagogical skills and strategies for reading instruction.

The present study found that most of the learners had reading facilitators who were college graduates, which parallels Davis-Kean et al.'s (2021) research showing that the educational attainment of parents or reading facilitators plays a significant role in supporting a child's literacy development. Davis-Kean et al. (2021) found that children with more highly educated facilitators, such as those with college degrees, often receive better guidance in reading, leading to improved reading comprehension and overall academic performance. This supports the current study's conclusion that having a college-educated reading facilitator positively correlates with learners' reading engagement.

4.1.5. Number of Hours Spent Reading at Home

Table 5

Profile of the Learners in terms of the Number of Hours Spent Reading at Home

| Number of Hours Spent Reading at Home | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| 4.0 hours and above | 37 | 6.92 |
| 3.0 to 3.9 hours | 33 | 6.17 |
| 2.0 to 2.9 hours | 83 | 15.51 |
| 1.0 to 1.9 hours | 172 | 32.15 |
| less than 1.0 hour | 210 | 39.25 |

As shown in Table 5, the profile of the learners in terms of the number of hours spent reading at home. As reflected in Table No. 15, 6.92% in the 4.0 hours and above hours bracket,

6.17% in the 3.0 to 3.9 hours bracket, 15.51% in the 2.0 to 2.9 hours bracket, 32.15% in the 1.0 to 1.9 hours bracket, and 39.25% in the less than 1.0 hour bracket.

This implies that the majority of learners, with 39.25% spending less than 1.0 hour reading at home, may not be dedicating sufficient time to reading activities outside of school. This limited reading time could impact their reading proficiency and overall academic development, as consistent reading practice is essential for literacy improvement. The fact that 32.15% of learners spend only 1.0 to 1.9 hours reading also suggests that a significant portion of learners might not be receiving enough reading practice to fully develop their skills. Meanwhile, the smaller percentages of learners in the 2.0 to 2.9 hours (15.51%), 3.0 to 3.9 hours (6.17%), and 4.0 hours and above (6.92%) brackets indicate that only a minority of learners are committing substantial time to reading at home. This highlights the need for interventions to encourage and facilitate more reading time outside of school.

The current study revealed that most learner-respondents spent less than 1.0 hour reading at home, a finding that resonates with Utami and Nur's (2021) previous research, which also noted a decline in daily reading time among learners. In Utami and Nur's (2021) study, it was suggested that limited reading time at home is often influenced by competing demands such as schoolwork, extracurricular activities, and the increasing use of digital media. This decline in home reading hours is consistent with the present study's findings and highlights the importance of creating structured reading routines to improve learners' reading habits.

4.2. Reading Comprehension Levels in English of the Learners

Table 6

Mean Rating and Interpretations of the Reading Comprehension Levels in English of the Learners

| Item | Indicators | Mean Rating | Interpretation |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Literal Comprehension | 2.82 | Instructional Reader |
| 2 | Inferential Comprehension | 2.56 | Instructional Reader |
| 3 | Evaluative Comprehension | 2.32 | Frustration Reader |
| 4 | Applied Comprehension | 2.22 | Frustration Reader |
| General Mean Rating | | 2.48 | Frustration Reader |

As shown in Table 6, reading comprehension levels in English of the learners. As reflected in Table No. 16, a majority of the learners had the general mean rating of 2.48 or "Frustration Reader." It was observed that, "Literal Comprehension" had the highest mean of 2.82 equivalent to "Instructional Reader."

This implies that the majority of the learners are struggling with reading comprehension, as reflected by their general mean rating of 2.48, categorizing them as "Frustration Readers." This suggests that most learners are having significant difficulty understanding texts at their grade level, which may hinder their academic progress in subjects that require strong reading skills. The fact

that "Literal Comprehension" had the highest mean of 2.82, classified as "Instructional Reader," indicates that while learners can grasp basic, explicit information from texts, they struggle with more complex comprehension tasks, such as making inferences or understanding deeper meanings. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to improve higher-order comprehension skills, beyond just literal understanding, to help learners progress beyond the frustration level.

The present study revealed that learner-respondents demonstrated instructional reading levels in literal comprehension, a finding that aligns with Sidneva et al.'s (2023) previous study, which emphasized the ability of learners to grasp basic information and recall facts from the text. Sidneva et al. (2023) found that literal comprehension skills, such as identifying key details and understanding straightforward meanings, are typically mastered early in a learner's development, making it easier for learners to operate at an instructional level in this area. This supports the current study's results, where the respondents could manage literal comprehension tasks effectively, yet may still require guidance and practice to reach mastery.

In both the present study and De-La-Peña and Luque-Rojas' (2021) previous research, inferential comprehension was identified as an area where learners function at an instructional level. In De-La-Peña and Luque-Rojas' (2021) study, it was noted that learners often struggle with making inferences, drawing conclusions, and understanding implicit information in texts, though they could perform these tasks with sufficient support. This mirrors the current study's finding that respondents achieved an instructional reading level in inferential comprehension, suggesting they are capable of understanding underlying meanings in the text but may still need strategies to improve their inferential thinking.

The present study found that learner-respondents reached a frustration level in evaluative comprehension, which is consistent with Golke et al.'s (2022) findings that learners typically struggle with making critical judgments about the text and assessing its quality or relevance. Golke et al. (2022) indicated that evaluative comprehension requires higher-order thinking skills that are often underdeveloped in elementary learners, particularly when they are tasked with forming opinions, comparing ideas, or understanding the author's purpose. This aligns with the frustration level observed in the current study, highlighting the need for more focused instruction on critical reading and analytical thinking.

Similar to evaluative comprehension, the present study found that learners were at a frustration level in applied comprehension, which is supported by Zollman's (2021) previous study. Zollman (2021) found that learners often have difficulty transferring information from texts to real-life situations, applying lessons learned, or connecting the content to broader contexts. The frustration level in applied comprehension observed in both studies indicates that while learners may understand content on a basic level, they often struggle to apply it practically or use the information creatively in new situations. This points to a need for enhanced instructional strategies that bridge the gap between comprehension and application.

The present study revealed that the overall reading comprehension levels of the learner-respondents were at a frustration level, which aligns with Hattan et al.'s (2023) previous findings regarding learners' general reading abilities. In Hattan et al.'s (2023) study, it was highlighted that many learners, particularly at the elementary level, struggle to integrate the different levels of comprehension—literal, inferential, evaluative, and applied—leading to an overall difficulty in achieving proficiency. Hattan et al. (2023) pointed out that learners often need significant support in building both basic and higher-order comprehension skills, as a lack of mastery in one area can

affect their overall reading comprehension. This parallels the frustration levels found in the current study, indicating that without targeted interventions, learners may continue to struggle across multiple facets of reading comprehension, limiting their academic success and engagement with more complex texts.

4.3. Academic Performance in English of the Learners

Table 7

Mean Rating and Interpretations of the Academic Performance in English of the Learners

| Item | Indicators | Mean Rating | Interpretation |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Written Works | 3.08 | Satisfactory |
| 2 | Performance Tasks | 3.17 | Satisfactory |
| 3 | Quarterly Assessment | 3.19 | Satisfactory |
| General Mean Rating | | 3.15 | Satisfactory |

As shown in Table 7, the academic performance in English of the learners. As reflected in Table No. 17, a majority of the learners had the general mean rating of 3.15 or "Satisfactory." It was observed that, "Quarterly Assessment" had the highest mean of 3.19 equivalent to "Satisfactory."

This implies that the majority of learners are performing at a "Satisfactory" level in English, with a general mean rating of 3.15. While this indicates that learners are meeting the basic expectations for academic performance, there is room for improvement to elevate their performance to higher levels, such as "Very Satisfactory" or "Outstanding." The fact that "Quarterly Assessment" had the highest mean of 3.19, also classified as "Satisfactory," suggests that learners perform consistently across formal evaluations. However, their overall satisfactory rating might indicate a need for more focused instruction to strengthen their skills and move beyond mere adequacy, particularly in areas of reading comprehension, where difficulties were observed.

The present study found that learner-respondents achieved satisfactory performance in their written works, which aligns with Yasynetska's (2024) previous study, where it was noted that structured writing activities help learners demonstrate their understanding of English concepts. Yasynetska (2024) observed that written works, such as essays and short answers, allow learners to organize their thoughts and apply grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension skills effectively. However, Yasynetska (2024) also highlighted that while learners may achieve satisfactory results in written works, their performance often depends on the clarity of instructions and the level of guidance provided, similar to the current study's finding of satisfactory but not exceptional performance in this area.

The present study revealed that learner-respondents performed satisfactorily on performance tasks, a finding consistent with Saydibragimova's (2024) research, which emphasized the importance of interactive and hands-on activities in assessing learners' practical use of the English language. Saydibragimova (2024) found that performance tasks, such as presentations, group work, and role-playing, help learners apply language skills in real-world contexts, leading to better engagement and understanding. However, Saydibragimova (2024) also noted that learners

often need scaffolding to perform well in these tasks, reflecting the current study's satisfactory outcomes where learners could complete tasks effectively with appropriate support.

In the present study, learner-respondents obtained satisfactory results in their quarterly assessments, a finding that echoes Uysal's (2022) previous study, which highlighted the role of standardized tests in measuring learners' retention and comprehension of English topics over time. Uysal (2022) pointed out that while learners may perform well on assessments covering familiar content, their performance often varies when faced with higher-order questions requiring analysis and synthesis. This is similar to the current study's observation, where respondents achieved satisfactory scores, suggesting that while they grasp the core concepts, more work is needed to deepen their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The overall academic performance in English of the learner-respondents, as indicated by their satisfactory scores in written works, performance tasks, and quarterly assessments, aligns with Heydarnejad et al.'s (2022) findings on general language proficiency. Heydarnejad et al. (2022) emphasized that learners who perform satisfactorily across various assessment types tend to have a balanced understanding of both the practical and theoretical aspects of English. However, Heydarnejad et al. (2022) also cautioned that satisfactory performance does not always equate to mastery, as learners may still struggle with more complex language tasks. This aligns with the current study's overall findings, where learners' mean score of 3.15 indicates solid foundational skills but highlights the need for continued instructional support to achieve higher proficiency.

4.4. Difference Between the Reading Comprehension Levels in English of the Learners and Their Profile

4.4.1. Age

Table 8

Difference Between the Age Groups of the Learners

| Groups | MR | Eta squared (η^2) | H | df | p | Decision |
|--------------|--------|--------------------------|------|----|------|----------------------------------|
| 13 years old | 228.17 | .01 (Small) | 8.05 | 2 | .018 | Reject H_{01} (Significant) |
| 12 years old | 244.95 | | | | | |
| 11 years old | 280.58 | | | | | |

As shown in Table 8, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess the difference between the age groups of the learners. The Mean Rank results revealed that the observed scores in the 11 years old group ($MR = 280.58$) were higher than those in the 13 years old group ($MR = 228.17$) and 12 years old group ($MR = 244.95$). Additionally, the Eta squared result indicated that the strength of the difference was small ($\eta^2 = .01$), suggesting a small effect. Furthermore, the Kruskal-Wallis Test results revealed a statistically significant difference in scores between the age groups ($H(2) = 8.05$, $p = .018$) at the 5% level; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. In conclusion, these findings suggest that the age may have an effect on learners' reading comprehension levels in English.

This implies that there is a statistically significant difference in reading comprehension levels among the different age groups of learners, with the 11-year-old group performing better than the 12- and 13-year-old groups. Although the effect size ($\eta^2 = .01$) is small, it suggests that age may still play a role in influencing learners' reading comprehension skills, possibly due to developmental differences or variations in prior exposure to reading instruction. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that age-related factors should be considered when designing reading

interventions, as younger learners in this study appear to have an advantage in reading comprehension. This may also imply that targeted support could be necessary for older learners who are lagging behind in comprehension skills.

The present study found that age has a significant impact on the learner-respondents' reading comprehension levels, a finding that aligns with Liu et al.'s (2023) previous study, which emphasized that reading comprehension skills tend to develop progressively with age. Liu et al. (2023) noted that as learners mature, they are better able to process complex texts, make inferences, and understand deeper meanings. This developmental progression directly correlates with the current study's results, where older learners demonstrated stronger reading comprehension abilities compared to their younger peers, highlighting the role of cognitive maturity in literacy development.

4.4.2. Sex

Table 9

Difference Between the Sex Groups of the Learners

| Groups | <i>H</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | Decision |
|--------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Male | 3.52 | 1 | .061 | Accept H_{01} |
| Female | | | | (Not Significant) |

As shown in Table 9, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess the difference between sex groups of the learners. The Kruskal-Wallis Test results revealed no statistically significant difference in scores between the sex groups ($H(1) = 3.52$, $p = .061$) at the 5% level; thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. In conclusion, these findings suggest that sex may have no effect on learners' reading comprehension levels in English.

This implies that there is no statistically significant difference in reading comprehension levels between male and female learners, as indicated by the Kruskal-Wallis Test results ($H(1) = 3.52$, $p = .061$). The acceptance of the null hypothesis suggests that sex does not appear to influence learners' reading comprehension skills in this study. This finding indicates that both male and female learners may face similar challenges and benefits in developing reading comprehension, emphasizing the importance of focusing on instructional strategies that cater to all learners regardless of sex. Consequently, educational interventions should be designed to address the overall needs of learners rather than being tailored based on gender differences in reading comprehension.

In contrast, the present study found no significant difference between the learner-respondents' sex and their reading comprehension levels, which supports Akhrib and Nedjai's (2021) research. In Akhrib and Nedjai's (2021) study, it was concluded that while males and females may show varying preferences in reading materials, these differences do not necessarily translate into disparities in comprehension abilities. Akhrib and Nedjai (2021) found that both boys and girls, when provided with equal reading opportunities and support, are capable of achieving similar levels of reading comprehension, a conclusion that aligns with the current study's findings.

4.4.3. Monthly Family Income

Table 10

Difference Between the Monthly Family Income Groups of the Learners

| Groups | H | df | p | Decision |
|----------------------|------|----|------|-------------------|
| P120,000 and above | 5.94 | 6 | .430 | Accept H_{01} |
| P100,000 to P119,999 | | | | (Not Significant) |
| P80,000 to P99,999 | | | | |
| P60,000 to P79,999 | | | | |
| P40,000 to P59,999 | | | | |
| P20,000 to P39,999 | | | | |
| P19,999 and below | | | | |

As shown in Table 10, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess the difference between the monthly family income of the learners. The Kruskal-Wallis Test results revealed no statistically significant difference in scores between the monthly family income groups ($H(6) = 5.94$ $p = .430$) at the 5% level; thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. In conclusion, these findings suggest that the monthly family income may have no effect on learners' reading comprehension levels in English.

This implies that there is no statistically significant difference in reading comprehension levels among the various monthly family income groups of learners, as indicated by the Kruskal-Wallis Test results ($H(6) = 5.94$, $p = .430$). The acceptance of the null hypothesis suggests that learners' reading comprehension skills are not influenced by the socioeconomic status of their families. This finding may indicate that factors other than income—such as the quality of educational support at home or access to resources—play a more crucial role in the development of reading comprehension. Consequently, educational strategies and interventions can be implemented without bias toward the income level of learners, focusing instead on improving reading skills across the board for all learners.

Similarly, the present study revealed that monthly family income had no significant effect on the learner-respondents' reading comprehension levels, a result that is consistent with Çigdemir and Akyol's (2022) previous research. Çigdemir and Akyol (2022) suggested that while family income may influence access to resources such as books or tutoring, it does not automatically determine a child's reading comprehension ability. Çigdemir and Akyol (2022) emphasized that with strong instructional support in school and a positive reading environment, learners from various economic backgrounds can perform equally well in reading comprehension, as reflected in the current study.

4.4.4. Highest Educational Attainment of the Learning Facilitator

Table 11

Difference Between the Highest Educational Attainment of the Learning Facilitator Groups of the Learners

| Groups | H | df | p | Decision |
|----------------------|------|----|------|-------------------|
| EdD/PhD/DPA/DBA | 3.08 | 4 | .545 | Accept H_{01} |
| Graduate | | | | (Not Significant) |
| MA Graduate | | | | |
| College Graduate | | | | |
| High School Graduate | | | | |

Elementary Graduate

As shown in Table 11, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess the difference between the highest educational attainment of learning facilitator groups of the learners. The Kruskal-Wallis Test results revealed no statistically significant difference in scores between the highest educational attainment of learning facilitator groups ($H(4) = 3.08$ $p = .545$) at the 5% level; thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. In conclusion, these findings suggest that the highest educational attainment of learning facilitator may have no effect on learners' reading comprehension levels in English.

This implies that there is no statistically significant difference in reading comprehension levels among learners based on the highest educational attainment of their learning facilitators, as evidenced by the Kruskal-Wallis Test results ($H(4) = 3.08$, $p = .545$). The acceptance of the null hypothesis indicates that the educational background of facilitators does not appear to influence the reading comprehension skills of their learners. This finding suggests that other factors—such as teaching methods, engagement strategies, or the quality of interaction between facilitators and learners—may be more critical in determining learners' reading comprehension levels than the formal qualifications of the facilitators. Therefore, efforts to enhance reading comprehension may benefit more from focusing on effective teaching practices rather than solely on the educational attainment of facilitators.

The present study found no significant difference between the highest educational attainment of the learning facilitator and the learner-respondents' reading comprehension levels, which resonates with Novitasari's (2023) findings. Novitasari (2023) observed that while a facilitator's education level can influence their ability to provide effective reading guidance, other factors such as the facilitator's involvement, consistency, and the learner's intrinsic motivation are often more critical in shaping reading outcomes. This supports the current study's conclusion that the facilitator's formal educational background alone does not significantly impact learners' comprehension levels.

4.4.5. Daily Number of Hours Spent Reading at Home

Table 12

Difference Between the Daily Number of Hours Spent Reading at Home Groups of the Learners

| Groups | MR | Eta squared (η^2) | H | df | p | Decision |
|---------------------|--------|--------------------------|-------|----|------|----------------------------------|
| 4.0 hours and above | 307.61 | .03 (Small) | 18.54 | 4 | .001 | Reject H_{01} (Significant) |
| 3.0 to 3.9 hours | 318.77 | | | | | |
| 2.0 to 2.9 hours | 312.33 | | | | | |
| 1.0 to 1.9 hours | 245.68 | | | | | |
| less than 1.0 hour | 253.80 | | | | | |

As shown in Table 12, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess the difference between the daily number of hours spent reading at home groups of the learners. The Mean Rank results revealed that the observed scores in the 3.0 to 3.9 hours group ($MR = 318.77$) were higher than those in the 4.0 hours and above group ($MR = 307.61$), in 2.0 to 2.9 hours group ($MR = 312.33$), in 1.0 to 1.9 hours group ($MR = 245.68$), and in less than 1.0 hour group ($MR = 253.80$). Additionally, the Eta squared result indicated that the strength of the difference was small ($\eta^2 = .03$), suggesting a small effect. Furthermore, the Kruskal-Wallis Test results revealed a statistically significant difference in scores: the daily number of hours spent reading at home groups ($H(4) =$

18.54, $p = .001$) at the 5% level; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. In conclusion, these findings suggest that the daily number of hours spent reading at home have an effect on learners' reading comprehension levels in English.

This implies that the daily number of hours learners spend reading at home significantly affects their reading comprehension levels, as indicated by the Kruskal-Wallis Test results ($H(4) = 18.54$, $p = .001$). The higher mean rank of the 3.0 to 3.9 hours group ($MR = 318.77$) compared to other groups suggests that increased reading time is associated with better comprehension skills. Although the effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .03$), the statistical significance indicates that even modest increases in reading time can lead to improved comprehension outcomes. This finding underscores the importance of encouraging learners to engage in regular reading activities at home, as it can positively impact their reading proficiency. Educational programs and initiatives should aim to promote habits that foster more substantial reading time among learners, thereby enhancing their comprehension skills over time.

The present study revealed a significant difference between the daily number of hours spent reading at home and the learner-respondents' reading comprehension levels, a finding that is consistent with Harvey's (2021) research. Harvey (2021) found that increased time spent reading at home directly enhances reading comprehension, as it provides learners with more opportunities to practice, engage with texts, and develop a deeper understanding of content. Harvey (2021) stressed that regular reading habits are crucial for improving literacy skills, which aligns with the current study's observation that learners who spend more time reading at home tend to have higher comprehension levels.

4.5. Correlation Between the Reading Comprehension Levels of the Learners and Their Academic Performance in English

Table 13

Correlation Between the Reading Comprehension Levels of the Learners and their Academic Performance in English

| Dependent Variables | <i>r</i> | <i>p</i> | Interpretation | Decision |
|----------------------|----------|----------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Written Works | .79 | .000 | Positive Strong Correlation | Reject H_{02} (Significant) |
| Performance Tasks | .68 | .000 | Positive Moderate Correlation | Reject H_{02} (Significant)) |
| Quarterly Assessment | .81 | .000 | Positive Strong Correlation | Reject H_{02} (Significant)) |
| Overall | .79 | .258 | Positive Strong Correlation | Reject H_{02} (Significant) |

As shown in Table 13, the correlation between the reading comprehension levels of the learners and their academic performance in English by using the Spearman's Rho Correlation.

It shows that the reading comprehension levels of the learners had a *positively strong significant correlation* with their academic performance in English in terms of written works ($r = .79$, $p = .000$), a *positively moderate significant correlation* in terms of performance tasks ($r = .68$, $p = .000$), a *positively strong significant correlation* in terms of quarterly assessment ($r = .81$, $p = .000$), and a *positively strong significant correlation* with the overall learner's academic

performance in English ($r = .79, p = .000$), at 5% significance level; thus, the null hypothesis was *rejected*.

The positive correlation implies that as the value of independent variables (learners' reading comprehension levels in English) increased, the value of the dependent variables (learners' academic performance in English) tended to increase. Therefore, the results suggest that improvements in learner's comprehension levels in English are associated with their higher academic performance in English.

This implies that there is a strong and consistent relationship between learners' reading comprehension levels and their academic performance in English across various assessment types. The positively strong correlations ($r = .79$ for written works, $r = .81$ for quarterly assessment) indicate that as learners enhance their reading comprehension skills, their performance in English also improves significantly. The moderately strong correlation with performance tasks ($r = .68$) further supports the idea that reading comprehension plays a critical role in understanding and executing assignments effectively. Given these results, it is evident that fostering strong reading comprehension skills is essential for academic success in English. Therefore, educational strategies and interventions aimed at improving reading comprehension could lead to better overall academic outcomes for learners, emphasizing the need for targeted reading programs in the curriculum.

The present study found a strong, positive, significant correlation between the learner-respondents' reading comprehension levels and their academic performance in English, specifically in written works. This finding resonates with Kim and Graham's (2021) previous study, which underscored that proficient reading comprehension directly influences the quality of learners' written assignments. Kim and Graham (2021) found that learners who can understand and interpret texts effectively are more likely to express their ideas clearly and cohesively in writing. The alignment of these findings highlights the importance of fostering reading comprehension skills to enhance written expression, suggesting that interventions aimed at improving comprehension could lead to better academic outcomes in written tasks.

In the present study, a moderate, positive, significant correlation was recorded between the reading comprehension levels of the learner-respondents and their academic performance in English, particularly regarding performance tasks. This aligns with Higgs et al.'s (2023) research, which indicated that while reading comprehension plays a critical role in completing performance tasks, the relationship may vary based on factors such as task complexity and learner engagement. Higgs et al. (2023) noted that learners who understand the material better tend to perform well in tasks that require the application of knowledge and skills, yet the effectiveness of such performance can also depend on other instructional strategies employed. This relationship reflects the moderate correlation found in the current study, suggesting that enhancing reading comprehension can improve performance in varied task contexts.

Similarly, the present study indicated a strong, positive, significant correlation between the learner-respondents' reading comprehension levels and their academic performance in English, which is evident in their quarterly assessments. This finding is supported by Clinton-Lisell et al.'s (2022) previous study, which illustrated that learners with high reading comprehension scores typically excel in standardized assessments. Clinton-Lisell et al. (2022) emphasized that reading comprehension equips learners with the ability to interpret questions, understand complex passages, and apply learned concepts, leading to better assessment outcomes. The consistent finding across both studies reinforces the notion that strong reading comprehension is crucial for achieving high scores in academic evaluations.

On a broader scale, the present study revealed a strong, positive, significant correlation between the learner-respondents' reading comprehension levels and their overall academic performance in English. This conclusion is echoed in Alenezi's (2021) research, which demonstrated that reading comprehension serves as a foundational skill necessary for academic success in English. Alenezi (2021) pointed out that learners who excel in reading comprehension tend to perform better not only in writing but also in verbal and analytical tasks within the English curriculum. This comprehensive correlation underscores the integral role that reading comprehension plays in shaping learners' overall academic achievements, reinforcing the necessity for targeted reading interventions to support learners' proficiency in English.

4.6. An Enhanced Reading Comprehension Program to Improve the Reading Comprehension Levels and Academic Performance in English of Grade 6 Learners

Reading comprehension is a crucial skill that directly influences Grade 6 learners' academic performance in English, yet challenges such as limited reading time, economic constraints, and uneven comprehension skills hinder their success. To address these issues, the Enhanced Reading Comprehension Program implements targeted strategies, including home reading initiatives, book donation drives, and facilitator training, to create a supportive literacy environment. The program ensures equitable access to learning resources, incorporates inclusive reading materials, and strengthens critical thinking through structured activities like debates, essay writing, and project-based learning. Additionally, differentiated instruction and diagnostic assessments help tailor support for learners with varying comprehension levels, bridging the gap between reading proficiency and overall academic achievement. With a three-year implementation plan from 2025 to 2028, this initiative fosters collaboration among teachers, parents, and community leaders, ensuring sustainable literacy development and long-term academic success.

5. CONCLUSIONS

1. The learner, being primarily 11 years old, female, from lower-income families, and supported by reading facilitators with college education, spent limited time reading at home, which may have influenced their overall reading development.
2. The learner exhibited instructional reading ability at the literal and inferential levels, but struggled significantly with evaluative and applied comprehension, ultimately performing at a frustration level in overall reading comprehension.
3. The learner demonstrated satisfactory academic performance in English, achieving a mean score of 3.15 across written works, performance tasks, and quarterly assessments.
4. The learner's age had a significant impact on reading comprehension, while factors such as sex, monthly family income, and the educational attainment of the reading facilitator did not show significant differences; however, more time spent reading at home positively influenced reading comprehension.
5. The learner's reading comprehension levels were strongly correlated with academic performance in English, particularly in written works, showing a significant positive relationship between reading skills and overall academic success.
6. An enhanced reading comprehension program has been developed to improve the academic performance in English of Grade 6 learners.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The teacher should allocate additional in-class reading time to supplement the limited home reading time of learners, especially those from lower-income families.
2. The teacher should implement targeted interventions to improve learners' evaluative and applied comprehension skills, addressing their frustration-level performance in overall reading comprehension.
3. The school head should encourage continued support for learners' English academic performance by enhancing instructional strategies that balance written works, performance tasks, and assessments.
4. The teacher should focus on promoting consistent reading habits at home, as increased reading time significantly enhances learners' comprehension, regardless of demographic factors.
5. The teacher should integrate more reading comprehension activities into English lessons, recognizing the strong correlation between reading skills and learners' academic success, particularly in written tasks.
6. The school head should ensure the implementation of the enhanced reading comprehension program, designed to boost Grade 6 learners' academic performance in English.
7. Further studies on the influence of home reading facilitators' support and reading habits across different age groups should be conducted to better understand their impact on learners' overall reading development and academic success.

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