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Reading Literacy of Grade 7 Learners

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Abstract

Aim: This study determined the reading literacy of the Grade-7 learners of Dan-ar Integrated School for the school year 2022-2023 using the Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT).

Methodology: This study utilized the descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship that exists between the profile of the respondents and the level of post-reading assessment of Grade-7 learners. The respondents of the study were the 100% of 62 officially enrolled Grade-7 students of DIS of S.Y. 2022-2023. The research instrument used in this study was the Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT).

Results: Findings show that most respondents were female, with majority in the age range of 12 to 13. Parents' educational attainment varied, with a significant number having completed high school. The predominant ethnic affiliation was Ilocano/Ilokano; most learners belonged to the low-income class. Grade 7 learners demonstrated varying levels of reading literacy, with proficiency observed across functional literacy levels such as paragraph, story, and local material comprehension. Significant growth was observed from pre-reading to post-reading assessments, indicating the effectiveness of intervention programs in enhancing literacy levels over time. Age showed a significant negative correlation with literacy level, while parents' educational attainment and reading proficiency exhibited positive correlations. Socio-economic status showed a moderately positive correlation, and reading status for the last reading validation had a strong positive correlation with overall literacy level. A significant improvement in literacy levels was observed from pre-reading to post-reading assessments, with learners demonstrating higher mean scores following the intervention program. The observed difference was statistically significant, highlighting the effectiveness of targeted reading interventions and instructional programs in promoting literacy development among respondents.

Conclusion: Based on the result of the study, the researcher crafted a comprehensive intervention plan that will help teachers and learners especially in coping the challenges in reading literacy.

Keywords: FLAT, reading literacy, reading level, reading interventions, instructional programs

INTRODUCTION

The growing concern about the worsening handicap in reading of many learners, specifically in reading comprehension, posits one of the most pressing challenges in terms of communication in the country today (Carvajal & Sanchez, 2023; Muñoz & Sanchez, 2023). As reported by CNN Philippines 2020, the country stands above most of the world's nations when it comes to literacy as one of the key factors by which a country's overall competence is measured. According to the Department of Education, there are more than one million pre-literates in the country and more than six million people are deemed illiterate (<https://lcc.deped.gov.ph/news/literacy-at-work-at-sil/>).

Reading is an essential part of a person's daily life, they read every day, they read the daily newspaper, instructions in recipe books, road signs, television manuals and electric bills. Students across year levels also read an array of instructional materials like books, journal articles and other valuable references. Hence, days would not go by without reading anything. Through reading, person can get to know the world around him and he will be able to travel around the globe to meet new faces and experience wondrous events that he never encountered before. As what Francis Bacon posits, "Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man." This



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implies that a person creates a total view of himself/herself and the environment that he/she lives in through reading, making him/her whole, complete, learned and person that matters.

Understanding written content is accomplished by reading, which plays a significant role in the teaching and learning process. The students' comprehension of the text's substance is just as important as their comprehension of the written symbol. Reading comprehension is the process of creating meaning by coordinating several complicated processes, including word reading, word and word understanding, and fluency, according to Smahillah (2011). In addition, students are required to read extensively for assignments and exams as part of the learning process. Many students, however, struggle to understand their lessons and raise their reading achievement. Consequently, the fundamental issue that needs to be solved is the text's difficulty in being understood.

In the Philippines, the ability to read and write is of topmost priority, hence, any effort to promote literacy initiated by the government, organizations, or even private individuals is imperative and inevitable.

In Cristobal (2015) article, Dina Ocampo, Department of Education's Literacy Coordinating Council OIC stressed in her speech during the National Literacy Conference and Awards: "It is through literacy that one is empowered to interact in his community and realizes his worth, what he can do and eventually make him do things that contribute to sustainable development of his society."

A triennial survey of 15-year-old students is called PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) that evaluates their level of mastery of the essential knowledge and abilities available worldwide for complete societal participation. The examination focuses on the fundamental academic areas of reading, mathematics, and science. Also, students' knowledge in a cutting-edge field is evaluated; in 2018, the field was global competence.

As reported by Besa (2018), the Philippines' 15-year-old children performed worse in reading, math, and science than students from most of the nations and economies that took part in PISA 2018. The nation's average reading score was 340, which put it on par with the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic and the Philippines had the lowest scores of any nation. Students in the Philippines achieved 353 and 357 points in math and science, respectively, matching Panama's results. In science and mathematics, the Philippines performed better than the Dominican Republic. One of the highest percentages of under performers among all PISA participating nations and economies is seen in the Philippines, where more than 80% of students failed not achieve a minimum level of reading proficiency.

Because of the 2018 PISA result, the Department of Education (DepEd) strongly encouraged all elementary and secondary public schools to intensify their reading advocacy through DepEd Memorandum no. 173 series of 2019 which urged schools to respond to Hamon: *Bawat Bata Bumabasa* or the so-called 3Bs Initiative.

Bautista (2022) discussed in her article the 3B program which was launched in 2019 by Leonor Briones, who was then the education secretary. It emphasizes the six components of reading—oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension—that learners must comprehend and use in order to learn to read.

Thus, in support of Hamon: *Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs)*, the Department of Education Regional Office 1 launched its reading program dubbed as Reading First for Region One. This reading program is grounded on the needs of the learners for the development of subsequent interventions. The framework provides a succinct yet coherent system on how the program will work to achieve its goals in closing achievement gaps through a culture of reading.

One of the reading programs which is part of the Reading First for Region One is the Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT), this is a tool used to measure the highest level of reading learners can perform comfortably. As observed by the researcher, teachers obliged their students to read and read but the problem is the students do not understand the meaning of what they are reading especially if it is written in the English language, and for the Grade 7 learners of Dan-ar Integrated School based on the reading validation, most of the students were validated as slow readers and there were also some who are validated as non-readers and very slow readers, because of this problem, the researcher who also happens to be the teacher of the respondents tried to look for possible ways for them especially techniques in developing their reading literacy. Furthermore, the reading intervention which the researcher wanted to use in the enhancement of reading literacy of Junior High School of Dan-ar Integrated School is the Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT), this reading intervention was crafted for elementary learners but because of the reading situation of the Junior High School specifically the grade 7 learners the researcher wanted to try if this intervention can help the learners in improving their reading literacy, since the intervention begins with the reading foundation which is the uttering of letter sounds, to reading comprehension. This FLAT is different from the crafted reading intervention for junior high school which is the Phil-IRI, Phil-IRI is an intervention which is use to assess reading comprehension while FLAT is use to assess reading literacy.



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Objectives

The study determined the reading literacy of the Junior High Students of Dan-ar Integrated School using Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT).

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. age;
 - b. sex;
 - c. parent's educational attainment;
 - d. ethnic affiliation;
 - e. socio-economic status;
 - f. reading status for the last reading validation;
2. What is the level of reading literacy in terms of:
 - a. Pre-reading Assessment; and
 - b. Post-Reading Assessment.
3. Is there a significant relationship between the profile and the post-reading assessment of the Grade 7 learners?
4. Is there a significant difference between the pre-reading assessment and the post reading assessment?
5. What is the level of difficulty index in reading literacy?
6. What valid literacy intervention plan can be proposed to enhance the reading literacy skills of the respondents?

Hypothesis

Based on the problems presented, the hypothesis has been tested.

1. There is no significant relationship between the profile and the post reading assessment of the Grade 7 learners.
2. There is no significant difference between the pre-reading assessment and the post reading assessment of the respondents.

METHODS

Research Design

This research study made use of descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship between two variables: the profile of the respondents, and the level of reading literacy in terms of pre-reading and post reading assessment. It also used T-test to determine the significant difference between the pre-test and post test of the study.

Population and Sampling

The study was conducted at Dan-ar Integrated School, Santiago Ilocos Sur. The respondents for the study were the Grade-7 students at the Junior High School Department of DIS S.Y. 2022-2023. For the Junior High School Respondents of the study, they were chosen using total enumeration. Total population sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique where you choose to examine the **entire population** (i.e., the **total population**) that have a particular set of **characteristics**.

Instrument

The research instrument which was used in this study was the Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT), Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT) is used to measure the functional literacy levels of children in primary school. The FLAT assesses children's abilities in letter recognition, reading words, reading paragraphs, reading stories, and comprehending stories. Children who can comprehend stories or local materials are considered functionally literate according to the assessment. Since FLAT is intended for elementary pupils, the researcher have planned to use or apply this assessment to Junior High School, since one of the problems which is facing by the teachers in the secondary level is reading. The instrument is standardized, it is uses by DepEd to assess reading literacy of learners in Elementary.



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Data Collection

The data were gathered, read, and analyzed following the objective of the study and in adherence to all protocols in the conduct of research.

Treatment of Data

The data of the study was analyzed using frequency and percentage, mean, Pearson correlation coefficient and t-test.

The frequency and percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents. The mean was used to determine the level of effectiveness of Functional Literacy Assessment Tool in the enhancement of reading comprehension of Junior High School of Dan-ar Integrated School during pre-reading assessment and post reading assessment, and the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the profile and the level of effectiveness of Functional Literacy Assessment Tool during the pre-reading and post reading assessment.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that all research protocols involving ethics in research were complied with for the protection of all people and institutions involved in the conduct of the study.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

As for gender, the data reveals that majority of the respondents are female, comprising 32 frequencies and covering 52% of the population. In contrast, male respondents accounted for 30 frequencies, representing 48% of the population. This gender disparity in participation rates prompts a deeper examination of the underlying factors influencing educational engagement and literacy outcomes among male and female students. Though, the female respondents outnumbered male respondents, it has been found that there is no effect on the literacy level of Grade-7 learners though female learners outperformed male learners as to literacy measures (Adriany, 2019). This contradicts the study of Mondero (2021) that male is in greater proportion than female. This finding also underscores the importance of adopting a gender-sensitive approach to literacy assessment and intervention to address potential disparities and ensure equitable educational outcomes for all students.

The data reveals a notable disparity in age representation among respondents, with the majority falling within the 12 to 13-year-old age range. Students aged 12 to 13 constitute 95% of the sample, with a frequency of 59, while those aged 14 to 16 make up only 5% of the respondents, with a frequency of 3. This stark contrast in age distribution prompts a closer examination of potential implications for the study's findings and broader trends in educational participation and achievement. The overwhelming representation of students aged 12 to 13 in the study reflects the typical demographic composition of Junior High School students, as this age range aligns with the standard progression through the educational system. However, the limited representation of older students aged 14 to 16 raises questions about potential factors contributing to their lower participation rates. It is essential to understand the reasons behind this age disparity to interpret the study's findings accurately and develop strategies to promote inclusivity in future research efforts. The result of the study contradicts the findings with the study of (Bell & Daniels, 1990; Borg & Falzon 1995; Crosser 1991; Russel & Startup, 1986; Trapp, 1995 as cited by Vlachos & Artemis 2015) that older learners have better scores than younger ones in reading performance.

As for parents' educational attainment, within the sample, there were no instances where parents had no formal education, constituting 0% of the respondents. While this observation may suggest a positive trend towards educational attainment within the community, it's crucial to acknowledge potential limitations in data collection or participation biases that could have contributed to this absence. Among the respondents, a small portion had parents with elementary undergraduate education, with a frequency of 1, accounting for 2% of the sample. This suggests limited representation of this educational attainment level within the community, possibly indicating challenges or barriers to educational advancement at this level. A larger proportion of respondents had parents who graduated from elementary school, with a frequency of 10, representing 16% of the sample. Similarly, those with parents who completed high school undergraduate education constituted a significant portion of the sample, with a frequency of 15, covering 24% of respondents. Furthermore, respondents with parents who graduated from high school comprised a substantial portion of the sample, with a frequency of 22, representing 35% of respondents. This indicates a strong emphasis on secondary education within the community, suggesting a supportive environment for academic achievement and literacy development. In terms of higher education, respondents with parents who



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completed undergraduate college degrees were also represented in the sample, with a frequency of 11, covering 18% of respondents. Additionally, there were respondents with parents who held college degrees, with a frequency of 3, representing 5% of the sample. The absence of respondents whose parents held advanced degrees, such as master's or doctorate degrees, is noteworthy. While this may reflect limitations in educational attainment within the community or challenges in data collection related to these specific demographics, it underscores the importance of understanding the educational landscape and resources available to students within the community. By recognizing the educational background of students' parents, educators and policymakers can develop targeted interventions to support literacy development and promote equitable educational opportunities for all students. Same findings came out on the study of Mondero (2021) when she found out that basic skills and performance level of learners were significantly related to the parent's educational attainment.

As for ethnic affiliation, the data reveals a significant concentration of respondents identifying as Ilocano/Ilokano, comprising 95% of the sample with a frequency of 59. In contrast, respondents identifying as Tagalog make up only 5% of the sample, with a frequency of 3. This stark disparity in ethnic representation prompts a deeper examination of potential implications for the study's findings and broader considerations of cultural diversity within the school community. The overwhelming majority of respondents identifying as Ilocano/Ilokano suggests a predominant ethnic affiliation within the school community, potentially reflecting the local demographics of the region or the cultural composition of the student body. The high percentage of Ilocano/Ilokano respondents may indicate a strong sense of cultural identity and cohesion within the school community, which can have both positive and negative implications for educational outcomes.

As for socioeconomic status, the data reveals a varied representation across different socio-economic classes, with the majority of respondents belonging to the low-income class. This group constitutes 63% of the sample, with a frequency of 39. Additionally, there are smaller proportions of respondents from the lower middle-income class, comprising 5% of the sample with a frequency of 3, and the middle middle-income class, accounting for 32% of the sample with a frequency of 20. However, there were no respondents classified under the, upper middle-income, upper-income, or rich categories. The significant representation of respondents from the low-income class underscores the prevalence of socio-economic diversity within the school community. While these students may not fall under the classification of poverty, they may still face financial challenges and limited access to resources that could impact their educational opportunities and outcomes. Addressing the needs of students from low-income backgrounds requires targeted interventions and support programs aimed at mitigating barriers to academic success and promoting equitable educational opportunities.

As for reading status for the last reading validation, The data reveals a varied representation across different reading statuses, with most respondents classified as Good Readers. This group constitutes 68% of the sample, with a frequency of 42. Additionally, there are smaller proportions of respondents classified as Slow Readers, comprising 18% of the sample with a frequency of 11, and Very Good Readers, accounting for 14% of the sample with a frequency of 9. However, there were no respondents classified as Non Readers, Very Slow Readers, or Very Good Readers. The significant representation of respondents classified as Good Readers suggests a positive trend in reading proficiency within the school community. Good Readers are likely to have developed strong literacy skills and comprehension abilities, which are essential for academic success across various subjects. This finding reflects positively on the efficacy of literacy instruction and support programs within the school, indicating a conducive learning environment that fosters reading fluency and comprehension among students. The presence of respondents classified as Slow Readers highlights the importance of addressing reading difficulties and providing targeted interventions to support struggling readers. Slow Readers may require additional support and resources to improve their reading skills and catch up with their peers.

The literacy level of Grade-7 learners along Pre-reading Assessment and Post-reading Assessment.

The second problem of this study focuses on the assessment of the level of reading literacy of the respondents in terms of the following functional literacy levels: Below Letter Level, Letter Level, Word Level, Paragraph Level, Story Level, Story Level + Comprehension, and Local Material Level + Comprehension based on two assessments: Pre-reading and post-reading assessments.

Table 1. The literacy level of Grade-7 learners along Pre-reading Assessment and Post-reading Assessment.

Functional Literacy	Pre-Reading	Post-Reading
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	Assessment		Assessment	
	Frequency	%	frequency	%
1. Below Letter Level	0	0	0	0
2. Letter Level	0	0	0	0
3. Word Level	6	9.67	0	0
4. Paragraph Level	21	33.87	8	12.90
5. Story Level	28	45.16	34	54.84
6. Story Level + Comprehension	6	9.68	13	20.97
7. Local Material Level + Comprehension	1	1.61	7	11.29
TOTAL	62	100	62	100

For the pre-reading assessment, the data indicates a varied distribution across different functional literacy levels, providing insights into the reading proficiency of Junior High School students at Dan-Ar Integrated School. Among the respondents, the majority were classified at the Paragraph Level, comprising 33.87% of the sample with a frequency of 21. This suggests that a significant portion of students have developed the ability to comprehend and analyze text at the paragraph level, indicating proficiency in basic reading comprehension skills.

On the other hand, a sizable proportion of respondents were classified at the Story Level, representing 45.16% of the sample with a frequency of 28. This suggests that many students have progressed beyond basic text comprehension and can engage with longer and more complex written passages.

Additionally, a smaller percentage of respondents were classified at the Word Level, comprising 9.67% of the sample with a frequency of 6. This suggests that some students are still focusing on decoding individual words and building foundational vocabulary skills.

Furthermore, a small percentage of respondents were classified at the Story Level + Comprehension and Local Material Level + Comprehension, representing 9.68% and 1.61% of the sample, respectively. These levels indicate proficiency in reading narrative texts and local materials, coupled with the ability to comprehend and critically analyze the content. Students classified at these levels demonstrate advanced reading skills and comprehension abilities, indicating readiness for more challenging reading materials and tasks. The absence of respondents classified at the Below Letter Level and Letter Level suggests that all participants have achieved basic literacy skills, including letter recognition and phonemic awareness, necessary for further reading development.

Following the post-reading assessment, the majority of respondents were classified at the Story Level, comprising 54.84% of the sample with a frequency of 34. This suggests that a significant portion of students demonstrated the ability to comprehend and engage with narrative texts effectively.

Additionally, a substantial number of respondents were classified at the Story Level + Comprehension, representing 20.97% of the sample with a frequency of 13. This indicates that many students not only possess the ability to comprehend narrative texts but also demonstrate proficiency in critically analyzing and interpreting the content. Achieving proficiency at the Story Level + Comprehension reflects advanced reading skills and critical thinking abilities, indicating readiness for more complex reading tasks and higher order thinking challenges.

Furthermore, a smaller percentage of respondents were classified at the Paragraph Level, comprising 12.90% of the sample with a frequency of 8. This suggests that some students may still be focusing on extracting meaning from shorter written passages and developing basic reading comprehension skills at the paragraph level. Targeted instruction and support in comprehension strategies can help these students progress to higher levels of reading proficiency. Moreover, a portion of respondents were classified at the Local Material Level + Comprehension, representing 11.29% of the sample with a frequency of 7. This indicates proficiency in reading and comprehending local materials, such as informational texts or culturally relevant literature. Achieving proficiency at the Local Material Level + Comprehension reflects the ability to engage with texts that are contextually meaningful and culturally relevant, highlighting the importance of incorporating diverse reading materials into literacy instruction.

The absence of respondents classified at the Below Letter Level, Letter Level, and Word Level suggests that all participants have achieved basic literacy skills necessary for engaging with written texts. However, it's essential to continue monitoring and supporting students' progress to ensure continued growth and proficiency in reading literacy across all functional levels.



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Significant Relationship between the Profile and the level of Post-Reading Assessment of the Grade 7 learners.

The table below shows the significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and their post-reading assessment level, as indicated by computed correlation coefficients (r) and their corresponding p-values.

Table 2. Significant Relationship between the Profile and the level of Post-Reading Assessment of the Grade 7 learners.

Profile	Computed "r"	P-value
Age	-0.257*	0.044
Sex	0.031	0.810
Parents Educational Attainment	0.331**	0.009
Ethnic Affiliation	0.061	0.638
Socio-Economic Status	0.247	0.053
Reading Status for the last Reading Validation	0.771**	0.000

Legend:

- * Correlation is significant @.05 level
- ** Correlation is significant @ .01 level

For age, there is a significant negative correlation of -0.257* with post-reading assessment level. This suggests that younger learners tend to have higher literacy levels, albeit the correlation is relatively weak. It indicates that age may play a role in literacy development, with younger learners potentially benefiting from more recent exposure to literacy instruction and learning experiences.

Regarding sex, the correlation coefficient of 0.031 suggests a very weak positive relationship with post-reading assessment level, which is not statistically significant (p = 0.810). This implies that there is no discernible association between sex and literacy level among Grade 7 learners in this study. On the other hand, parents' educational attainment shows a significant positive correlation of 0.331** with post-reading assessment level. This indicates that learners with parents who have higher levels of education tend to have higher literacy levels themselves. The result of the present study arrived at a similar finding with that of Pere (2010) cited by Mondero (2021) when she found out that the basic skills performance level of the learners is significantly related to the parents' educational attainment and parents' occupation but not significantly related to age, sex, number of siblings, ordinal position.

Ethnic affiliation demonstrates a weak positive correlation of 0.061 with post-reading assessment level, which is not statistically significant (p = 0.638). This suggests that there is no significant relationship between ethnic affiliation and literacy level among Grade 7 learners in this study. This contradicts the findings in the study of Sewasew, D. et.al. (2019) the relationship between reading competence and ethnicity has gained research priority as the ethnic background of students' families has been shown to impact reading competence.

Socio-economic status exhibits a moderately positive correlation of 0.247 with post-reading assessment level, approaching statistical significance (p = 0.053). This implies that learners from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to have higher literacy levels, although the relationship is not conclusively significant at the 0.05 level, this supports the findings of Pere (2010) cited by Mondero (2021) that basic performance of students is not significantly related to family income.

For Reading status for the last reading validation shows a strong positive correlation of 0.771** with post-reading assessment level. This indicates a significant relationship between reading proficiency and post-reading assessment level among Grade 7 learners. Learners who demonstrate higher reading proficiency are more likely to have higher post-reading assessment levels, highlighting the importance of reading skills in literacy development.

The significance of demographic factors in shaping the post-reading assessment level among Grade 7 learners is evident from the correlations observed in the study. Among these factors, age emerges as a noteworthy predictor, showing a significant negative correlation with literacy level. While the correlation is relatively weak, it suggests that younger learners tend to exhibit higher literacy levels.

Additionally, parents' educational attainment emerges as a robust predictor of literacy achievement among Grade 7 learners, showing a significant positive correlation with post-reading assessment level. This finding underscores the profound influence of home environments and parental involvement in shaping students' literacy



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development (Amihan & Sanchez, 2023; Amihan, Sanchez & Carvajal, 2023; Salendab, Ocariza-Salendab & Sanchez, 2023; Sanchez, et al., 2024a). Learners with parents who have higher levels of education are more likely to demonstrate higher literacy levels themselves, highlighting the importance of fostering a supportive home environment and engaging parents as partners in literacy instruction and intervention programs (Salendab & Sanchez, 2023; Sanchez, 2022; Sanchez, et al., 2024d; Sanchez & Sarmiento, 2020; Sanchez, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2023; Sanchez, et al., 2022).

Socio-economic status also emerges as a notable predictor of literacy achievement, showing a moderately positive correlation with post-reading assessment level. While the relationship is approaching statistical significance, it suggests that learners from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to have higher literacy levels. This underscores the role of socio-economic factors in shaping educational opportunities and outcomes, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address disparities in access to resources and support services that may impact literacy development among learners from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Furthermore, reading proficiency stands out as a strong predictor of post-reading assessment level among Grade 7 learners, showing a significant positive correlation. Learners who demonstrate higher reading proficiency are more likely to exhibit higher post-reading assessment levels, emphasizing the fundamental role of reading skills in literacy development. This finding underscores the importance of early literacy interventions and targeted support programs aimed at enhancing reading skills and comprehension abilities among learners, laying a solid foundation for overall literacy achievement.

Conversely, demographic factors such as sex and ethnic affiliation do not exhibit significant associations with post-reading assessment level among Grade 7 learners in this study. While sex and ethnic affiliation may play important roles in shaping students' experiences and identities, they may not be as influential in determining literacy development within this context. Nonetheless, it's essential to recognize the intersecting identities and experiences of learners and consider their unique needs and perspectives in literacy instruction and intervention programs to ensure equitable access to quality education and support services for all students.

Table 3. Significant Difference between the Pre-reading and Post-reading Assessment.

	Mean	Mean Difference	t-test	Significance
Pre-reading	3.5645	-0.742	-10.793	.000**
Post-reading	4.3065			

The table above shows a significant difference between the pre-reading and post-reading assessments in terms of the overall literacy levels of Grade 7 learners. The mean score for the pre-reading assessment is 3.5645, whereas the mean score for the post-reading assessment is 4.3065. This substantial difference in mean scores indicates a notable improvement in literacy levels following the reading intervention or instructional program implemented between the two assessments.

The mean difference between the pre-reading and post-reading assessments is calculated as -0.742, indicating that, on average, learners' literacy levels increased by approximately 0.742 points from the pre-reading to the post-reading assessment. This positive mean difference underscores the effectiveness of the reading intervention or instructional program in facilitating literacy development and enhancing students' reading skills and comprehension abilities over time. To further validate the significance of the observed difference, a t-test was conducted, yielding a t-value of -10.793. This t-value is associated with a p-value of .000**, indicating that the observed difference between the pre-reading and post-reading assessments is statistically significant at the .01 level. This suggests that the improvement in literacy levels observed from the pre-reading to the post-reading assessment is unlikely to have occurred by chance and is instead attributed to the reading intervention or instructional program implemented during this period.

The statistically significant difference between the pre-reading and post-reading assessments underscores the effectiveness of targeted reading interventions and instructional programs in promoting literacy development among Grade 7 learners. It highlights the importance of implementing evidence-based practices and interventions that are tailored to meet the diverse needs and abilities of students, thereby facilitating meaningful progress in reading skills and comprehension abilities over time. Furthermore, the significant improvement in literacy levels observed from the pre-reading to the post-reading assessment signifies positive growth and achievement among Grade 7 learners. It reflects the dedication and efforts of educators, administrators, and stakeholders in fostering a



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supportive learning environment and implementing effective literacy instruction and intervention strategies that contribute to students' overall academic success and well-being.

The significant difference between the pre-reading and post-reading assessments underscores the effectiveness of targeted reading interventions and instructional programs in enhancing literacy levels among Grade 7 learners. This finding highlights the importance of ongoing assessment and evaluation to monitor students' progress and inform instructional practices, ultimately supporting their continued growth and development as proficient readers and critical thinkers (Carvajal & Sanchez, 2024; Carvajal, et al., 2024; Dizon & Sanchez, 2020; Sanchez, 2020; Sanchez, 2023a; Sanchez, et al., 2024b).

Table 4. What is the level of difficulty index in reading literacy?

Level	Difficulty Index	Descriptive Equivalent
Below Letter Level	1.00	not constraints
2. Letter Level	1.00	not constraints
3. Word Level	1.00	not constraints
4. Paragraph Level	1.00	not constraints
5. Story Level	0.87	not constraints
6. Story Level + Comprehension	0.32	Constraints
7. Local Material Level + Comprehension	0.11	Constraints

The table above shows the level of difficulty index in reading literacy of Grade 7 learners of Dan-ar Integrated School, wherein it shows that Below Letter Level has a difficulty index of 1.0 with descriptive equivalent of "not constraints" which means that the respondents of the study are good in identifying letters from the alphabet. Letter Level also got 1.0 difficulty index with descriptive equivalent of "not constraints" which means that Grade-7 learners are excellent in determining letters and good in producing their sounds. Furthermore, the difficulty index of Grade 7 learners in terms of Word Level is 1.0 with a descriptive equivalent of "not constraints" which means that the respondents are already good in uttering words. Paragraph Level also got a difficulty index of 1.0 with a descriptive equivalent of "not constraints" this means that Grade 7 respondents can already read paragraphs. Moreover, Story Level got a difficulty index of 0.84 with a descriptive equivalent of "not constraints", this result means that most of the respondents are good at reading stories with less mistakes.

On the other hand, Story Level + Comprehension and Local Material Level + Comprehension has a difficulty index of 0.32 and 0.11 respectively with a descriptive equivalent of "constraints", this means that most of the respondents are good in stories and local materials but not in comprehending the text that they have read. This is very evident in the result of post-reading assessment.

As observed in the result of pre-reading assessment and post reading assessment, respondents improved but they still need to practice more, especially when most of them are not yet good in comprehending a text. Hence, teachers must still focus on giving reading interventions and support to the learners to ensure their growth and development (Carvajal, Sanchez & Amihan, 2023; Sanchez, 2023b; Sanchez, et al., 2024c).

The result of the level of difficulty index in reading literacy has paved the way for the researcher to propose an intervention plan which can help the teachers in teaching reading to their learners.



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Table 5: PROPOSED INTERVENTION PLAN FOR GRADE 7 LEARNERS

KRA's	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	STRATEGIES	RESOURCES			ESTIMATED BUDGET	TARGET CLIENTELE	TIME FRAME	SUCCESS INDICATOR
				HUMAN	FINANCIAL	MATERIALS				
Content Knowledge and Pedagogy	Familiarize the sounds of letters especially consonant and vowel sounds and utter words correctly.	Smart learning videos with drills Recitation word drills	Watch the video in YouTube entitled "How to teach Phonics to your children the fun way – The Sounds of Alphabet" Watch Videos from "Kiddos World TV" YouTube Channel Demonstrations	English Teachers Learners	MOOE/SCHOOL FUND	Television, video clips, PPT Worksheets Flash cards	1,500.00	All Grade 7 learners	July-August 2024	Increased the index of mastery by at least 85%
Curriculum and Planning	Increase and improve the reading proficiency of learners by presenting engaging activities with ICT integration	Adaptation of DepEd's Reading Interventions	Letra Adopt-a-struggling reader Readers Theater Readathon	English Teachers Learners	MOOE/SCHOOL FUND	Television and video clips Activity Sheets Hand-outs PPT	1,500.00	All Grade 7 learners	October - January 2025	Increased the index of mastery by at least 85%
Assessment and Reporting	Conduct diagnostic test on reading to identify struggling readers	Oral reading with comprehension questions	One-on-one reading Read-write-pair-share	English Teacher	MOOE/SCHOOL FUND	Hand-outs Worksheets	1,000.00	All Grade 7 learners	September 2024	Increased the index of mastery by at least 85%
Assessment and Reporting	Conduct Monthly oral reading test	Reading with comprehension questions	One-on-one reading	English Teachers learners	MOOE/SCHOOL FUND	Modules Activity sheets	500.00	All Grade 7 learners	June-May 2025	Increased the index of mastery by at least 85%
Assessment and Reporting	Evaluate the improvement of learner's reading proficiency	Evaluation of learner's reading level	One-on-one reading	English Teachers learners		Modules Activity sheets	500.00	All Grade 7 learners	May 2025	Increased the index of mastery by at least 85%
Personal Growth and Professional Development	Intensify reading abilities and encourage a sense of personal responsibility for students one's own progress	Practicing reading with the guidance of parents, siblings, and reading facilitators	Peer Reading, Story Retelling One-on-one reading	English Teachers learners	MOOE/SCHOOL FUND	Bond paper Worksheets Modules	2,000.00	All Grade 7 learners	February-April 2025	Increased the index of mastery by at least 85%



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Conclusions

The following are the conclusions of the study based on the findings done above.

1. The demographic profile of Grade 7 learners at Dan-Ar Integrated School reveals a diverse student population, with variations in gender, age, parents' educational attainment, ethnic affiliation, and socio-economic status. Most respondents were female, with a slight majority in the age range of 12 to 13. Parents' educational attainment varied, with a significant number having completed high school. The predominant ethnic affiliation was Ilocano/Ilokano, and most learners belonged to the low-income class. These demographic factors play a crucial role in shaping students' educational experiences and outcomes, highlighting the importance of understanding and addressing the diverse needs of learners within the school community.
2. The assessment of reading literacy levels among Grade 7 learners indicates varying degrees of proficiency across different functional literacy levels. While many students demonstrate competency in reading comprehension at the paragraph and story levels, there is also evidence of growth and development over time, as demonstrated by the significant improvement observed from pre-reading to post-reading assessments.
3. The significant correlations observed between demographic factors and post reading assessment underscore the complex interplay of various factors in shaping students' literacy development. Age, parents' educational attainment, and reading proficiency emerge as key predictors of literacy achievement, highlighting the importance of targeted interventions and support programs aimed at addressing students' diverse needs and backgrounds. Age showed a significant negative correlation with literacy level, while parents' educational attainment and reading proficiency exhibited positive correlations. Socio-economic status showed a moderately positive correlation, and reading status for the last reading validation had a strong positive correlation with overall literacy level.
4. A significant improvement in literacy levels was observed from pre-reading to post-reading assessments, with learners demonstrating higher mean scores following the intervention program. The observed difference was statistically significant, highlighting the effectiveness of targeted reading interventions and instructional programs in promoting literacy development among Grade 7 learners.
5. The difficulty index result shows that below letter level, letter level, word level, and paragraph level has a difficulty index of 1.0 with a descriptive equivalent of "not constraints", while story level has a difficulty index of 0.87 with a descriptive equivalent of "not constraints". On the other hand, story level + comprehension and local material level + comprehension has a difficulty index of 0.32 and 0.11 respectively with a descriptive equivalent of "constraints", this means that respondents need to give extra effort in practicing reading with comprehension for them to be identified as very good reader.
6. The significant improvement in literacy levels observed following the intervention program highlights the effectiveness of targeted reading interventions and instructional programs in promoting literacy development among Grade 7 learners. This finding underscores the importance of ongoing assessment and evaluation to monitor students' progress and inform instructional practices, ultimately supporting their continued growth and development as proficient readers and critical thinkers.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following are the recommendations of this study.

1. Develop tailored support programs that address the specific needs identified within the diverse demographic profile of Grade 7 learners. These programs should consider factors such as age, parents' educational attainment, and socio-economic status, providing targeted interventions to support students in areas where they may face challenges in literacy development. Also, The department should develop an inclusive curriculum that integrates diverse perspectives, cultural contexts, and literacy materials reflective of students' ethnic affiliations and backgrounds. By incorporating culturally relevant texts and materials into the curriculum, educators can enhance students' engagement with reading and promote a sense of belonging within the learning environment.
2. Implement continuous assessment and monitoring systems to track students' literacy progress over time. Regular assessments, such as pre-reading and post-reading assessments, allow educators to identify areas of improvement and adjust instructional strategies accordingly. This ongoing monitoring ensures that interventions remain effective and responsive to students' evolving needs.



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3. Provide professional development opportunities for educators to enhance their understanding of literacy instruction and intervention strategies. Equip teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively support students across various functional literacy levels and demographic backgrounds. By investing in teacher training and development, schools can strengthen their capacity to deliver high-quality literacy instruction that meets the diverse needs of Grade 7 learners.
4. Foster partnerships with families, community organizations, and stakeholders to create a supportive ecosystem for literacy development. Engage parents and caregivers as active partners in their children's education, providing resources and guidance to support literacy development at home. Collaborate with community organizations to offer additional enrichment opportunities and literacy-focused initiatives that extend beyond the classroom, enriching students' learning experiences and fostering a culture of lifelong learning within the community.
5. Establish peer mentorship programs where proficient readers can support and mentor peers who may be struggling with literacy skills. Peer mentoring not only fosters positive relationships among students but also provides opportunities for collaborative learning and skill-building. Through peer support, students can receive personalized assistance and encouragement, further enhancing their literacy development especially reading with comprehension. Teachers must also provide tasks in higher order thinking skills in order for the learners to practice doing higher challenges.
6. Craft a comprehensive intervention plan that will ensure equitable access to technology and resources that support literacy development. Provide access to digital literacy tools, e-books, and online resources that supplement traditional reading materials and cater to diverse learning preferences. Additionally, invest in library resources and classroom libraries stocked with a variety of reading materials to accommodate students' interests and reading levels. And encourage interdisciplinary approaches to literacy instruction that integrate reading skills across various subject areas. Incorporate literacy activities and strategies into science, social studies, and other content areas to reinforce reading comprehension skills and promote cross-curricular connections. By contextualizing literacy within different academic disciplines, educators can enrich students' learning experiences and deepen their understanding of content while advancing their reading proficiency.

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