

# READING SKILLS, PROFILE, AND CHALLENGES OF GRADE TWO PUPILS IN RELATION TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: BASIS FOR INTERVENTION



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## Reading Skills, Profile, and Challenges of Grade Two Pupils in Relation to Academic Performance: Basis for Intervention

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### Abstract

This study entitled Reading Skills, Profile, and Challenges of Grade Two Pupils in Relation to Academic Performance: Basis for Intervention determined the reading skills, reading profile, and the most common reading challenges of pupils and their association with their academic performance. Respondents were 173 grade two pupils. Descriptive-correlative research design was used. Data were collected using the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) tools issued by the Department of Education. Results revealed that most of the grade two pupils in terms of sex are almost equal in number, had normal nutritional status, fathers' occupations were mostly service workers, and most mothers were confined in their homes. The reading skills of pupils was high; reading profile was light refresher; the most common reading challenge of grade two pupils was repetition; the academic performance of grade two pupils was very satisfactory. There was no significant difference in the reading skills and sex of pupils; no significant difference in the reading skills and nutritional status of pupil; no significant difference in the reading skills and fathers' occupation of the pupils; and no significant difference in the reading skills and mothers' occupation of pupils. There was a significant relationship between the level of reading skills and academic performance of pupils, and no significant relationship between the number of reading challenges and academic performance of pupils.

**Keywords:** *reading skills, profile, challenges, academic performance*

### Introduction

Reading is considered a step-by-step procedure which fosters development of higher-order thinking skills. The basic elements of reading are to decode the message, comprehend the message, analyze it, and integrate the whole idea of a text. Some researchers advocated that children and teen have an important performance in reading accomplishment when they have a vast prior wisdom and words range domain (Shahar- Yames & Prior, 2018).

Reading instruction possesses five elements which are: phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, vocabulary, and comprehension. They all allow the reader to obtain the basic reading skills to be an acceptable reader (Gunobgunob-Mirasol, 2019). Abdullah (2018) added that reading can be improved by the use of some activities and techniques such as skimming and scanning. Granda and Ramírez-Avila (2020) described reading comprehension as the act of processing and understanding a text. It allows readers to make connections between their prior knowledge and the same or new content to understand it. Activities that raise reading comprehension are repeated reading, timed- reading, and rate-building reading (Abdullah, 2018).

It is fair to state that reading is complex yet central to any English language program. It is a skill that involves learners entirely in the learning process as it depends on prior knowledge and connects it with the reading tasks at hand (Al-Ahdal, 2020; Alenezi, 2021; Al-Kadi & Hamdi, 2022; Suchona & Urmy, 2019; Van, 2021).

As Claessen et al. (2020) coined, reading difficulties are present in the world. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) Results from PISA 2018 revealed that reading is among the areas that fifteen-year-old students in the Philippines scored lower than those in majority of the countries and economies that participated in PISA 2018. The country's average reading score was 340 score points, on a par with that of the Dominican Republic. No country scored lower than the Philippines and the Dominican Republic. In mathematics and science, students in the Philippines scored 353 and 357 points, respectively, on a par with performance in Panama. The Philippines outperformed the Dominican Republic in mathematics and science. The Philippines shared a significant rate of low performers among all PISA participating countries and economies. That is, 80% of the Filipino students did not reach the minimum level of proficiency in reading. Their poor scores in English, Mathematics, and Science are attributed to the students' lack of ability in basic reading and comprehension. This being the case, the Department of Education (DepEd) has launched the Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (M. J. L. Tomas et al., 2021).

Vocabulary is defined as the units of speech or writing needed to convey a message in written and spoken forms. Harmon and Wood (2018) stated that the aim of vocabulary instruction is to improve and advocate for deep reading understanding. Similarly, in another finding it was evidenced that students may achieve the basic knowledge of lexical size to obtain an in-depth reading comprehension (Rosado & Caro, 2018). Nevertheless, McQuillan (2019) concluded that free reading was 1.70 more efficient to learn vocabulary rather than teaching vocabulary in short and long periods.

Reading is defined as the process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. It is the ability to recognize words easily, read with greater speed, accuracy and expression, and better understand what is read.

Considered as a life skill, reading is one of the four skills, which needs to be learned besides listening, speaking, and writing. Reading

has the considerable role in the language teaching to strengthen the skills acquired by the students in listening, speaking, and writing. Reading skill affects the other skills learning process.

In the Philippines, at least nine out of 10 children aged 10 struggle to read and write simple texts, according to the World Bank's latest statistics on learning poverty in 2021. The country also ranked lowest among 79 countries that participated in a 2018 international reading literacy assessment.

Education Secretary Sara Duterte, also the country's vice president, acknowledged the severity of the country's growing number of frustrated readers in the department's first Basic Education Report.

Meanwhile, teachers and other local education officials have highlighted how students' inability to grasp complex material affects their performance in almost every other subject area, like history and the social sciences.

In the locale of the study, the teachers' classroom dilemma is the inability of a considerable number of pupils to read or the critical lack of it. When the pupils do not know how to read and attack even simple words, it forces the teachers to read the words for them so they could take part in the activity. However, this scenario has always been extremely taxing and arduous on the part of the teachers especially as they think of other competencies that they need to introduce to the pupils.

Some reading interventions were introduced in the past; however, they have not completely addressed, or did not suit to the individual needs of the pupils. For instance, an intervention for grade four pupils would not suit with what grade two pupils desperately need. In other words, what was administered was considered as a wrong prescription.

In the light of the foregoing concerns and with the intention to contribute to the resolution of these complications is what has motivated the researcher to conduct this study.

### Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to determine the reading skills, reading profile and challenges of grade two pupils of Bago City Elementary School as assessed by their advisers and their relationship to their academic performance during the school 2022-2023. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of grade two pupils in terms of:
  - 1.1. sex;
  - 1.2. nutritional status;
  - 1.3. fathers' occupation; and
  - 1.4. mothers' occupation?
2. What is the level of reading skills of grade two pupils when taken as a whole in terms of:
  - 2.1. alphabet knowledge;
  - 2.2. phonological awareness;
  - 2.3. word recognition;
  - 2.4. reading fluency; and
  - 2.5. listening comprehension?
3. What is the overall reading profile of grade two pupils after the administration of reading skills test?
4. What are the most common reading challenges of grade two pupils in terms of
  - 4.1. substitution;
  - 4.2. insertion;
  - 4.3. omission;
  - 4.4. repetition;
  - 4.5. reversion; and
  - 4.6. self-correction?
5. What is the overall academic performance of grade two pupils?
6. Is there a significant difference in the reading skills of grade two pupils when grouped according to their profile?
7. Is there a significant relationship between the reading skills and academic performance of grade two pupils?
8. Is there a significant relationship between the number of reading challenges and academic performance of pupils?
9. Based on the findings of the study, what appropriate intervention may be proposed?

### Methodology

#### Research Design

To determine the reading skills, reading profile, and challenges of grade two pupils of Bago City Elementary School as assessed by their advisers and their relationship to their academic performance, the descriptive research design was adopted in this study.

Descriptive research is the ideal choice when finding characteristics, frequencies, trends, and classifications is the main objective of

the study. It is useful when there is not much information available regarding the topic. Additionally, it uses only observation and measurement to accurately depict a population, situation, or phenomenon (McCombes, 2019).

### Respondents

The respondents of this study were the grade two pupils of Bago City Elementary School composed of ten sections for school year 2023-2024. Meanwhile, the participants were composed of ten grade two teacher-advisers who were tapped to conduct the reading assessment for their pupils and assist the researcher in the collection of data needed for the study.

The total population for ten sections of grade two pupils was 304. To determine the sample size for this study, the researcher used Yamane's formula at a 5% margin of error.

Advancing the result of the computation, a sample size of one hundred seventy- three (173) pupils was utilized as the respondents of the study.

To determine the number of respondents per section, the researchers used the Stratified Random Sampling given the formula, and the sample size per section.

The distribution of respondents per section is presented in the table below:

Table 1. *Distribution of Respondents Per Section*

<i>Grade 2 Sections</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>n</i>
Wright	26	15
Circle	32	18
Triangle	31	18
Cone	30	17
Rectangle	31	18
Diamond	31	18
Heart	32	18
Cube	32	18
Oval	29	16
Square	30	17
Total	304	173

A simple random sampling technique, using draw lots, was employed to identify the respondents from each year level. In identifying the subjects of the study, simple random sampling was used following the draw lots method.

### Instrument

This study used as a research instrument the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) tool issued by the Department of Education (DepEd) for the reading assessment of pupils. The CRLA tool is a 5-minute start-up reading assessment designed to help teachers quickly determine the reading profiles of their Grade II to Grade III learners, and develop appropriate reading instructional strategies. The main goal is to identify children who need additional support in reading.

### Procedure

The procedures for gathering the data needed for the study are as follows:

First, necessary permissions were obtained from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent of the Department of Education, Division of Bago City (see Appendix B). Upon approval, a copy of the approved communication was forwarded to the district supervisor, principal, and teachers to communicate the purpose, date and the mechanics of the survey to be conducted. The researcher met with all grade two teacher-advisers personally and provided them with an orientation as to what the survey was all about and what their responses and support would mean to the accomplishments of the purposes of the researcher in conducting the study. he advisers were tapped to conduct the reading assessment for their pupils as the subjects of the study and furnish the researcher with the needed data of the profile of pupils, as well as the results of the reading assessment, the reading profile, and challenges of pupils in the reading assessment and the grades needed to determine their academic performance. During this process, the respondents were guaranteed the confidentiality of their answers, and that their responses would only be used for the purposes of the study.

### Data Analysis

This section employs various statistical and qualitative techniques to systematically analyze the data, ensuring accuracy and validity in the findings. The results of this analysis would form the foundation for subsequent discussions and recommendations, offering valuable contributions to the field of study.

The data gathered from the survey were treated statistically using the following tools for their analysis:

For statement of the problem 1, on the profile of grade two pupils in terms of their sex, nutritional status, fathers' occupation, and

mothers' occupation, frequency count and percentage distribution were utilized.

For statement of the problem 2, on the reading skills of grade two pupils when taken as a whole and categorized according to alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, word recognition, reading fluency, and listening comprehension, the mean was used.

For statement of the problem 3, on the reading profile of grade two pupils in terms of grade ready, light refresher, moderate refresher, and full refresher, the mean was also used.

For statement of the problem 4, frequency and rank were used to describe the common reading challenges of grade two pupils in terms of substitution, insertion, omission, repetition, reversion, and self-correction.

For statement of the problem 5, on the overall academic performance of grade two pupils, the overall mean of their grades was computed.

For statement of the problem 6, on the difference in the reading skills of grade two pupils in terms of their profile, the Mann-Whitney U Test, and Kruskal-Wallis H Test were utilized.

For statement of the problem 7, on the relationship between the level of reading skills and academic performance of grade two pupils, the Gamma Coefficient.

For statement of the problem 8, on the relationship between the number of reading challenges and academic performance of grade two pupils, the Gamma Coefficient was also used.

## Results and Discussion

This section contains the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data.

### Profile of Grade Two Pupils

Table 2 that follows presents the frequency and percent distribution of the pupil- respondents in terms of their profile on sex, nutritional status, father's occupation, and mother's occupation.

Table 2. *Frequency and Percent Distribution of Respondents in terms of Profile*

<i>Profile</i>	<i>Groupings</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Sex	Male	87	50.29
	Female	86	49.71
	Total	173	100.00
Nutritional Status	Severely Wasted	0	0
	Wasted	13	7.52
	Normal	157	90.75
	Overweight	0	0
	Obese	3	1.73
	Total	173	100.00
Father's Occupation	Corporate Executive	8	4.62
	BPO	5	2.89
	Defense and Security	15	8.67
	Professionals	9	5.20
	Service Workers	97	56.07
	Seafarer	7	4.05
	Teaching	1	0.58
	Self-Employed	6	3.47
	Gov't Employee	6	3.47
	OFW	4	2.31
	N/A	15	8.67
Total	173	100.00	
Mother's Occupation	Corporate Executive	6	3.47
	BPO	5	2.89
	Officials of Gov't	2	1.16
	Professionals	6	3.47
	Service Workers	33	19.08
	Teaching	7	4.05
	Self-Employed	6	3.47
Gov't Employee	2	1.16	

OFW	12	6.94
N/A	94	54.34
Total	173	100.00

Table 2 shows that on the profile of the pupil-respondents in terms of sex, out of one hundred seventy-three pupils, 87 or 50.29 percent are male, and 86 or 49.71 percent are female. The data reveal that both sexes have almost the same number. This may imply that equal allocation of several pupils in all sections by sexes has been done previously for purposes of fair distribution among teacher-advisers.

In terms of nutritional status, 157 or 90.75 pupils have been assessed with normal status, 13 or 7.52 percent were evaluated to have a wasted status, and 3 or 1.73 as obese. The figure suggests that the large number of pupils rated with normal status can be attributed to proper nutritional interventions provided to the pupils in their homes and the school.

The School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) of the Department of Education is one of the key interventions for enhancing the nutritional status of school children. During 2019, DepEd issued DepEd Order No. 036, s. In 2019, the Guidelines for implementing the School-Based Feeding Program-Milk Feeding Component were introduced to enhance the SBFP by offering fresh milk as a supplement for the meals provided to the beneficiaries in the regular feeding program. Based on RA No. 11037, also known as the Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act, SBFP seeks to promote milk consumption among SBFP beneficiaries to enhance their nutritional status, school attendance, and academic achievements.

Regarding the jobs of the students' fathers, 97, or 56.07 percent, work in service, 15, or 8.67 percent, are in defense and security roles, 9, or 5.20 percent, are professionals, 8, or 4.62 percent, work as seafarers, and the remainder are either government workers, self-employed, or overseas Filipino workers (OFW). In addition, 15 pupils, which is 8.67 percent, have fathers who are dead, disabled, or without a job.

The above findings show that most fathers of the survey participants work as service workers. As per the Law Insider online article, service workers refer to people in roles such as food service, cleaning service, personal service, and protective service. Skill can be developed through formal education, on-the-job training, or hands-on experience. Some examples of positions in the food service industry include chefs, barkeepers, and other workers in the food service sector. Personal service positions like medical assistants, hairdressers, ushers, and transportation attendants are some examples of roles in the service industry. Cleaning service jobs like cleaners, janitors, and porters are common positions. Some examples of protective service roles are transit and railroad police, firefighters, security guards, and private detectives and investigators.

The service sector plays a crucial role in a thriving society and expanding economy. These companies hire skilled people who offer important services and intangible products. Various sectors have service industries, and comprehending their importance in society can assist individuals considering a career in service to better grasp their job opportunities (Indeed Career Guide, 2023). Most fathers working as service workers likely have limited time to help their children with reading skills.

In terms of mothers' occupations, 94 or 54.34 percent are either plain housewives, incapacitated, unemployed, or deceased. 33 or 19.08 percent are service workers, 12 or 6.94 percent are OFWs, 7 or 4.05 percent have teaching jobs, and the rest are either corporate executives, self-employed, professionals, or call center agents. The above figure indicates that most of the mothers of the pupils are confined to their homes.

Many Filipino mothers choose to stay at home and be housewives, which reflects their cultural tradition or personal preference. Mothers, in various societies, are responsible for taking care of their children and also fulfilling other important roles for the family's health and helping their children with household chores (Walunday and Herlisa, 2018). Mothers nowadays have different choices available to them to meet their motherly duties towards their children, based on their social, economic, personal, and work circumstances. Badrawasi and Khalid (2020) suggested that a mother's educational level, socioeconomic status, and language abilities can impact her level of involvement. This is particularly accurate for parents who have higher educational qualifications, as it allows them to be more involved in their children's schoolwork at home. The importance of parental engagement has been highlighted as a crucial element in enhancing the education of students in schools (Brossard et al., 2020).

### Reading Skills of Grade Two Pupils

Table 3 shows the reading skills of grade two pupils in terms of alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, word recognition, reading fluency, and reading comprehension.

Table 3 shows that about the reading skills of grade two pupils, their competence is manifested in alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, and word recognition, each obtaining a mean of 9.07, 8.17, and 7.59 respectively, interpreted as high. Reading comprehension, and reading fluency, on the other hand, each gained a mean of 5.97 and 3.93 respectively, interpreted as average. Overall, the reading skill of grade two pupils is high with a mean of 7.93.

Having a solid understanding of the alphabet at a young age can greatly influence future reading and academic success. In the research by Heilmann et al., (2018), it was found that being able to recognize the alphabet may be a reliable indicator of future reading success, as it is connected to overall reading and academic skills. Yet, several studies and theoretical explanations have indicated that this ability



is likely to have a cause-and-effect connection with future reading success. Understanding letter shapes helps kids quickly recognize them in words, aiding in learning how to sound out words effectively. Moreover, children's interaction with letters enhances their comprehension of sound-letter connections. Several research studies have shown that children who are familiar with the name of a letter are more likely to show proficiency in connecting sounds with letters. Most likely, this is because most English letters consist of consonant-vowel (e.g., d, t) or vowel- consonant (e.g., f, s) combinations. Therefore, understanding the alphabet is crucial for children to learn how to read and write.

**Table 3. Reading Skills of Pupils**

<i>Reading Skills</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Alphabet Knowledge	173	9.07	High
Phonological Awareness	173	8.17	High
Word Recognition	173	7.59	High
Reading Fluency	173	3.93	Average
Reading Comprehension	173	5.97	Average
As a Whole	173	7.93	High

Various internal and external factors influence children's acquisition of alphabet knowledge. Internally, the cognitive ability of children, as assessed by receptive vocabulary and various reasoning and processing tasks, is a significant indicator of their current alphabet knowledge. Outside factors, such as the level of participation in early literacy activities during preschool, can impact children's understanding of the alphabet (Heilmann et al., 2018). Having a strong ability to identify letters is a good predictor of a child's future reading success (Heilmann et al., 2018).

When it comes to phonological awareness, achieving a high score in this area is an impressive accomplishment for the students. Phonological awareness has been identified as a key factor in predicting success in reading. Several research studies, such as those by Newbury et al. (2020) and Ferraz et al. (2020), indicate the significance of phonological awareness in word recognition, reading fluency, and accuracy. It also plays a role in reading speed and comprehension, highlighting the importance of early development of this cognitive ability (Wanzek et al., 2019).

As emphasized by Amorim et al. (2020), promoting phonological awareness aids in the learning-to-read process and helps in preventing the onset of learning disabilities. Preventing learning disabilities is crucial as they can result in negative outcomes in various areas such as academics (e.g., quitting school), social-emotional (e.g., poor self-esteem), and behavioral aspects (e.g., inappropriate behaviors) (Eloranta et al., 2018; Emam, 2018; Razak et al., 2018; Rodrigues et al., 2018). Therefore, given the significance placed on promoting phonological awareness, it is crucial to highlight the contribution of elementary school educators. This role is particularly important for students who face challenges in their learning journey (Didion et al., 2020).

Achieving a high score in word recognition indicates that students' abilities to decode and identify words will ultimately result in improved reading and understanding. Gunobgunob-Mirasol (2019) suggests that instruction in reading consists of five components: phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, vocabulary, and comprehension. Word recognition is a skill in comprehension processing covered by the interactive approach instruction. It allows readers to comprehend passages by deciphering the pronunciation of unfamiliar words. All of them enable the reader to acquire the essential reading abilities to become a proficient reader. Anyiendah et al. (2020) found that improving learners' word recognition skills positively and significantly impacted their achievement in reading comprehension, indicating that activating these skills helped enhance comprehension levels.

Assisting students in enhancing their word recognition skills to enhance their reading and comprehension abilities is a beneficial scaffolding activity aimed at developing their independence as readers.

**Reading Profile of Grade Two Pupils**

Table 4 presents the reading profile of grade two pupils as to grade ready, light refresher, moderate refresher, and full refresher.

**Table 4. Reading Profile of Grade Two Pupils**

<i>Reading Profile</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Overall Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Grade Ready	84		
Light Refresher	37		
Moderate Refresher	37	15.60	Light Refresher
Full Refresher	15		
Total	173		

Table 4 reveals that, as a whole, the reading profile of one hundred seventy-three pupils is a light refresher as evidenced by the overall mean of 15.60.

The result above implies that pupils possess a basic level of reading proficiency but may need some additional support to reach grade-level expectations. According to DepEd's Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA), these pupils benefit from targeted

interventions to strengthen their reading skills and bridge any gaps in their literacy development. Early identification and support can help these pupils improve their reading fluency and comprehension, setting them on a path to academic success.

### Reading Challenges of Grade Two Pupils

Table 5 shows the common reading challenges of grade two pupils in terms of substitution, insertion, omission, repetition, reversion, and self-correction.

Table 5. *Common Reading Challenges of Grade Two Pupils*

<i>Common Reading Challenges</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Substitution	63	3
Insertion	56	4
Omission	52	5
Repetition	77	1
Reversion	46	6
Self-Correction	71	2

Table 5 reveals that of the common reading challenges identified by the teachers, repetition is on top of all with 77 pupils committing the errors, followed by self-correction with 71 faults, substitution, with 63, insertion with 56, omission with 52, and reversion, with 46.

The findings above relate to the study of Cardente (2019) on Students' Reading Errors and Their Reading Proficiency, where the author described how each reading error can be committed by the pupils, and how the readers themselves or the teachers can fix the errors.

Mispronouncing words is a frequent mistake while reading. It is a mispronunciation of words while reading aloud. Even teachers, as well as students, sometimes mispronounce words whether they are reading or speaking. Mispronunciation can occur when there is limited interaction or exposure to certain words. If words are not frequently used, they tend to be mispronounced. A study found that readers associate word spellings with their pronunciations by creating connections between graphemes and phonemes. Mispronunciation often occurs when readers struggle to merge letter sounds while decoding words (Cardente, 2018).

During oral reading, self-correction happens when the reader detects a mistake, reads the word or section again without help, and corrects it. Research indicates that as readers increase their speed, they are more likely to make mistakes and then attempt to fix them on their own. Self-correction, a beneficial reading practice, occurs when the reader accurately pronounces a word after initially mispronouncing it. Furthermore, educators desire for students to correct themselves.

In addition, actual correction indicates that the learners understand the meaning of the word. If the student is making many corrections, they may be reading too quickly and focusing on the appearance of words rather than their meaning (Cardente, 2018).

Insertion occurs when the reader includes a word or phrase that is not originally in the text being read. Even if the reader is reading quickly, there is still a tendency to add words that are not written in the reading material. Yet, if the additional word does not change the text's meaning, it is believed that the reader understands it but has still made an insertion mistake (Cardente, 2018).

Repetition occurs when the reader echoes a word or a section of text. At times, readers are encouraged to say a word again if they are unsure of how to pronounce it. Nevertheless, when saying the word again, the reader failed to get the pronunciation right. Therefore, this constitutes a repetition mistake. It is important to investigate whether the repeats occur before a challenging term. If so, the student might spend time getting ready to decipher the word (Cardente, 2018).

Omission happens when a word or portion of a word in the text has been left out. It might occur due to a lack of concentration or reading too quickly. A research study indicates that the reader's visual recognition of words plays a significant role in the occurrence of omission errors. Consequently, if the reader makes several omission mistakes. Hence, a reader's weak sight vocabulary may lead to several omission errors.

On the flip side, reversals occur when a child switches the sequence of the print or the word. The majority of reversals happen with young readers who are familiar with high- frequency words. Additionally, a high frequency of reversal errors by the reader may suggest they possess a limited sight vocabulary (Cardente, 2018).

Finally, substitution occurs when the reader switches out a word with a different one, rather than reading the original word in the text. The assessment of the replacement word is determined by its suitability in meaning and structure to the context, as well as how closely it resembles the original word in terms of visual appearance. Moreover, the examination of substitution involves looking at both its length and how closely it resembles the original word (Cardente, 2018).

### Academic Performance of Grade Two Pupils

Table 6 that follows presents the academic performance of grade two pupils.

Table 6 shows the academic performance of grade two pupils, which is very satisfactory, as proved by the overall mean of 85.3. The very satisfactory academic performance of grade-two pupils indicates a solid foundation in their educational journey, which is crucial

for future academic success. According to a study by Berja (2023), effective interactive learning strategies significantly enhance pupils' numeracy performance, indicating that early academic success can boost learners' self-esteem and motivation to engage with new challenges. Additionally, research by Punzalan (2020) suggests that students' satisfaction with school policies positively correlates with their academic performance, implying that a supportive and well-structured learning environment contributes to early academic achievements. These findings highlight the importance of fostering a positive educational atmosphere and implementing effective teaching strategies to ensure continued academic success and a lifelong love for learning.

**Table 6. Academic Performance of Grade Two Pupils**

<i>Academic Performance</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Overall Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Outstanding	41		
Very Satisfactory	51		
Satisfactory	61	85.3	Very Satisfactory
Fairly Satisfactory	20		
Did Not Meet Expectations	0		
Total	173		

### Difference in Reading Skills of Grade Two Pupils and Their Profile

Table 7 shows the difference in reading skills of grade two pupils when grouped according to sex.

**Table 7. Difference in the Reading Skills of Grade Two Pupils When Grouped According to Sex**

<i>Sex</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>
Male	87	86.31
Female	86	87.70
Total	173	

*Computed Value: 3681.00*

*p-value: .0829*

*Decision: Accept Ho*

*Interpretation: Not significant at 0.05 level of significance*

Using the Mann-Whitney U Test, the table reveals the computed value is 3681.00. Comparing the p-value of .0829 shows that it is greater than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means there is no significant difference in the reading skills and sex of pupils. This may also mean that the sex of the pupils is not a determinant of their reading skills. In other words, there is no point in comparing that boys have better reading skills than girls or vice versa.

To avoid social penalties, for example, people are more likely to participate in pursuits or fields that align with gender stereotypes. Reading is stereotypically associated with women therefore this could deter guys from being motivated to read, claim Muntoni, Wagner, & Retelsdorfs (2019); Plante, O'Keefe, Aronson, Fréchette-Simard, & Goulet (2019). Research revealed that there were gender disparities in the text-based interests of elementary and secondary pupils, and that text features including theme, protagonists, and difficulty were significant underlying variables (Lepper et al., 2021). Thus, textual features and their applicability to gender-specific text-based interests are highlighted.

So, the question of which text subjects support gender disparities emerges. One method clarifies subjects that are attributed to being more male or female. According to a recent study by Lepper et al. (2021), which was based on experimental text variation, boys expressed significantly less interest in a text with a more female-attributed topic than in a text with a less female-attributed topic for students in Grade 4, while girls' interest was not significantly impacted by the text topic. Regardless of the text genre—narrative or informative—this outcome was clear.

In general, studies that used a broad range of text topics are needed to better understand the interaction between gender-specific text-based interest and text topics. Most previous studies were restricted to a small number of text topics and did not specifically focus on the role of gender-attributed text topics for text-based interest. However, other research also indicates that there are no gender differences that are statistically significant in the way that elementary children's intrinsic reading motivation and reading comprehension interact (Kavanagh, 2019). As a result, there are differences in the empirical results on the relationship between text comprehension and intrinsic reading abilities in boys and females. Furthermore, when both are taken into account at the same time, it is unclear if situation-specific interrelationships between text-based interest and reading comprehension are driven by more stable motivational variables, such as intrinsic reading desire. This is where the current study takes up the subject of what aspects of texts influence boys' and girls' text-based interest and how that interest connects to reading abilities in both genders.

### Difference in Reading Skills and Nutritional Status of Grade Two Pupils

Table 8 shows the difference in reading skills and nutritional status of grade two pupils.

Using the Kruskal-Wallis H Test, Table 8 reveals the computed value is 1.33. Comparing the p-value of 0.515 shows that it is greater

than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means there is no significant difference in the reading skills and nutritional status of pupils.

Table 8. *Difference in Reading Skills and Nutritional Status of Pupils*

<i>Nutritional Status</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>
Wasted	13	80.12
Normal	157	87.10
Obese	3	111.17
Total	173	

*Computed Value: 1.33*

*p-value: 0.515*

*Decision: Accept Ho*

*Interpretation: Not significant at 0.05 level of significance*

The above result specifies that despite the excellent nutritional status of the majority of the intermediate pupils, their reading skills are not attributed to it. This discovery, however, runs counter to Versola's (2019) assertion that a person's capacity to read, think effectively, and recall memories is mostly influenced by their diet. For children's learning to be optimized and improved, a balanced diet is vital. However, reading comprehension and reading abilities are prerequisites for learning success. Reading comprehension and abilities serve as a bridge for children to understand concepts in a range of academic subjects. Proactive measures are being implemented in schools right now to give kids the best opportunity to complete grade-level competency standards across the K–12 curriculum (Versola, 2019).

### Difference in Reading Skills and Father's Occupation of Pupils

Table 9 that follows presents the difference in reading skills and the father's occupation of grade two pupils.

Table 9. *Difference in Reading Skills and Father's Occupation of Pupils*

<i>Mother's Occupation</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>
Corporate Executive	8	107.56
BPO	5	88.10
Defense and Security	15	88.10
Professionals	9	101.56
Service Workers	97	87.39
Seafarer	7	65.86
Teaching	1	53.5
Self-Employed	6	96.75
Gov't Employee	6	96.75
OFW	4	96.75
N/A	15	82.33
Total	173	

*Computed Value: 8.59*

*p-value: 0.571*

*Decision: Accept Ho*

*Interpretation: Not significant at 0.05 level of significance*

Using the Kruskal-Wallis H Test, the table reveals the computed value is 8.59. Comparing the p-value of 0.571 shows that it is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means there is no significant difference in the reading skills and fathers' occupation of the pupils.

Table 10. *The Difference in Reading Skills and Mother's Occupation of Pupils*

<i>Mother's Occupation</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>
Corporate Executive	6	82.33
BPO	5	88.10
Officials of Gov't	2	96.75
Professionals	6	82.33
Service Workers	33	87.58
Teaching	7	78.21
Self-Employed	6	96.75
Gov't Employee	2	96.75
OFW	12	89.54
N/A	94	86.63
Total	173	

*Computed Value: 1.04*

*p-value: 0.999*

*Decision: Accept Ho*  
*Interpretation: Not significant at 0.05 level of significance*

Using the Kruskal-Wallis H Test, the table reveals the computed value is 1.04. Comparing the p-value of 0.999 shows that it is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means there is no significant difference in the reading skills and mothers' occupation of pupils.

### Relationship Between Level of Reading Skills and Academic Performance

Table 11 presents the relationship between the level of reading skills and the academic performance of grade two pupils.

**Table 11. Relationship Between Level of Reading Skills and Academic Performance**

Level of Reading Skills	Level of Academic Performance					Total
	Outstanding	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Fairly Satisfactory	Did Not Meet Expectations	
High	41	43	36	0	0	120
Average	0	7	22	4	0	33
Low	0	1	3	16	0	20
Total	41	51	61	20	0	173

*Computed Value: 0.88*

*p-value: <0.001*

*Decision: Reject Ho*

*Interpretation: Significant at 0.05 level of significance*

Using the Gamma Coefficient, the table indicates the computed value is 0.88. Comparing the p-value of <0.001 shows that it is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means there is a significant relationship between the level of reading skills and the academic performance of pupils. In other words, the finding explains that when the pupils have excellent reading skills, they will most likely achieve a high academic performance.

The problem of low reading comprehension in the Philippines has come to light as a major worry, which exacerbates the country's ongoing learning crisis. The current scenario has become even more intense due to the revival of in-person educational activities. The Philippines' noteworthy rate of learning poverty is highlighted in the UNICEF report on learning poverty in Southeast Asia, which was released in 2019.

Similar to this, the World Bank emphasizes the importance of the long-term effects of the pandemic's learning loss, especially about the future economic prospects of the current student body. Consequently, a significant proportion of students are found to enroll in postsecondary educational institutions without the requisite preparation to successfully manage the rigorous demands of reading. Their total academic performance has been proven to be significantly impacted by this lack of preparation.

It has been discovered that a comparatively small percentage of students can read and comprehend text or any other type of reading material with proficiency (de la Pena & Rojas, 2021). In a similar vein, Nanda and Azmi (2020) discovered that students' low reading comprehension and skills are a problem. Three notable variables have been connected to poor reading comprehension and skills: limited prior knowledge, weak vocabulary in English, and low motivation among students. As a result, this problem has negative effects that include lower learning attainment, worse problem-solving abilities, and hindrances to students' future academic and professional endeavors.

With an emphasis on students in Grades 3–6, DepEd Order No. 14 (2018) outlines the procedures for adopting the Phil-IRI in primary and secondary schools across the country. The document highlights the necessity of using this technology properly and lists the duties of educational leaders at different levels. Graded passages are used in the Phil-IRI program to evaluate students' proficiency in oral reading, silent reading, and reading comprehension (Abril et al., 2022). Evaluations are important tools for gauging children's reading ability.

The foundation for creating extra reading programs aimed at enhancing their reading abilities is provided by this data. The updated PHIL-IRI guidelines were doughted by DepEd Order No. 14, series 2018, which also introduced the reading program to the secondary level. In the current setting, many primary school graduates are still labeled as slow readers or non-readers even after reading programs have been put in place at the elementary school level. The status of education now points to ongoing difficulties in improving literacy, especially for pupils who have difficulty with writing and reading (Abril et al., 2022). These students frequently struggle to keep up with their peers and display poor reading comprehension.

Higher levels of reading skills are closely linked to better academic performance. Strong readers can comprehend and engage with texts more effectively, leading to improved performance across subjects. Conversely, students with lower reading skills may struggle academically due to difficulties understanding course materials. Therefore, enhancing reading skills is crucial for overall academic success.

### Relationship Between Number of Reading Challenges and Academic Performance

Table 12 on the next page shows the relationship between several reading challenges and the academic performance of grade two

pupils.

Table 12. Relationship Between Number of Reading Challenges and Academic Performance

Number of Reading Challenges	Level of Academic Performance					Total
	Outstanding	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Fairly Satisfactory	Did Not Meet Expectations	
0	17	18	19	3	0	57
1	6	6	7	5	0	24
2	2	3	2	4	0	11
3	1	4	4	2	0	11
4	2	2	5	1	0	10
5	7	11	11	3	0	32
6	6	7	13	2	0	28
Total	41	51	61	20	0	173

Computed Value: 0.10

p-value: 0.199

Decision: Accept  $H_0$

Interpretation: Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Using the Gamma Coefficient, the table indicates the computed value is 0.10. Comparing the p-value of 0.199, it shows that it is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means there is no significant relationship between the number of reading challenges and the academic performance of pupils.

## Conclusions

Based on the foregoing findings of this research study, the conclusions that were drawn are as follows:

Most of grade two pupils in terms of sex are almost equal in number, have normal nutritional status, fathers' occupations are mostly service workers, and most mothers are confined in their homes.

The reading skills of pupils are high.

The reading profile of the respondents is a light refresher.

The most common reading challenge of grade two pupils is repetition.

The academic performance of grade two pupils is very satisfactory.

There is no significant difference in the reading skills of pupils according to sex, nutritional status, father's occupation, and mother's occupation.

The level of reading skills of pupils is significantly related to their academic performance.

To significant relationship is found between the number of reading challenges and the academic performance of pupils.

The following recommendations are presented:

By implementing a scientifically-based reading program, DepEd Division officials can explore a variety of strategies to improve reading skills across the division. The program should be in line with the science of reading and offer explicit and systematic instruction in the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. They guarantee that educators have access to the right teaching resources, technological instruments, support services, and tech-based fixes for reading difficulties.

A principal can ensure that all students acquire good reading skills by promoting a reading culture in the classroom. He makes certain that the school implements a reading program that is in line with the science of reading and that teaches the fundamentals of reading explicitly and methodically. He can give teachers enough uninterrupted time to teach reading, especially to children who struggle with the language, and he can assist teachers in providing small-group or individualized instruction based on the individual needs of each student.

Teachers can use a range of tactics that target core skills and encourage reading engagement with their students since they play a crucial role in helping children build strong reading abilities and a love of reading. To guarantee that reading teaching places a strong emphasis on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, they must adopt a methodical and explicit approach. Additionally, they can provide students with regular and varied opportunities to practice fundamental skills in small groups as well as individually. To make learning interesting and memorable, incorporate games, music, and interactive activities. Give students access to a variety of texts and authors, genres, and reading levels to suit their unique interests and skill levels.

Parents can support their children's reading development by reading aloud to their children even from a very young age because it is one of the most effective ways to promote literacy. They will make reading time a memorable and delightful experience by selecting

books that are interesting and age-appropriate. In addition, they can establish a home library and provide their kids with easy access to books. They can also establish reading as a daily ritual by designating a specific period for reading each day, even if it is only for fifteen minutes. This could take place around mealtimes, right before bed, or at any other time that suits your family. Above all, they should teach their kids the alphabet's letters and their accompanying sounds by introducing letter sounds.

Regular practice can help the students become more proficient readers because it will increase their word recognition and comprehension skills. Every day, kids should set aside time to read and reflect on how the material or story connects to their own experiences or knowledge. This will enhance the meaning of what they read and aid with their memory. To learn the meaning of words they are unfamiliar with, students should also thoroughly research words online or in dictionaries. They should also make a note of the definition of each word so they can refer to it later. Lastly, they may read works in a range of genres, such as news, poetry, non-fiction, and fiction.

This covers the expansion of one's vocabulary as well as comprehension techniques, prior knowledge, drive, and involvement. Taking into account that every student learns differently and has specific strengths and limitations, they can look into ways to customize interventions and education to meet the needs of each student. Researchers can also look at how socioeconomic background, school-wide literacy initiatives, and home literacy practices affect reading outcomes; they can also investigate how to modify reading instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners, such as those with special needs, different cultural backgrounds, and language backgrounds; they can also look into the advantages and disadvantages of using technology, such as digital tools, online resources, and assistive technologies, to support reading instruction; and finally, they can make sure that the focus of their studies is on the long-term effects of interventions and instructional practices on reading development. This includes tracking students' progress beyond the initial intervention period and examining how reading skills influence academic success in later grades.

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