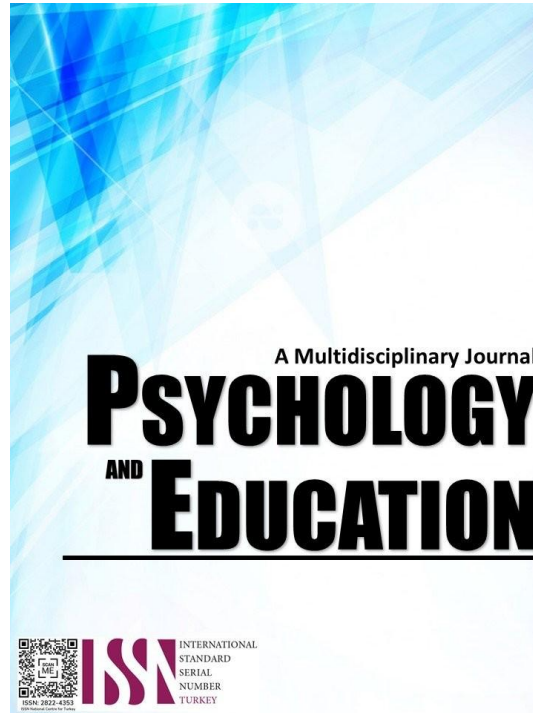


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Examining the Correlation Between Catch-Up Friday and Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance of Grade 5 Learners

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Abstract

This study examined the correlation between Catch-Up Friday a targeted literacy intervention under the Department of Education's National Learning Recovery Program and the academic performance and reading comprehension levels of Grade 5 learners in a public elementary school in Central Visayas, Philippines. The intervention was implemented because of persistent literacy learning deficits, particularly those exacerbated by the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to the classroom. In accordance with the Department of Education's National Learning Recovery Program (NLRP), Catch-Up Friday was established to provide focused support in basic skills. With the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) and third and fourth grading periods of the School Year 2023–2024 students' English grades, a quantitative research approach was employed. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was applied to assess significant differences between before and after the intervention on performance. Results showed significant improvements in both reading comprehension and English grades ($p < 0.05$). No significant relationships were observed between learners' academic performance and their sex ($r = -0.08$, $p = 0.58$) or age ($r = 0.14$, $p = 0.32$). Findings affirm the intervention's effectiveness regardless of demographic variables. Sustained implementation and broader application of Catch-Up Friday are recommended. The outcomes indicated that the level of reading comprehension had statistically significantly improved, with a significant increase in students reaching "instructional" and "independent" levels and a reduction in students remaining at the "frustration" level. The intervention was implemented to enhance learners' comprehension. In the same way, students' academic performance in English was considerably enhanced following the intervention. Correlation studies also indicated no apparent relationship between students' academic achievement and age or sex, which means that the intervention was effective regardless of demographic categories. These results lend support to the efficacy of Catch-Up Friday as a means to combat learning loss and promote literacy performance. In order to maximize the program's long-term effects, it is recommended that it be sustained, expanded to other grades, and reinforced with contextualized materials, teacher training, and increased family involvement.

Keywords: *catch-up friday, intervention, academic performance, reading comprehension*

Introduction

The Philippines' education system has been through drastic change, especially after the learning disruptions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. When schools reopened in full capacity, international measurements like PISA highlighted the Philippines' endemic learning poverty, especially in reading literacy (Chi, 2023; Ines, 2023). The Department of Education responded by implementing the National Learning Recovery Program (DO 013, s. 2023), which has Catch-Up Friday as part of its intervention to address foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

Catch-Up Friday seeks to close learning gaps through focused instructional time for remediation, reading, and enrichment. Implemented on a weekly basis, the program supports growth through scaffolding activities based on educational psychology, specifically Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy, and Bruner's (1978) scaffolding model. This research examined the relationship between attendance on Catch-Up Friday and enhanced reading understanding and academic achievement. It also examined whether the sex and age of learners had implications for different outcomes.

Research Questions

This study examined the correlation between Catch-Up Friday a targeted literacy intervention under the Department of Education's National Learning Recovery Program and the academic performance and reading comprehension levels of Grade 5 learners in a public elementary school in Central Visayas, Philippines. as the basis for an intervention plan for a strengthened curriculum. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the learners in terms of:
 - 1.1. sex;
 - 1.2. english grades (3rd and 4th quarters);
 - 1.3. age; and
 - 1.4. reading level?
2. Is there a significant difference in learners' academic performance before and after the implementation of Catch-Up Friday?
3. Is there a significant difference in learners' reading comprehension before and after the implementation of Catch-Up Friday?
4. Is there a significant relationship between learners' sex and their academic performance?

5. Is there a significant relationship between learners' age and their academic performance?

Methodology

Research Design

This research was conducted using a quantitative pretest-posttest design. It aimed to determine appreciable differences and correlations between variables through the use of inferential statistical methods. A correlational design was utilized to investigate relationships between demographic variables and performance measures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Respondents

The study was conducted in a public elementary school in Central Visayas, Philippines. Forty Grade 5 learners participated. The entire population of one Grade 5 class was chosen through convenience sampling method to collect and interpret the data and responses.

Instrument

Phil-IRI (Philippine Informal Reading Inventory) Set A was used to determine reading levels. The Phil-IRI is a validated instrument created by the Department of Education. The third (pre-intervention) and fourth (post-intervention) quarter English grades were downloaded from the learners' official school records. The reliability and validity of Phil-IRI is established through previous national implementation (DepEd, 2023).

Procedure

Before beginning to handle the questionnaires, the researcher will obtain permission from the principal by sending a request letter to access the grade five learners' report cards, Section VBV, as well as the learners' adviser. Data collection and administration will start as soon as permission is granted. The Tal-ut Elementary School students in grade 5 will answer the Phil-iri tool to test their comprehension skills. Following the collection of all the data, results will be tabulated, and the data will be analyzed and interpreted. Following data interpretation, conclusions will be drawn that will form the foundation of an intervention. Approval was obtained from the school head and the learners' adviser. Third quarter English grades were recorded. Learners underwent a pre-intervention reading assessment using Phil-IRI. Catch-Up Friday was implemented weekly over one grading period. Post-intervention data collection included 4th quarter English grades and another round of Phil-IRI testing. Data were tabulated, coded, and statistically analyzed.

Data Analysis

Responses from the questionnaire were processed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, were employed to describe the socio-demographic variables and the distribution of reading levels among learners. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used to assess whether there existed a significant variation in learners' academic performance before and after implementing Catch-Up Friday. In addition, the Point-Biserial Correlation was used to determine whether there was a significant correlation between sex and academic performance. At the same time, the Spearman Rank Correlation was employed to examine the correlation between age and academic performance.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher will apply the principles of ethical considerations developed by Bryman and Bell (2007). Regarding the study's involvement, participants will not be subjected to any harm in any form. Prior to the study, the researcher asked permission from the principal of Tal-ut Elementary School. Additionally, the researcher ensured the participants' privacy and that their identities would not be disclosed. Voluntary participation in study is always considered throughout the process. In handling the data, the highest level of confidentiality will be observed. Biases and any form of misleading information will be strictly avoided. On the other hand, the highest level of objectivity will be observed during the analysis of data to avoid biases. Funding and any forms of affiliations will be declared, as well as any possible conflicts of interest. Lastly, the researcher will ensure that transparency and honesty are observed throughout the process.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of the Learners

Distribution of the Learners by Sex



Figure 1. Distribution of the learners by sex

This study involved 40 fifth graders from Tal-ut Elementary School, comprising 23 males (57.50%) and 17 females (42.50%). To further visualize the distribution by sex, Figure 1 is shown. The result shows that a majority of male learners.

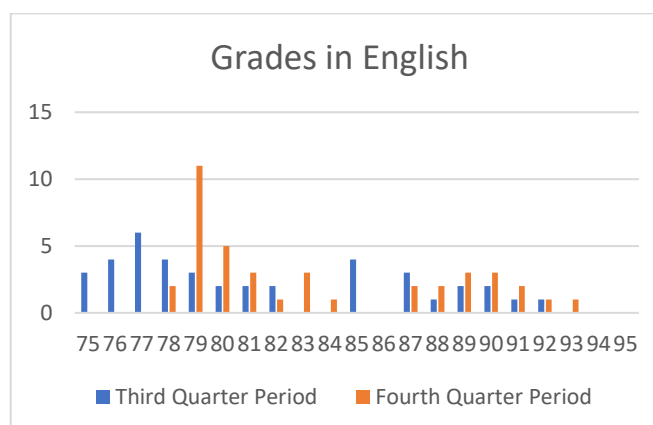


Figure 2. *Learner's grade in English*

Figure 2 shows the distribution of grades in English for the 3rd and 4th quarters of the academic year 2023-2024 among the learners in this study. The lowest grade recorded in the 3rd quarter was 75, while the highest in that quarter was 92. Based on the figure, the majority of the learners' grades in English from the 3rd quarter were 80 and below. On the other hand, the lowest grade recorded from the 4th quarter was 78, and the highest grade recorded was 93. There is a slight positive change in the learners' grades during the 4th quarter, showing that the majority of the learners in this study have grades above 80.

Table 1. *Age Distribution of the learners*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
9	3	7.5%
10	34	85.0%
11	3	7.5%
Total	40	100%

Table 1 presents the distribution of learner ages in the study. The participants are grade 5 learners; hence, it is expected that their age distribution is between 9 and 11. Thirty-four of the learners are 10-year-olds, which covers 85.0% of the total learners in the study. Both the 9-year-old and 11-year-old age groups have three learners each.

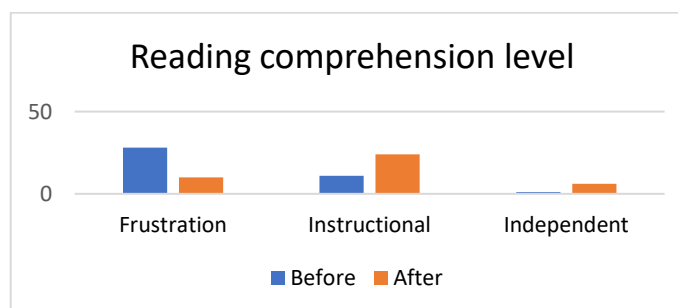


Figure 3. *Reading comprehension level of the learners before and after implementing Catch-up Fridays*

Figure 3 shows the distribution of the learners grouped by reading comprehension level. The Blue bars represent the distribution of reading comprehension level before implementing catch-up Fridays, while the orange bars represent the distribution of reading comprehension level after implementation of catch-up Fridays. From the distribution, 28 of the learners had a reading comprehension level of "Frustration" before the implementation of the said intervention. Only one learner had a reading comprehension level of "Independent" before catch-up Fridays was implemented. When catch-up Fridays was implemented, the number of learners having "frustration" level in English reading comprehension decreased by 18, hence, there were only 10 learners having the said reading comprehension level. Majority of the learners included in this study had "Instructional" level of reading comprehension when the intervention was implemented. The number of learners with "independent" level of reading comprehension also increased, which totaled, 6 learners.

Academic Performance

Test of difference between learners' academic performance in English before and after the implementation of catch-up Friday.

The table below tested the difference between learner's grade in English from 3rd quarter and their grade from 4th quarter. The reason

for this was, catch-up Fridays was implemented during the 4th quarter, and no other intervention was applied during 3rd quarter.

Table 2. Test of difference in English grade from two different quarters

<i>W statistic</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
561	0.0212	Significant

Significant if $p\text{-value} < 0.05$

Table 2 shows the result from testing the difference in English grades of the students from two quarters – 3rd and 4th. Since the distribution of grade are not normally distributed, a nonparametric test for paired samples was utilized. The Wilcoxon sign rank test with continuity correction was employed to test of there is a significant difference in the 3rd and 4th quarter grades of the learners in the study. Mean English grade improved from 80.2 (SD = 4.6) in Q3 to 84.1 (SD = 4.3) in Q4. The result showed that the calculated p-value was 0.0212, less than the set significance level $\alpha=0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that the learners' 3rd and 4th quarter grades are significantly different from each other. One-sided test, testing if 3rd quarter grades are lower than 4th quarter grades also showed significant results, which suggests that grades from 3rd quarter are significantly lower than of 4th quarter grades.

The use of Catch-up Fridays, which aims to provide additional help and remediation to struggling learners by assigning dedicated time for catch-up activities and interventions, proved to be an effective tool for enhancing learners' comprehension skills and improving overall reading performance. As stated by Talain and Cruzado (2024).

Reading Comprehension

Test of difference between learners' reading comprehension level before and after the implementation of catch-up Friday

Table 3. Test of difference in learners' reading comprehension level before and after the implementation of catch-up Friday

<i>W statistic</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
419	0.00332	Significant

Significant if $p\text{-value} < 0.05$

Table 3 shows the result from testing the reading comprehension level before and after the implementation of catch-up Friday. Since the distribution of reading comprehension level are not normally distributed, a nonparametric test for paired samples was utilized. A one-sided Wilcoxon sign rank test with continuity correction was employed to test of there is a significant difference in the reading comprehension level before and after implementing the intervention. The one-sided test was specified since there is an assumption that an intervention may contribute to the improvement of the learner's reading comprehension. The result showed that the calculated p-value was 0.00332, less than the set significance level $\alpha=0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that the learners' reading comprehension level after implementing catch-up Fridays are higher than of the level before the implementation.

As Namoc (2024) concludes, it is necessary to have personalized learning experience, varied reading activities, and nurturing teaching practices to enhance reading comprehension in primary education. The Catch-Up Friday program is an ideal model for instilling a passion for reading and meeting the diverse needs of learners.

Relationship between Sex and Academic Performance

Test of relationship between the socio-demographic profile (sex) of the learners and their academic performance.

Table 4. Test of the relationship between the socio-demographic profile (sex) of the learners and their academic performance.

<i>rpb statistic</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
-0.07679	0.5841	No significant relationship

Significant if $p\text{-value} < 0.05$

The relationship between the learners' sex and their academic performance was analyzed using the Point-Biserial Correlation. Results showed a correlation coefficient (rpb) of -0.07679 with a p-value of 0.5841. Since the p-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means there is no significant relationship between the learners' sex and their academic performance. In this study, being male or female did not significantly influence the learners' English grades after the Catch-Up Friday intervention.

Based on Sara Vera Gil (2024) The study established that psychological resilience varies with academic performance according to gender. For women, some aspects of resilience like planning ability and social support were positively related to their academic marks. On the other hand, there was no relationship between academic performance and factors of resilience among men.

Relationship between Age and Academic Performance

Test of relationship between the socio-demographic profile (age) of the learners and their academic performance?

To determine the relationship between the learners' age and their academic performance, the Spearman Rank Correlation was used. The computed correlation coefficient (rs) was 0.1377, with a p-value of 0.3165. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null

hypothesis is not rejected. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between the learners' age and their academic performance. Age did not play a significant role in influencing the learners' English grades in the context of the Catch-Up Friday program.

Table 5. *Test of the relationship between the socio-demographic profile (age) of the learners and their academic performance.*

<i>rs statistic</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
0.1377	0.3165	No significant relationship

Significant if $p\text{-value} < 0.05$

In the study of Relationship of School Entrance Age to Academic and Social Performance by Demeis and Stearns (1992). Kendall's tau correlation analysis was used to investigate the association between the referred students' birth month and the number of months after the cutoff age for school entry. For Groups 1 and 1A, the findings were that the correlations were not significant. This implies that for these groups, the birth months of the students and their relative ages at school entry were not related to increased referral rates for psycho-educational assessments or academic problems.

By contrast, for Group 1SB, the analysis revealed a positive and significant association ($r = 0.64$, $z = 2.88$, $p < 0.002$). This means that children who were born later in the calendar year and were consequently younger compared to their peers were more likely to be referred for social and behavioral issues.

Overall, the results indicate that relative age at school entry does not have a strong impact on the risk of academic referrals. For social-behavioral concerns, however, being relatively younger increases the risk of referral. This points to the possible impact of developmental maturity on students' social and emotional adjustment, even if academic performance is not affected.

The study, "Impact of Catch-Up Friday on Reading Comprehension and Academic Performance of Grade 5 VBV Learners," examined the effectiveness of the Department of Education's Catch-Up Friday program. The study gathered data from 40 learners at Tal-ut Elementary School, utilizing the Phil-IRI Tool and English grades as measurement tools. The findings indicated that the learners' reading comprehension and academic performance improved following the implementation of the program. A decrease in the number of learners at the "frustration" reading level and an increase in reading levels above this level were noted. Academic scores in English also improved from the 3rd to the 4th quarter. No meaningful relationship, however, was reported between sex or age and educational achievement, indicating that the success of the intervention was uniform for all learners.

Conclusions

Catch-Up Friday dramatically improved learners' academic achievement and reading proficiency. The intervention was found to be effective for various sex and age ranges. These results justify the extension of Catch-Up Friday to other grades and the continued implementation of the program. Future research might incorporate qualitative learner and instructor feedback to better understand the effects of the program.

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