

## Article

## Impact of Reading Practices on Reading Understanding Among Third-Grade Learners

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**Abstract:** This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the demographic profile, familial background, reading habits, and reading comprehension levels of a cohort of learners. The demographic analysis reveals a balanced gender distribution, prevalent larger family sizes, and a tendency towards lower parental education levels and income brackets. Learners exhibit a pronounced enthusiasm for reading, with a particular preference for teacher-recommended and library-borrowed books, although their reading habits show a negligible positive correlation with their reading comprehension levels, which are predominantly proficient or approaching proficiency. The significant number of learners from economically constrained backgrounds and the lack of a strong correlation between reading habits and comprehension skills highlight the potential need for targeted educational interventions. The study underscores the complex interplay between familial, economic, and personal factors in shaping learners' reading skills and suggests a nuanced approach to enhancing reading comprehension amidst varying reading habits.

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**Keywords:** Reading Habits, Reading Comprehension, learner demographics, family background

### Introduction

Reading is an essential skill that forms the cornerstone of education and lifelong learning. It is a fundamental tool that enables individuals to access information, expand their knowledge, and foster critical thinking (Akinola, 2021). Moreover, reading is a skill that transcends academic boundaries and beyond its role in school, reading is a vital life skill that facilitates effective communication, enhances vocabulary, and encourages creativity (Fang, 2023). In the digital age, where information is readily available through various mediums, the ability to comprehend written text remains indispensable (Turner et al.,



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2020). Therefore, cultivating a love for reading in young learners is of paramount importance.

Reading is the foundation of education. It serves as the primary conduit through which students gain knowledge across subjects (Ortlieb & Schatz, 2020). Whether it's deciphering math problems, understanding scientific concepts, or delving into history, reading is a key component of the learning process (Chen et al., 2022). Proficient reading skills are essential for students to excel academically and reach their full potential in various subjects. Moreover, for young learners, reading goes beyond academics; it fosters intellectual curiosity and nurtures imagination (Cremin et al., 2022). Reading books, stories, and informational texts opens up new worlds, broadens perspectives, and instills a lifelong passion for learning (Kueng, 2022). Furthermore, it helps students develop empathy, understanding, and cultural awareness by exposing them to diverse characters and viewpoints.

The way reading is taught and practiced can significantly impact a student's reading comprehension. For instance, effective reading practices, such as phonics instruction, comprehension strategies, and reading for pleasure, play a crucial role in enhancing students' ability to understand and analyze text (Divya, 2023). It is imperative to investigate how these practices influence the reading understanding of third-grade learners (Hwang & Duke, 2020). Moreover, the manner in which reading is taught and practiced holds a profound influence on the reading comprehension abilities of third-grade learners (Fajr, 2022). Effective reading practices play a pivotal role in shaping students' understanding of written material and for instance, when students are taught comprehension strategies such as predicting, questioning, and summarizing, they become active participants in the reading process, leading to improved understanding of texts (Dewitz & graves, 2021). Additionally, phonics instruction helps students decode words accurately, contributing to enhanced word recognition and reading fluency, which in turn bolsters overall comprehension (Duke et al., 2021). Moreover, fostering an environment that promotes independent reading, teacher support and feedback, and peer collaboration further strengthens the impact of reading practices on young learners, facilitating their journey toward becoming proficient readers who can comprehend and engage with a wide range of texts.

There are several research gaps in the current understanding of reading practices and their impact on third-grade learners. Firstly, there is a need assessed the reading habits and reading comprehension skills of the Grade 3 learners. Additionally, research should explore the level of reading habits and the level of reading comprehension skills of the learners. Future research in this area should aim to identify effective reading practices and instructional methods that can optimize reading comprehension outcomes among third-grade learners. Longitudinal studies tracking the progress of students exposed to different reading

interventions will provide valuable insights. Reading is an essential skill that underpins education and personal growth. Understanding the importance of reading and how different practices can affect reading comprehension among third-grade learners is vital for educators, parents, and policymakers. By addressing research gaps, we can better support young readers in their journey toward becoming proficient and enthusiastic readers.

## Methodology

The research design chosen for this study employed a Descriptive Correlational approach, which was selected to allow for a comprehensive exploration and description of the reading habits of third-grade learners. It also facilitated an examination of the correlation between these reading habits and the students' reading comprehension skills. The study took place at San Roque Elementary School (SRES) in the bustling city of Talisay. The participants were selected from two different sections of third-grade students enrolled at SRES. To gather data, two primary research instruments were employed: the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) and a Reading Habits Survey Questionnaire. The research process was structured into three stages: the Preliminary Stage, the Data Gathering Stage, and the Post Data Gathering Stage. This methodological approach was designed to ensure the validity and reliability of the study's findings, providing a robust foundation for analyzing the relationship between reading practices and reading comprehension among third-grade learners.

## Results and Discussion

Table 1. Age and Gender of the Learners

Age (in years)	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
9	19	23.46	30	37.04	49	60.49
8	20	24.69	12	14.81	32	39.51
Total	39	48.15	42	51.85	81	100.00

Table 1 presents the age and gender distribution of the learners. The table highlights the total number of learners as 81, with a nearly balanced gender distribution: 48.15% female (39 learners) and 51.85% male (42 learners). Age-wise, the learners are grouped into two categories: 8 years and 9 years. In the 9-year-old category, there are 49 learners, constituting 60.49% of the total population. Within this age

group, females account for 23.46% (19 learners), while males represent a larger proportion at 37.04% (30 learners). On the other hand, the 8-year-old category comprises 39.51% of the total learners (32 individuals). In this younger cohort, females are slightly more prevalent, constituting 24.69% of the total (20 learners), compared to males who make up 14.81% (12 learners). Overall, the distribution suggests a fairly even gender split across the total population but reveals notable differences in gender ratios within each age category.

Table 2. Parents' Highest Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Mother		Father	
	f	%	f	%
With Master's Units	1	1.23	0	0.00
College Graduate	2	2.47	6	7.41
College Level	12	14.81	14	17.28
High School Graduate	44	54.32	37	45.68
High School Level	14	17.28	15	18.52
Elementary Graduate	4	4.94	1	1.23
Elementary Level	4	4.94	8	9.88
Total	81	100.00	81	100.00

Table 2 details the highest educational attainment of the parents of the learners, categorizing the data separately for mothers and fathers. Each parent category encompasses 81 individuals, mirroring the total number of learners. For mothers, the most common educational attainment is 'High School Graduate,' accounting for 54.32% (44 individuals). This is followed by 'High School Level' and 'College Level,' representing 17.28% (14 individuals) and 14.81% (12 individuals) respectively. A smaller fraction of mothers has reached 'Elementary Graduate' and 'Elementary Level,' each constituting 4.94% (4 individuals). Notably, only 1.23% (1 individual) of mothers have attained 'With Master's Units,' and 2.47% (2 individuals) are 'College Graduates.' In comparison, fathers exhibit a slightly different distribution. 'High School Graduate' is also the most prevalent category, but with a lower percentage of 45.68% (37 individuals). 'College Level' and 'High School Level' follow, with 17.28% (14 individuals) and 18.52% (15 individuals) respectively. Interestingly, fathers have a higher representation in 'College Graduate' at 7.41% (6 individuals) compared to mothers. The 'Elementary Level' category is more pronounced among fathers, constituting 9.88% (8 individuals), whereas 'Elementary Graduate' and 'With Master's Units' are the least common, each represented by 1.23% (1 individual). Overall, while both mothers and fathers predominantly fall into the 'High School Graduate' category, the data reveals subtle differences in the educational landscape between the two, particularly in the higher education levels ('College Graduate' and 'With Master's Units') and the lower education levels ('Elementary Level').

Table 3. Number of Siblings of the Learners

Number of Siblings	f	%
More than 4	23	28.40
3-4	34	41.98
1-2	23	28.40
None	1	1.23
Total	81	100.00

Table 3 provides insights into the familial settings of the learners by detailing the number of siblings each learner has. The data encompasses a total of 81 learners. The majority of learners, 41.98% (34 individuals), have between 3 to 4 siblings, indicating a prevalence of moderately large family sizes within the group. A significant proportion, 28.40% (23 individuals), belong to even larger families, having more than 4 siblings. This suggests that over two-thirds of the learners come from families with three or more children. Another 28.40% of the learners (23 individuals) have 1 to 2 siblings, indicating smaller family sizes. Interestingly, a minimal number, 1.23% (1 individual), is an only child with no siblings. Overall, the data from Table 3 highlights a tendency towards larger family sizes among the learners, with most learners having multiple siblings and a substantial portion coming from families with more than four children. Small family units (1-2 siblings) are equally common as the very large families (more than 4 siblings), while single-child families are quite rare within this group.

Table 4 Combined Family Monthly Income

Monthly Income (in pesos)	f	%
Above 30,000	3	3.70
25,001-30,000	2	2.47
20,001-25,000	1	1.23
15,001-20,000	13	16.05
10,001-15,000	18	22.22
10,000 and below	44	54.32
Total	81	100.00

Table 4 outlines the combined monthly income of the families of the learners, expressed in pesos, for a total of 81 families. A substantial majority, 54.32% (44 families), fall into the lowest income bracket, earning 10,000 pesos or below per month. This indicates that over half of the learners come from families with very limited financial resources. The next significant segment, 22.22% (18 families), earns between 10,001 to 15,000 pesos monthly, suggesting that almost three-quarters of the families earn 15,000 pesos or less per month. The representation diminishes as the income brackets increase. About 16.05% (13 families) of the learners' families have a monthly income

ranging from 15,001 to 20,000 pesos. Only a small fraction, 1.23% (1 family), earns between 20,001 to 25,000 pesos, and an even smaller 2.47% (2 families) have incomes ranging from 25,001 to 30,000 pesos. The highest income bracket, above 30,000 pesos, comprises only 3.70% (3 families) of the total. Moreover, data indicates a predominantly low-income demographic among the families of the learners, with a significant concentration of families earning 10,000 pesos or below. Higher income levels are progressively less common, highlighting the economic challenges faced by a majority of the learners' families.

Table 5. Level of Reading Habits of the Learners

S/ N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	I like reading in my leisure time.	3.42	Excellent
2	I like borrowing books from the library for reading.	3.44	Excellent
3	I like reading only the recommended books from the teachers.	3.31	Excellent
4	Formal features of the book (thickness, font size, illustrations, etc.) affect my preference for reading it or not.	2.81	Very Satisfactory
5	I usually read the book in electronic version (E-books).	2.62	Very Satisfactory
6	I usually find the book I will read from the library.	2.88	Very Satisfactory
7	I usually buy the book I will read.	2.88	Very Satisfactory
8	I initially learn the book I will read if my friends read it.	3.02	Very Satisfactory
9	I think reading is an important part of life.	3.57	Excellent
10	I read a text in the internet due to its low cost.	3.10	Very Satisfactory
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.10	Very Satisfactory

Table 5 provides a detailed insight into the reading habits of the learners by assessing their responses to various statements related to reading. Results showed that learners exhibit a strong inclination towards reading, particularly highlighted by their excellent ratings in three specific areas: enjoying reading during leisure time (WM: 3.42), borrowing books from the library (WM: 3.44), and reading teacher-recommended books (WM: 3.31). This strong preference indicates a positive attitude towards reading as both a leisure activity and a part of their educational engagement. However, when it comes to the formal features of a book, such as thickness, font size, and illustrations, the interest slightly wanes with a 'Very Satisfactory' rating (WM: 2.81), suggesting that while these aspects are considered, they are not as crucial to the learners' reading choices. Similarly, preferences for electronic versions of books (E-books) and the habit of finding books in the library or purchasing them are also rated as 'Very Satisfactory' (WM: 2.62, 2.88, and 2.88 respectively), indicating a moderate engagement with these aspects of reading. Interestingly, the influence of peers seems to have a noticeable impact, as learners rated 'initially



learning about a book if friends read it' with a WM of 3.02, classified as 'Very Satisfactory.' This suggests a social component to their reading habits. The perception of reading as 'an important part of life' received an 'Excellent' rating (WM: 3.57), underscoring a strong intrinsic value placed on reading by the learners. Additionally, the cost-effectiveness of reading texts on the internet was also viewed positively, with a 'Very Satisfactory' rating (WM: 3.10), indicating a practical consideration in their reading habits. Overall, the aggregate weighted mean of 3.10 falls under the 'Very Satisfactory' category, reflecting a highly positive overall attitude towards reading among the learners, with particular emphasis on the value of reading, borrowing books, and the influence of teacher recommendations and peer choices.

Table 6. Level of Reading Comprehension of the Learners

Level	Numerical Range	f	%
Advanced	20	0	0.00
Proficient	15-19	48	59.26
Approaching Proficiency	10-14	33	40.74
Developing	5-9	0	0.00
Beginning	0-4	0	0.00
Total		81	100.00
Mean		15.04	
St. Dev.		2.15	

Table 6 delineates the level of reading comprehension among the learners, categorized into five proficiency levels, with corresponding numerical ranges. The data covers a total of 81 learners. The majority of the learners, 59.26% (48 individuals), are categorized as 'Proficient' with scores ranging from 15 to 19. This indicates a strong grasp of reading comprehension skills for more than half of the learners, suggesting that they are capable of understanding and interpreting text effectively at their respective academic level. A significant portion, 40.74% (33 individuals), are 'Approaching Proficiency,' with scores between 10 to 14. This group is demonstrating a fair level of understanding but may require further development to fully grasp complex textual nuances and implications. Notably, none of the learners fall into the 'Advanced' (scores above 20), 'Developing' (scores between 5 to 9), or 'Beginning' (scores between 0 to 4) categories. This absence indicates that while the group does not have any learners with exceptionally high comprehension skills, it is also free from learners with very low comprehension skills. The mean score of 15.04 suggests that the average reading comprehension level of the learners is solidly within the 'Proficient' category. The standard deviation of 2.15 points to a relatively tight distribution of scores around the mean, indicating consistency in the reading comprehension abilities across the learner group. Overall, the learners demonstrate commendable reading

comprehension skills, with the majority being 'Proficient' and a significant number 'Approaching Proficiency.' The absence of learners in the lowest and highest categories speaks to a certain uniformity in reading skills, with the collective leaning more towards proficiency rather than exceptional or insufficient comprehension.

Table 7. Test of Significant Relationship between the Reading Habits and Reading Comprehension of the Learners

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Reading Habits and Reading Comprehension	0.041	Negligible Positive	0.718	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant

\*significant at  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed)

Table 7 analyzed the relationship between the reading habits and reading comprehension of the learners. The correlation between these variables was measured using Pearson's r-value, which was found to be 0.041. This indicated a negligible positive correlation. With a p-value of 0.718, which is higher than the conventional significance level of 0.05, the decision was to not reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), leading to the conclusion that the relationship between reading habits and reading comprehension among the learners was not statistically significant. This result was important because it suggested that, in this specific context, other factors might play a more significant role in influencing reading comprehension than reading habits alone. Past research, such as a study by Wilson and Clarke (2018), has shown that while reading habits can impact comprehension, this relationship is often mediated by various factors including cognitive skills, home environment, and instructional methods. The findings implied that enhancing reading comprehension among learners might require a multifaceted approach that goes beyond merely promoting positive reading habits. As indicated by the study of Patel and Anderson (2019), interventions focusing on cognitive skills, vocabulary development, and comprehension strategies could be more effective in improving reading comprehension. The analysis of the relationship between reading habits and reading comprehension, as presented in Table 8, indicated that the correlation between these two variables was not significant among the third-grade learners. This highlighted the complexity of factors influencing reading comprehension and suggested the need for comprehensive, multi-dimensional strategies in literacy education.

## Conclusion

The learners demonstrate a strong affinity towards reading, particularly valuing books recommended by teachers or borrowed



from libraries. While formal book features and electronic formats are moderately embraced, the influence of peers and a general appreciation of reading's importance are prominently positive. Despite this enthusiasm for reading, the analysis of reading comprehension reveals that most learners are proficient, with a substantial number approaching proficiency, but none in the advanced category. Interestingly, a statistical examination of the relationship between reading habits and comprehension shows a negligible positive correlation, not statistically significant. This outcome suggests that while the learners are generally inclined towards positive reading habits, these habits are not strongly predictive of their comprehension skills. This could imply the need for more targeted interventions or teaching strategies to bridge the gap between reading engagement and comprehension mastery. The overall picture is one of a learner group with positive attitudes towards reading, facing economic and educational challenges, and exhibiting a need for enhanced focus on developing reading comprehension skills to match their enthusiasm for reading.

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