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Cultivating Early Literacy Proficiency: Exploring Interventions in Shaping Reading Skills among Grade 1 Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the implementation of early literacy interventions and reading proficiency among Grade 1 learners at Tigbao-Diit Elementary School, Tacloban City, to inform an enhanced reading instruction plan. A quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational design used complete enumeration of three teachers and available official Middle of School Year Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) records, alongside 70 complete parent or guardian questionnaires. Validated questionnaires and CRLA data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and appropriate tests of association. Phonics instruction received the highest implementation rating ($M = 3.27$), yet only 17.14% of assessed learners were grade ready in decoding, 64.29% were at the lowest reading comprehension level, and 21.43% were reading at grade level. Parental educational attainment was positively associated with decoding ($r_s = .421$, $p < .001$), while number of siblings was inversely associated with reading fluency ($r = -.350$, $p = .003$); reported home-reading frequency had no significant association with literacy outcomes. These findings reveal a gap between foundational sound-letter knowledge and effective connected-text reading, alongside selective contextual associations. The study recommends CRLA-guided differentiated decoding, fluency, and comprehension instruction, supported by family engagement and routine monitoring. Its single-school, cross-sectional scope and only three independent classroom intervention scores restrict causal inference and generalizability. The findings offer an actionable basis for school improvement aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4, promoting equitable foundational literacy and sustainable educational support.

Keywords: *Decoding, Early Literacy, Grade 1 Learners, Home Literacy, Phonics Instruction, Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency*

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental competency that supports academic achievement, communication, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. During the early years of formal education, learners develop essential literacy competencies, including phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, decoding, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. These interconnected skills provide the foundation for understanding written language and acquiring knowledge across learning areas. Recent research emphasizes the importance of systematic reading instruction, oral-language development, and responsive instructional support, particularly among learners with diverse linguistic and educational experiences (Hoover & Tunmer, 2022; Kittle et al., 2024). Despite continuing educational reforms, foundational literacy remains a major concern in Philippine basic education. The World Bank (2022) reported that approximately 91% of Filipino children at late primary age were not proficient in reading, based on the available pre-pandemic data and adjusted for out-of-school children. Although this estimate does not directly represent Grade 1 learners, it underscores the importance of early identification and intervention. In response, the Department of Education (2023) strengthened foundational literacy instruction through the MATATAG Curriculum, while Republic Act No. 12028 (2024) established the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program to support learners requiring additional academic assistance. Effective early literacy development requires coordinated classroom instruction and appropriate learning support. Evidence indicates that explicit and systematic phonics instruction can strengthen foundational reading skills, while guided reading, interactive read-alouds, and language activities provide opportunities to develop vocabulary, connected-text reading, and comprehension (Baker & Santoro, 2023; Morgan et al., 2024; Lane et al., 2025). However, instructional effectiveness may vary according to learners' needs, teaching practices, implementation conditions, and opportunities for learning at home. Within this context, the present study examined early literacy interventions and the reading proficiency of Grade 1 learners at Tigbao-Diit Elementary School, Schools Division of Tacloban City, during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it investigated learner characteristics, classroom intervention implementation, and literacy levels derived from official Middle of School Year Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (MoSY CRLA) records. The resulting evidence provided the basis for developing an Early Literacy Enhanced Reading Instruction Plan responsive to the school's identified needs.

Research Problem

Early literacy difficulties remain a significant educational concern because inadequate foundational reading skills may restrict learners' ability to understand instructional materials and participate meaningfully in classroom activities. Although learners are exposed to reading instruction during the early grades, differences in literacy readiness, language experiences, family circumstances, and classroom learning opportunities may contribute to variations in reading performance. Kittle et al. (2024) emphasized that oral-language knowledge, phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, and comprehension are important components of reading development, particularly among multilingual learners. Instructional practices also require careful examination. Lane et al. (2025) demonstrated the value of systematic foundational reading instruction for kindergarten and first-grade learners, while Morgan et al. (2024) synthesized evidence concerning guided reading and its relationship with learner outcomes. Similarly, Baker and Santoro (2023) emphasized that purposeful read-aloud instruction depends on the quality of teacher interaction, vocabulary support, and comprehension activities. These findings suggest that the implementation of reading interventions must be examined in relation to their instructional characteristics rather than their mere presence in classroom activities. Learners' home literacy environments constitute another relevant consideration. Petersen-Brown et al. (2024) reported evidence supporting caregiver-

implemented literacy interventions, while Nan and Tian (2025) identified parental support, access to reading materials, and household circumstances as important factors associated with shared-reading practices. These findings highlight the importance of examining family literacy experiences without assuming that demographic characteristics directly determine reading achievement. Despite the availability of international research and national literacy initiatives, school-specific evidence remains necessary to understand the reading conditions of Grade 1 learners at Tigbao-Diit Elementary School. The central research problem therefore concerned the extent of implementation of phonics instruction, guided reading, read-aloud sessions, and interactive language activities; the learners' documented literacy levels; and the statistical relationships between these literacy outcomes, learner characteristics, and classroom intervention implementation. The research addressed these concerns through official MoSY CRLA records and information obtained from Grade 1 teachers and parents or legal guardians. It further sought to establish an evidence-based foundation for an enhanced reading instruction plan suited to the school's instructional context.

Assumptions of the Study

The study was guided by the assumption that early literacy development involves interconnected cognitive, linguistic, instructional, and contextual processes. Phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge support decoding, while accurate word recognition and language comprehension contribute to meaningful reading. These relationships are consistent with contemporary explanations of reading development and the importance of foundational literacy competencies (Hoover & Tunmer, 2022; Kittle et al., 2024). It was further assumed that systematic phonics instruction, guided reading, purposeful read-aloud sessions, and interactive language activities provide complementary opportunities for strengthening beginning reading skills. However, the study did not assume that the presence or reported frequency of these interventions necessarily produces higher literacy achievement. Their relationships with learners' reading performance remained subject to empirical examination (Morgan et al., 2024; Lane et al., 2025). The study also assumed that demographic and home-literacy characteristics may be associated with learners' reading development but do not independently determine literacy proficiency. Family participation, linguistic experiences, and access to learning opportunities were therefore considered relevant contextual factors (Petersen-Brown et al., 2024; Nan & Tian, 2025). Finally, the study treated the official CRLA records as the authorized basis for describing learners' documented reading performance. Only assessment components actually recorded through the prescribed procedures were considered appropriate for analysis. Consistent with the descriptive-correlational research design, identified statistical relationships were not interpreted as evidence of causation.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to determine the extent of implementation of early literacy interventions and the reading proficiency levels of Grade 1 learners at Tigbao-Diit Elementary School, Schools Division of Tacloban City, during School Year 2025–2026, as bases for developing an Early Literacy Enhanced Reading Instruction Plan. Specifically, it sought to describe the demographic and professional profiles of Grade 1 teachers in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, teaching position, technology exposure, teaching experience, and relevant training. It also examined the demographic and home-literacy characteristics of Grade 1 learners, including age, gender, parents' occupation, mother tongue spoken at home, parents' or guardians' educational background, number of siblings, and frequency of reading activities at home. Furthermore, the study determined the extent of implementation of phonics instruction, guided reading, read-aloud sessions, and interactive language activities. It assessed learners' documented literacy levels in terms of phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, decoding, reading fluency, and

reading comprehension using the available official MoSY CRLA results and prescribed follow-up records, where applicable. The research also examined whether significant statistical relationships existed between learners' CRLA literacy levels and their demographic characteristics and between those literacy levels and the extent of classroom intervention implementation. Based on the findings, the study sought to formulate an Early Literacy Enhanced Reading Instruction Plan addressing identified learner needs, instructional priorities, teacher support, family participation, and progress-monitoring requirements.

Theoretical or Conceptual Basis

The study was anchored in three complementary theoretical perspectives: the Simple View of Reading, Sociocultural Theory, and Transactional Theory of Reading. Together, these perspectives explain the cognitive foundations of literacy, the role of social interaction in learning, and the active construction of meaning during reading. The Simple View of Reading, originally developed by Gough and Tunmer, served as the principal cognitive foundation. It explains reading comprehension through the interaction of word recognition or decoding and language comprehension. Hoover and Tunmer (2022) reaffirmed the model's value in identifying essential cognitive capacities involved in successful reading. This perspective supported the examination of phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, decoding, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. It also provided a rationale for considering explicit phonics instruction alongside language and comprehension activities. Recent evidence from Lane et al. (2025) further demonstrates the instructional importance of systematically teaching foundational reading skills among beginning readers. Sociocultural Theory, associated with Lev Vygotsky, provided the foundation for understanding literacy as a socially mediated learning process. It emphasizes the role of interaction, guided participation, cultural experiences, and instructional assistance in developing learners' competencies. Weadman et al. (2023) applied a sociocultural perspective to examine how teachers support oral-language and emergent literacy development through shared book reading. Similarly, Hinchman et al. (2026) emphasized authentic reading tasks, collaborative interactions, culturally responsive instruction, and strategic teacher support. This perspective supported the inclusion of classroom interventions, home language, family literacy experiences, and teacher-guided learning in the study. Transactional Theory of Reading, associated with Louise Rosenblatt, explained reading comprehension as an active process of meaning construction involving the reader, the text, and the context of reading. Colton et al. (2023) reaffirmed the relevance of this perspective in understanding how readers draw upon language, experiences, and textual information to construct meaning. The theory supported guided reading, interactive read-alouds, discussion, questioning, prediction, and storytelling as meaningful opportunities for learners to engage with texts and develop comprehension. These theoretical foundations were complemented by the Philippine MATATAG Reading and Literacy Curriculum and the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program. The Department of Education (2023) emphasized foundational literacy competencies and developmentally appropriate instruction, while Republic Act No. 12028 (2024) and the Department of Education (2025) reinforced the use of assessment-based interventions, differentiated support, parental participation, and progress monitoring. Conceptually, the study examined the professional characteristics of Grade 1 teachers, the demographic and home-literacy characteristics of learners, the extent of early literacy intervention implementation, and official MoSY CRLA literacy results. The identified reading needs and statistical relationships informed the development of the proposed Early Literacy Enhanced Reading Instruction Plan. The framework was interpretive and planning-oriented and did not establish causal relationships between the variables.

The study was primarily aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4): Quality Education, which promotes inclusive, equitable, and quality education and lifelong learning

opportunities for all. In particular, the research was relevant to Target 4.1, which emphasizes effective learning outcomes in primary education, and Target 4.5, which concerns equitable educational access and opportunities. The United Nations Statistics Division (2025) emphasized that improving foundational learning outcomes and addressing educational inequalities remain essential priorities for achieving SDG 4. The research contributed to educational sustainability through its emphasis on early literacy proficiency, evidence-based instruction, assessment-informed intervention, and continuous learner progress monitoring. By examining documented reading difficulties and classroom instructional practices, the study provided a basis for developing school-level strategies intended to strengthen literacy instruction and support learners requiring additional assistance. The study also addressed social and institutional dimensions of sustainability. Examining learners' demographic and home-literacy characteristics supported the development of context-sensitive educational responses, while teacher capability building, family participation, instructional supervision, and coordinated school planning provided mechanisms for sustaining reading interventions. These priorities were consistent with the learner-centered and assessment-based directions of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program (Department of Education, 2025). Overall, the study supported SDG 4 through its potential contribution to equitable foundational learning, inclusive literacy support, and sustained school improvement. Its proposed Early Literacy Enhanced Reading Instruction Plan represented a localized educational response intended to strengthen the conditions necessary for continued reading development and lifelong learning.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational research design to examine the demographic characteristics of Grade 1 teachers and learners, the extent of implementation of early literacy interventions, and learners' reading proficiency levels. The quantitative approach facilitated the systematic collection and statistical analysis of numerical and categorical data, consistent with the principles of quantitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The descriptive component examined teachers' professional characteristics, learners' demographic and home-literacy profiles, and the implementation of phonics instruction, guided reading, read-aloud sessions, and interactive language activities. Learners' literacy proficiency was determined using officially documented CRLA results covering phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, decoding, reading fluency, and reading comprehension, where available. The correlational component investigated the relationships between learners' literacy levels and their demographic characteristics and exposure to classroom reading interventions. Since the variables were observed without experimental manipulation, the design examined statistical associations rather than causal relationships (Wubante, 2020). Data were collected within a defined period, and the resulting findings served as the basis for developing a school-specific reading instruction plan, which was not implemented or evaluated during the study.

Research Locale or Study Setting

The study was conducted at Tigbao-Diit Elementary School (TDES), a public elementary school under District Learning II, Schools Division of Tacloban City, Department of Education Region VIII, during School Year 2026–2027, as specified in the source methodology. The research covered the school's three Grade 1 sections, where teachers implemented various instructional approaches to address learners' foundational reading needs. The school was selected because it provided the actual educational environment for examining early literacy development, classroom intervention practices, and learner performance. The researcher's assignment at the school provided familiarity with its instructional context; however, all research information was

obtained through standardized instruments and authorized assessment records. The findings were limited to the participating Grade 1 teachers, learners, and families of TDES and were not automatically generalized to other schools.

Participants or Data Sources

The study employed complete enumeration involving all three Grade 1 teachers and 76 Grade 1 learners enrolled in the school's three Grade 1 sections. One parent or legal guardian of each learner was invited to participate. Complete enumeration was appropriate because the population was limited, manageable, and directly relevant to the research objectives. All three teachers participated, representing a 100% response rate. Official MoSY CRLA records were available for all 76 learners, providing complete learner-assessment coverage. Of the 76 parents or legal guardians invited, 70 submitted complete and usable questionnaires, representing a response rate of 92.11%. The teachers provided information regarding their demographic and professional characteristics, technology exposure, and implementation of early literacy interventions. Parents or legal guardians supplied learner demographic and home-reading information, while the authorized CRLA records provided literacy assessment results and classifications. All 76 official CRLA records were included in the descriptive literacy analysis, while the 70 complete learner-parent records were used for analyses involving demographic and home-reading variables. All 76 learners had CRLA records linkable to their respective classroom intervention scores. Confidential research codes were used to match the datasets without disclosing participant identities. Because learners from the same section shared teacher-reported intervention scores, classroom clustering was considered when interpreting the results.

Research Instruments or Materials

Three complementary research instruments were utilized: the Questionnaire for Parents or Legal Guardians, the Questionnaire for Grade 1 Teachers, and the MoSY CRLA Results Data Extraction Form. These instruments were developed or organized according to the approved research questions and the variables examined in the study. The parent or legal guardian questionnaire collected learners' age, gender, parents' occupation, mother tongue spoken at home, parents' or guardians' educational background, number of siblings, and frequency of reading activities at home. Home-literacy activities included shared reading, storytelling, letter-sound practice, word games, vocabulary discussions, and story retelling. Frequency was measured using a six-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 5 (two or more times a day). The teacher questionnaire obtained demographic and professional information, technology exposure, and the implementation of early literacy interventions. The 16-item technology exposure scale covered routine professional use, technology-supported instruction, assessment and communication, and professional learning, using a five-point frequency scale from 1 (never) to 5 (daily or almost daily). Intervention implementation was measured across phonics instruction, guided reading, read-aloud sessions, and interactive language activities, with eight indicators per intervention. Responses followed a five-category scale ranging from 0 (not implemented) to 4 (always implemented). The MoSY CRLA Results Data Extraction Form recorded learners' official literacy assessment results, reading-fluency and comprehension information, and corresponding proficiency classifications. Teacher-advisers extracted the information directly from authorized records, and the researcher verified its accuracy. Official CRLA scores and classifications were preserved without modification. The researcher-developed questionnaires underwent content validation involving three expert and master teachers, producing a Scale-Level Content Validity Index of .92. The revised instruments were pretested at Lucio Vivero Elementary School with four Grade 1 teachers and 15 parents or legal guardians. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .74 for the teacher questionnaire and .702 for the parent or guardian questionnaire, indicating acceptable

preliminary internal consistency. These findings were interpreted cautiously because of the limited pilot sample, particularly for the teacher questionnaire. The official CRLA instrument was not reconstructed or revalidated; only the extraction form was reviewed for accuracy, completeness, and compatibility with existing records.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researcher obtained the required ethical clearance and institutional permissions from Cebu Technological University, the Schools Division of Tacloban City, and the school head of Tigbao-Diit Elementary School. Coordination with the Grade 1 teachers established the procedures for questionnaire administration, CRLA record extraction, and participant protection. Following expert validation and pretesting, the finalized questionnaires were administered to the participating teachers and parents or legal guardians. Written informed consent was secured, and age-appropriate learner assent was obtained for the use of official literacy records. Participation was voluntary, with no academic or professional consequences for refusal or withdrawal. Data collection involved three sequential activities. First, the teachers completed questionnaires concerning their profiles, technology exposure, and early literacy intervention implementation. Second, parents or legal guardians provided learners' demographic characteristics and home-reading information. Third, teacher-advisers extracted the official MoSY CRLA results using the prescribed data extraction form and confidential learner codes. The researcher subsequently reviewed the completed instruments and official records for accuracy, completeness, consistency, duplicate entries, and missing information. The finalized dataset contained three complete teacher records, 76 official learner CRLA records, and 70 complete matched learner-parent records. Missing parent responses were not estimated or substituted, and official CRLA scores and classifications were retained as originally recorded.

Data Analysis

The collected data were encoded, verified, and analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical procedures aligned with the research questions and measurement levels of the variables. Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe categorical characteristics of teachers and learners, while means, standard deviations, and ranges summarized appropriate numerical variables. Weighted means and standard deviations described teachers' technology exposure, learners' home-reading frequency, and the extent of implementation of the four early literacy interventions. Separate subscale means were computed for phonics instruction, guided reading, read-aloud sessions, and interactive language activities using their prescribed scoring and interpretation ranges. Learners' literacy proficiency was analyzed through the official MoSY CRLA scores and classifications. Frequencies and percentages summarized proficiency categories, while means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values, average words per minute, and comprehension percentages were reported when supported by the authorized records. No unauthorized scoring thresholds, alternative classifications, or composite literacy measures were introduced. The relationships between learners' demographic characteristics and CRLA literacy outcomes were examined using the 70 complete matched learner-parent records. Pearson's product-moment correlation or Spearman's rank-order correlation was applied to appropriate numerical or ordinal variables. Point-biserial correlation, independent-samples t-tests, analysis of variance, Kruskal-Wallis tests, chi-square tests, Fisher's exact tests, and ordinal regression were considered according to variable characteristics, statistical assumptions, and sample adequacy. Relationships involving classroom intervention implementation were examined cautiously because the 76 learner records were distributed across only three classrooms, and learners within the same classroom shared identical teacher-reported intervention scores. Spearman's rank-order correlation was considered for exploratory analysis, but the limited number of

classroom clusters restricted statistical inference. The null hypotheses were evaluated at the .05 significance level. Results with p-values below .05 were considered statistically significant, while values equal to or greater than .05 resulted in failure to reject the corresponding null hypothesis. Statistical significance was interpreted alongside the direction and strength of relationships, applicable effect sizes, confidence intervals, and study limitations. The findings were interpreted as associations rather than evidence of causation. Finally, the findings concerning learner characteristics, literacy proficiency, intervention implementation, and identified instructional needs were synthesized to formulate the Early Literacy Enhanced Reading Instruction Plan. The proposed plan included instructional objectives, activities, responsible personnel, implementation schedules, resources, performance indicators, and monitoring procedures.

Ethical Consideration

The study adhered to the ethical principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, respect for persons, confidentiality, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and responsible data management. Ethical clearance and institutional authorization were secured before participant recruitment and access to official learner records. Written consent was obtained from participating teachers and parents or legal guardians, while learners were provided with age-appropriate explanations and opportunities to express assent. Participants were informed of their right to refuse or withdraw without affecting academic standing, employment, classroom instruction, or access to school services. To safeguard privacy, participants were assigned confidential research codes, and personally identifiable information was excluded from the statistical dataset and research findings. Identity keys were stored separately from questionnaires and extracted CRLA records. Findings were reported collectively to prevent the identification or ranking of individual learners, teachers, families, or classrooms. Additional safeguards addressed the researcher's professional association with the school and the potential for indirect identification of the three participating teachers. Official CRLA records were accessed only with appropriate authorization and were used exclusively for the approved research purposes. Paper records were secured, electronic files were password-protected, and data access was restricted to authorized research personnel. The collection, processing, storage, reporting, retention, and disposal of personal information complied with Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Research records were subject to the retention requirements of the approved ethics protocol and institutional policies, followed by secure destruction or permanent deletion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic and Professional Characteristics of Respondents

3.1.1 Profile of Grade 1 Teachers

The three Grade 1 teachers were female, with a mean age of 42.33 years (SD = 2.88). Two teachers (66.67%) had bachelor's degrees with master's units, while one (33.33%) had completed a master's degree. Two held Teacher III positions, and one held a Teacher II position. Technology exposure was high (M = 4.19, SD = 0.47). Teaching experience ranged from 3 to 22 years, averaging 12.67 years (SD = 9.50), while relevant training averaged 96 hours (SD = 24.00). These results indicated that the teachers possessed graduate-level educational exposure, varied teaching experience, and substantial professional-development participation. The findings suggest that the school has an established foundation for implementing literacy interventions and technology-supported instructional activities. However, professional qualifications, teaching experience, and training hours do not independently establish instructional effectiveness. Shelton et al. (2023) emphasized that literacy-focused professional development can improve teachers' knowledge and instructional practices, while Amemasor et al. (2025) highlighted the importance of sustained professional development for effective technology

integration. Similarly, Filderman et al. (2025) demonstrated that reading-focused professional development positively influences teacher outcomes. These findings support continuing instructional coaching and monitoring aligned with the teachers' actual literacy-instruction needs.

3.1.2 Profile of Grade 1 Learners

Among the 70 learners with complete demographic records, 35 (50.00%) were six years old, 33 (47.14%) were seven, and two (2.86%) were five, with a mean age of 6.44 years. Forty learners (57.14%) were female, while 30 (42.86%) were male. Waray-Waray was the sole reported home language of 50 learners (71.43%), while 20 (28.57%) used Waray-Waray together with Filipino or Cebuano. Twenty-seven parents or guardians (38.57%) were college graduates, and 17 (24.29%) had reached college level. Parents' occupations varied, although 24 respondents (34.29%) did not specify an occupation. Learners had an average of 1.53 siblings (SD = 0.96). Home reading activities were reported as frequent or very frequent for 55 learners (78.57%), with an overall mean frequency rating of 4.83 (SD = 1.46). The findings indicate that learners came from varied family, educational, and linguistic environments, requiring differentiated and culturally responsive literacy support. The prevalence of Waray-Waray provides opportunities to connect familiar language experiences with classroom reading instruction. Kittle et al. (2024) emphasized that first-language knowledge can support literacy development in additional languages. Tan and Macaraeg (2024) and Labareno and Gabuya (2025) likewise identified parental involvement and family literacy experiences as relevant considerations in beginning reading. Nevertheless, demographic characteristics and reported home-reading frequency should not be treated as direct measures of literacy proficiency.

3.2 Extent of Implementation of Early Literacy Interventions

3.2.1 Phonics Instruction and Guided Reading

Phonics instruction obtained the highest implementation mean of 3.27 (SD = 0.07), followed by guided reading with a mean of 3.17 (SD = 0.07). Phonics was implemented to a very great extent, while guided reading was implemented to a great extent. The results indicated that teachers regularly provided instruction involving sound-symbol relationships, blending, segmentation, word recognition, guided text reading, corrective feedback, and assessment-informed instructional support. The strong implementation of phonics reflects the instructional emphasis on foundational reading competencies. Lane et al. (2025) demonstrated the value of systematic foundational reading instruction involving phonemic awareness and phonics among kindergarten and first-grade learners. Morgan et al. (2024) also emphasized the importance of instructional design, teacher guidance, appropriate text selection, and assessment-informed grouping in guided reading. Although both approaches were regularly implemented, their high implementation ratings did not establish that they independently improved learners' reading proficiency.

3.2.2 Read-Aloud Sessions and Interactive Language Activities

Interactive language activities obtained a mean implementation rating of 3.20 (SD = 0.00), while read-aloud sessions obtained the lowest mean of 3.13 (SD = 0.07). The overall implementation mean across the four interventions was 3.19 (SD = 0.02). These findings showed that teachers regularly conducted activities involving storytelling, vocabulary development, oral discussions, questioning, language games, and learner participation. However, read-aloud sessions were

comparatively less frequent than the other measured instructional practices. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening purposeful oral-language and comprehension instruction alongside phonics and guided reading. Baker and Santoro (2023) emphasized that effective read-aloud instruction depends on both appropriate instructional content and the quality of teacher interaction, questioning, vocabulary support, and learner engagement. Kittle et al. (2024) similarly recognized oral-language development and meaningful interaction as important components of multilingual literacy instruction. Strengthening these activities may support more balanced literacy instruction, although their actual contribution to learners' reading outcomes requires further assessment.

3.3 Reading Proficiency Levels of Grade 1 Learners

3.3.1 Phonological Awareness and Alphabet Knowledge

The CRLA results for 70 learners indicated relatively strong foundational literacy readiness. In phonological awareness, 52 learners (74.29%) were classified as Grade Ready, 12 (17.14%) as Light Refreshers, and six (8.57%) as Full Refreshers. Alphabet knowledge demonstrated stronger performance, with 56 learners (80.00%) classified as Grade Ready, six (8.57%) as Moderate Refreshers, and eight (11.43%) as Full Refreshers. Thus, most learners demonstrated expected foundational sound and alphabet knowledge, although 18 required phonological-awareness support and 14 required additional alphabet instruction. These findings indicate that learners had developed relatively strong recognition of spoken-language sounds and alphabetic symbols. Al-Zoubi and Abunawas (2025) emphasized the importance of phonological awareness in early literacy development, while Lane et al. (2025) highlighted the instructional value of systematic phonemic-awareness and phonics activities. However, foundational readiness does not necessarily indicate successful word reading or comprehension. Learners requiring refresher support may benefit from targeted sound manipulation, letter-sound correspondence, blending, and cumulative practice.

3.3.2 Decoding Skills

Decoding emerged as a major literacy difficulty. Only 12 learners (17.14%) were classified as Grade Ready, while 40 (57.14%) were Light Refreshers, five (7.14%) were Moderate Refreshers, and 13 (18.57%) were Full Refreshers. Overall, 58 learners (82.86%) required additional decoding support. The considerable difference between alphabet readiness (80.00%) and decoding readiness (17.14%) indicated that many learners experienced difficulty applying their knowledge of letters and sounds to actual word recognition. The findings suggest a substantial gap between foundational knowledge and its application in reading printed words. Lane et al. (2025) emphasized systematic instruction involving phonemic awareness, letter-sound relationships, blending, and word-reading practice as important components of early literacy development. The results therefore support strengthening cumulative phonics instruction, guided word reading, decodable-text activities, and differentiated intervention. Nevertheless, the findings do not establish which specific instructional factors produced the observed decoding difficulties.

3.3.3 Reading Fluency

Reading fluency results showed that 17 learners (24.29%) were classified at Level 4, 12 (17.14%) at Level 3, 16 (22.86%) at Level 2, and 25 (35.71%) at Level 1. The lowest fluency category contained the largest proportion of learners, while 29 learners (41.43%) reached Levels 3 or 4. This distribution indicated that a substantial proportion of learners continued to experience

difficulty reading connected text with the expected accuracy and automaticity. The findings are consistent with the learners' substantial decoding difficulties, suggesting that limited word-recognition proficiency may constrain connected-text reading. Steklács and Vuong (2026) identified reading fluency as an important developmental connection between decoding and comprehension. Likewise, Leachman et al. (2025) demonstrated a strong relationship between text-reading fluency and reading comprehension across educational levels. These findings support instructional attention to guided oral reading, repeated reading, accuracy, pacing, and meaningful engagement with connected texts rather than reading speed alone.

3.3.4 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension showed the greatest concentration of learners at the lowest recorded level. Forty-five learners (64.29%) were classified at Level 1, eight (11.43%) at Level 2, 10 (14.29%) at Level 3, and seven (10.00%) at Level 4. Only 17 learners (24.29%) reached Levels 3 or 4. The results demonstrated that comprehension was a particularly substantial instructional concern, with almost two-thirds of learners placed in the lowest recorded category. The findings indicate that many learners encountered difficulty constructing meaning from written text, potentially reflecting challenges involving word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary, and language comprehension. Leachman et al. (2025) emphasized that text-reading fluency and comprehension are strongly related, although the strength of this relationship varies according to developmental and assessment characteristics. Barnuevo and Lastrella (2023) similarly identified foundational literacy gaps among Grade 1 learners requiring targeted instructional support. Baker and Santoro (2023) further emphasized the importance of vocabulary instruction and purposeful questioning during read-aloud activities. The findings therefore support integrated instruction addressing both accurate reading and comprehension.

3.3.5 Overall Reading Proficiency

The overall CRLA reading profile indicated that 15 learners (21.43%) were Reading at Grade Level, 15 (21.43%) were Transitioning Readers, 18 (25.71%) were Developing Readers, 17 (24.29%) were High Emerging Readers, and five (7.14%) were Low Emerging Readers. Developing Readers constituted the largest category, while only approximately one-fifth of the learners achieved the Reading at Grade Level classification. Consequently, 55 learners (78.57%) were classified below grade level and required varying forms of instructional support.

The findings demonstrate that literacy proficiency varied considerably across the participating learners and could not be adequately addressed through a single uniform intervention. Learners at emerging and developing levels require differentiated support corresponding to their documented reading needs, while transitioning readers may benefit from continued opportunities to strengthen fluency and comprehension. Morgan et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of assessment-informed instructional grouping, and Labareno and Gabuya (2025) highlighted family-supported literacy activities as potential complements to classroom intervention. These findings reinforce the importance of a coordinated and individualized reading instruction plan.

3.4 Relationships Between Learner Characteristics and Literacy Levels

3.4.1 Age, Sex, and Literacy Proficiency

Learners' age showed a significant inverse relationship with phonological awareness ($r = -.438$, $p < .001$), but no significant relationship with the remaining literacy dimensions. Sex was

significantly associated with phonological awareness (rpb = .402, p = .001) and alphabet knowledge (rpb = .400, p = .001). Under the numerical coding used, female learners tended to demonstrate stronger results in these two foundational domains. However, sex was not significantly associated with decoding, reading fluency, reading comprehension, or overall reading profile. These findings indicate that age and sex were associated with selected foundational literacy outcomes but did not consistently explain broader reading proficiency. The inverse age relationship should be interpreted cautiously because learners were concentrated within a narrow age range. Similarly, the observed differences between male and female learners should not be interpreted as inherent differences in reading capacity. Kittle et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of considering multiple linguistic and learning-related factors in reading development. The findings support assessment-based instructional decisions rather than intervention allocation based solely on demographic characteristics.

3.4.2 Parents' Occupation and Home Language

Parents' occupation showed weak positive relationships with reading fluency (rpb = .251, p = .036) and reading comprehension (rpb = .284, p = .017), but not with the other literacy outcomes. Home language was significantly associated with alphabet knowledge (rpb = −.309, p = .009) and overall reading profile (rpb = −.277, p = .020). Under the coding applied, learners from households using Waray-Waray together with Filipino or Cebuano tended to obtain higher numerical results in these two domains than learners from households reporting Waray-Waray alone. Other relationships involving home language were not statistically significant. The results suggest that selected household and linguistic characteristics were associated with literacy performance, although these associations do not establish causal relationships. Tan and Macaraeg (2024) identified family characteristics as relevant considerations in parental reading involvement, while Kittle et al. (2024) emphasized that multilingual learners may draw upon their existing linguistic knowledge in developing literacy. The findings do not imply that Waray-Waray negatively influences reading development. Moreover, the substantial number of unspecified parental occupations requires caution when interpreting the reduced occupational categories used in the correlation analysis.

3.4.3 Parental Educational Attainment and Number of Siblings

Parents' or guardians' educational attainment showed significant positive relationships with decoding (rs = .421, p < .001), reading fluency (rs = .322, p = .007), reading comprehension (rs = .322, p = .007), and overall reading profile (rs = .278, p = .021). The number of siblings demonstrated significant inverse relationships with alphabet knowledge (r = −.285, p = .017), decoding (r = −.345, p = .003), reading fluency (r = −.350, p = .003), and overall reading profile (r = −.297, p = .013). Neither variable was significantly associated with phonological awareness, while sibling count was also unrelated to reading comprehension at the predetermined significance level. These findings suggest that parental educational background and household composition were associated with particular reading competencies. Tan and Macaraeg (2024) and Labareno and Gabuya (2025) identified parental education and family literacy support as relevant considerations in early reading development. However, family size should not be interpreted as inherently disadvantageous. Li et al. (2025) demonstrated the potential contribution of structured sibling shared-reading activities to literacy development. The findings support accessible parent guidance and appropriately organized sibling-supported reading activities without attributing learners' reading difficulties directly to household characteristics.

3.4.4 Frequency of Home Reading Activities

The reported frequency of home reading activities was not significantly associated with phonological awareness ($r = .106$, $p = .381$), alphabet knowledge ($r = .058$, $p = .634$), decoding ($r = .111$, $p = .359$), reading fluency ($r = .170$, $p = .160$), reading comprehension ($r = .044$, $p = .719$), or overall reading profile ($r = .081$, $p = .505$). Although all coefficients were positive, their magnitudes were weak and did not reach the .05 significance threshold. The findings indicate that reported reading frequency alone did not significantly differentiate learners' CRLA results in this study. This contrasts with the broader evidence on the potential benefits of home literacy support discussed by Tan and Macaraeg (2024) and Labareno and Gabuya (2025). However, the absence of significant associations should not be interpreted as evidence that home reading is ineffective. Differences in instructional quality, duration, reading materials, learner engagement, and adult assistance may not have been captured by the frequency measure. The findings emphasize the need to consider the nature of home literacy activities rather than their reported frequency alone.

3.5 Relationships Between Early Literacy Intervention Implementation and Reading Proficiency

3.5.1 Phonics Instruction and Guided Reading

Phonics instruction and guided reading produced identical reported correlation coefficients. Both were inversely associated with decoding ($r = -.457$, $p < .001$), reading fluency ($r = -.241$, $p = .044$), and overall reading profile ($r = -.239$, $p = .046$). Neither intervention showed a statistically significant reported association with phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, or reading comprehension. The identical coefficients indicate that the intervention scores followed the same rank pattern across the three participating classrooms. These inverse relationships should not be interpreted as evidence that phonics instruction or guided reading reduced learners' reading proficiency. Lane et al. (2025) provided evidence supporting systematic foundational reading instruction, while Morgan et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of instructional quality and learner-responsive guided reading. The observed negative patterns may reflect teachers providing more intensive support to classrooms with greater reading difficulties. Because the intervention scores originated from only three classrooms, the reported learner-level significance values cannot provide reliable independent estimates of intervention effects.

3.5.2 Read-Aloud Sessions and Interactive Language Activities

Read-aloud implementation showed positive reported relationships with decoding ($r = .457$, $p < .001$), reading fluency ($r = .241$, $p = .044$), and overall reading profile ($r = .239$, $p = .046$), but no significant reported relationships with phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, or reading comprehension. Interactive language activities could not be included in the correlational analysis because all three teachers obtained the same implementation mean of 3.20, resulting in no variation in the predictor variable. The positive read-aloud relationships should be interpreted as exploratory classroom patterns rather than direct evidence of intervention effectiveness. Baker and Santoro (2023) emphasized that the educational value of read-aloud instruction depends on instructional quality, vocabulary development, teacher responsiveness, and learner participation. The identical correlation magnitudes but opposite directions relative to phonics and guided reading further indicate that the intervention variables were not statistically distinguishable in the available classroom data. The constant interactive-language rating likewise prevented meaningful correlation analysis.

3.5.3 Overall Intervention Implementation and Literacy Outcomes

Overall literacy intervention implementation showed the same reported inverse coefficients as phonics instruction and guided reading for decoding ($r = -.457$, $p < .001$), reading fluency ($r = -.241$, $p = .044$), and overall reading profile ($r = -.239$, $p = .046$). No statistically significant reported relationships were observed with phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, or reading comprehension. Although the original analysis identified selected associations at the .05 significance level, the intervention measures represented only three independent classroom-level observations. These findings indicate that intervention implementation and reading performance followed observable classroom patterns, but the available data were insufficient to determine the independent contribution of individual interventions. Filderman et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of instructional implementation in translating professional development into improved teaching practices, while Morgan et al. (2024) highlighted variation in the design and quality of guided reading. The results therefore support improved instructional documentation, direct classroom observation, repeated literacy assessment, and differentiated learner support. The proposed Early Literacy Enhanced Reading Instruction Plan should be interpreted as a response to documented instructional needs rather than as a tested intervention with established effectiveness.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that early literacy development among Grade 1 learners at Tigbao-Diit Elementary School was uneven despite the regular implementation of phonics instruction, guided reading, read-aloud sessions, and interactive language activities. Teachers reported the strongest implementation of phonics, while learners demonstrated comparatively stronger phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge than decoding, reading fluency, and comprehension. Most learners had not attained the expected overall reading level, indicating difficulties in progressing from foundational sound and letter recognition to meaningful connected-text reading. Learner characteristics demonstrated selective significant relationships with literacy outcomes, particularly parents' or guardians' educational attainment and number of siblings. However, the reported frequency of home reading activities was not significantly associated with literacy proficiency. Although selected intervention scores were associated with reading outcomes, the limited number of classrooms prevented conclusive statistical interpretation. Overall, the findings establish the need for differentiated, assessment-informed, and coordinated school-based literacy support.

Tigbao-Diit Elementary School should implement the proposed Early Literacy Enhanced Reading Instruction Plan, prioritizing decoding, reading fluency, and comprehension while sustaining phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge. School administrators and Grade 1 teachers should utilize official CRLA results to establish flexible instructional groups, strengthen systematic phonics instruction, conduct guided and repeated oral reading, and integrate interactive read-alouds, vocabulary development, and comprehension activities. The school should also establish differentiated family-literacy support through parent orientations, accessible reading materials, culturally responsive activities, and structured sibling-assisted reading where appropriate. Particular attention should be given to the quality and suitability of home-reading interactions rather than their frequency alone. Additionally, school leaders should strengthen instructional supervision through classroom observations, intervention documentation, teacher capability building, and regular assessment-based progress monitoring. Future researchers should examine the effectiveness of these interventions across

additional classrooms and schools using longitudinal or quasi-experimental approaches and appropriate statistical procedures.

The study was limited to Grade 1 learners and three teachers from a single public elementary school, restricting the generalizability of its findings. Its cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational design prevented causal conclusions regarding learner characteristics, instructional interventions, and literacy outcomes. Although 76 official CRLA records were available, only 70 learners had complete matched parent or guardian information for demographic analyses. Classroom intervention measures relied on teacher-reported implementation, and only three independent classroom scores were available, limiting statistical inference. The available CRLA records also determined which literacy components could be analyzed. Future studies may address these limitations through broader samples, repeated assessments, direct instructional observations, and stronger research designs.

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