



# Reading Proficiency and Comprehension Skills of Learners

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## Abstract

This study determines the influence of reading proficiency on the English comprehension skills of Grade 5 learners at Compra Elementary School, Pasacao District, Schools Division Office of Camarines Sur, for the School Year 2024–2025. It aimed to assess the learners' reading proficiency in terms of accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness, and decoding, and their comprehension skills across the literal, inferential, critical, creative, and evaluative levels. Employing a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 25 officially enrolled Grade 5 learners and were analyzed using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, and coefficient of determination.

The findings revealed that the learners' overall reading proficiency level was classified as "Fairly Satisfactory" with a mean score of 14.08, while the overall comprehension mean score was 8.84, indicating that both areas fell below the expected standards. Significant relationships were identified between specific components of reading proficiency and certain levels of comprehension. Notably, fluency showed a moderate influence on literal comprehension ( $r^2 = 0.40$ ), vocabulary demonstrated a weak influence on creative comprehension ( $r^2 = 0.25$ ), and decoding had a minimal influence on evaluative comprehension ( $r^2 = 0.19$ ). However, most of the relationships across other components and comprehension levels, particularly in the inferential and critical aspects, were weak or statistically insignificant.

Based on these findings, a reading intervention program titled Project P.R.E.P. (Reading Proficiency Enhancement Program for Grade 5 Learners) was developed to address the identified gaps in reading proficiency and to support the improvement of comprehension skills. The study concluded that both reading proficiency and comprehension levels among learners require enhancement, and that fluency, vocabulary, and decoding, while influential to a

degree, should be further developed. The continuous implementation of Project P.R.E.P. is recommended as a strategic measure to address these deficiencies and to promote sustained growth in the literacy performance of Grade 5 learners.

*Keywords: Reading Proficiency, Reading Comprehension Skills, Program Intervention*

## Introduction

Reading is undeniably one of the most crucial skills that students must master for both academic success and lifelong learning. Despite its importance, literacy remains a significant challenge worldwide, particularly in developing countries. The ability to read proficiently not only influences a student's academic performance but also shapes their future opportunities. Reading has always been a cornerstone of life, influencing education, effective communication, and continuous learning. In today's educational landscape, teachers face the daunting task of developing learners' reading proficiency. Achieving proficiency, where a learner can read accurately, quickly, and with comprehension, is a triumph for both students and educators.

The most important component of reading proficiency is reading comprehension, which serves as the foundation for all other aspects of literacy. In other words, reading comprehension refers to the ability to not only decode words and sentences but also to understand, interpret, and engage with the meaning of the text being read. It involves making connections between what is read and prior knowledge, as well as drawing inferences and understanding of a broader context of a text.

Despite increased school enrollment worldwide, a significant number of students struggle with basic reading skills. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, approximately 60% of adolescents globally lack minimum reading proficiency, highlighting that access to education does not always equate to quality learning outcomes.

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) most closely related to reading is SDG 4: Quality Education. This global goal aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Reading proficiency is a fundamental aspect of achieving quality education, as it directly impacts students' ability to learn and succeed academically. By improving literacy rates, we can help ensure that all individuals have the skills necessary to participate fully in society and access better opportunities in life. Addressing this issue has become a priority for the Department of Education (DepEd), which has launched various programs aimed at improving literacy skills, like the “Bawat Bata Bumabasa” or the 3Bs and with the parallel initiatives of Region V such as the “Bawat Batang Bicolano Bihasang Bumasa.”

In the Philippine context, the ability to read is considered a critical component of education. One of the latest laws in the Philippines that emphasizes reading is Republic Act No. 12028, known as the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act. Enacted in 2024, this law aims to address learning loss among basic education learners, with a particular focus on enhancing reading proficiency, to wit:

Reading proficiency refers to the ability to read text accurately, fluently, and with comprehension. It encompasses various skills such as word recognition, phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) continues to prioritize literacy through various programs. A recent initiative, starting January 12, 2024, involves implementing a reading program in all public schools to enhance the literacy skills of elementary and high school students. This program, part of DepEd's broader efforts to address learning losses, emphasizes the importance of reading proficiency and comprehension (DepEd, 2023). The relevant issuance for this reading program is DepEd Memorandum No. 431, s. 2023, which outlines the conduct of literacy intervention programs in English and Filipino for the School Year 2023-2024 (DepEd, 2023). This memorandum underscores the significance of enhancing literacy skills among students through targeted interventions. Despite this, the 2018 PISA results revealed that Filipino students are significantly behind their peers globally in terms of reading proficiency, with 80% of 15-year-olds scoring below the minimum level of proficiency in reading (OECD, 2019).

Reading proficiency is typically measured in terms of different levels, including accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and decoding. These levels provide a structured way for educators to assess students' reading abilities and identify areas for improvement. In the Philippines, the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) is used to assess these levels (DepEd Order No. 70, s. 2011). Phil-IRI allows teachers to evaluate students' reading skills and implement appropriate interventions based on their proficiency level.

The importance of assessing reading proficiency levels is well-documented in the literature. Accurate assessment of reading proficiency levels helps educators design targeted interventions that address specific reading deficits. For instance, students struggling with decoding may benefit from phonics-based instruction, while those with low fluency levels may need additional practice in reading aloud and timed reading exercises. In the Philippines, however, the implementation of assessments like Phil-IRI has been inconsistent due to limited resources and logistical challenges in schools.

The different levels of reading comprehension are essential for evaluating a student's ability to engage with text. These levels include literal comprehension, which involves understanding the explicit meaning of the text; inferential comprehension, which requires making connections between the text and prior knowledge; and evaluative comprehension, which involves critical thinking and judgment. The Phil-IRI also assesses students' reading comprehension levels, providing a comprehensive view of their reading abilities (DepEd, 2022).

Students who are proficient in decoding and fluent in reading are more likely to succeed at higher levels of comprehension. Students who struggle with literal comprehension are less likely to develop inferential and evaluative comprehension skills. This highlights the need for early interventions that focus on improving decoding and fluency to ensure students can advance to higher levels of comprehension.

Given the issues surrounding reading proficiency and comprehension, intervention strategies are necessary to address these challenges. In the Philippines, several initiatives have been implemented to enhance reading skills, including Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP) and the 5B initiative. These programs focus on improving early literacy skills, providing remedial reading instruction, and supporting teachers in delivering effective reading interventions (DepEd, 2022).

The “Bawat Batang Bicolano Bihasang Bumasa” initiative is a localized program under DepEd Region V that aims to ensure all Bicolano children are proficient readers by Grade 3. This initiative aligns with the national goals of ECARP and Phil-IRI, focusing on early intervention to address reading difficulties. The program involves intensive teacher training, distribution of supplementary reading materials, and community involvement to support students' reading development. The initiative's success lies in its holistic approach, which includes engaging parents and the broader community in promoting a culture of reading (DepEd, 2022).

Conducting this study was particularly important given the urgent need to improve reading outcomes among Filipino students. By exploring the factors influencing reading proficiency and comprehension, this research provided valuable insights that can inform policy decisions and guide educators in implementing effective reading intervention programs as an offshoot to improve reading.

*Section 4 of the ARAL Program Act mandates the establishment of a national learning intervention program targeting essential competencies, including reading. The law provides for both face-to-face and online (blended) tutorial sessions for learners who are struggling academically, ensuring adequate compensation for tutors. This initiative is a direct response to the urgent need to improve reading skills among Filipino students, as highlighted by recent assessments.*

## Reading Proficiency Skills

According to Nation (2020), vocabulary knowledge is a key predictor of reading success, as it allows readers to understand and make meaning of the texts they read. Stahl and Nagy (2019) define vocabulary as the words necessary for effective communication and comprehension, stressing that a strong vocabulary base helps students tackle more complex reading materials as they progress academically. Duke and Pearson (2020) emphasize that vocabulary knowledge is a primary contributor to reading comprehension, noting that students with robust vocabularies can understand text more quickly and easily.

Fluency in reading refers to the ability to read text accurately, quickly, and with appropriate expression. It bridges the gap between word recognition and comprehension, allowing readers to focus on the meaning of the text rather than decoding each word (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2021). In the Philippines, according to Cruz (2020), fluency in reading is an essential aspect of literacy development as it enables learners to read smoothly and comprehend texts more effectively. Santos (2021) defines fluency as not just speed in reading but the ability to read with expression, thereby understanding the meaning behind the text.

Rasinski (2019) advocates for repeated reading as one of the most effective ways to build fluency, allowing students to read more smoothly and with greater comprehension over time. Pikulski and Chard (2020) suggest that pairing phonics instruction with fluency practice is key, as decoding skills underpin the ability to read quickly and accurately. Kuhn and Schwanenflugel (2020) further recommend using partner reading, where students read aloud with a peer, allowing for immediate feedback and reinforcement of fluent reading behaviors.

Both local and foreign literature agree that fluency is a critical skill in reading development, and it can be attained through practices such as repeated reading, guided oral reading, and phonics instruction. Teachers can adopt these strategies to help learners develop reading fluency, which will ultimately support their comprehension and overall literacy skills.

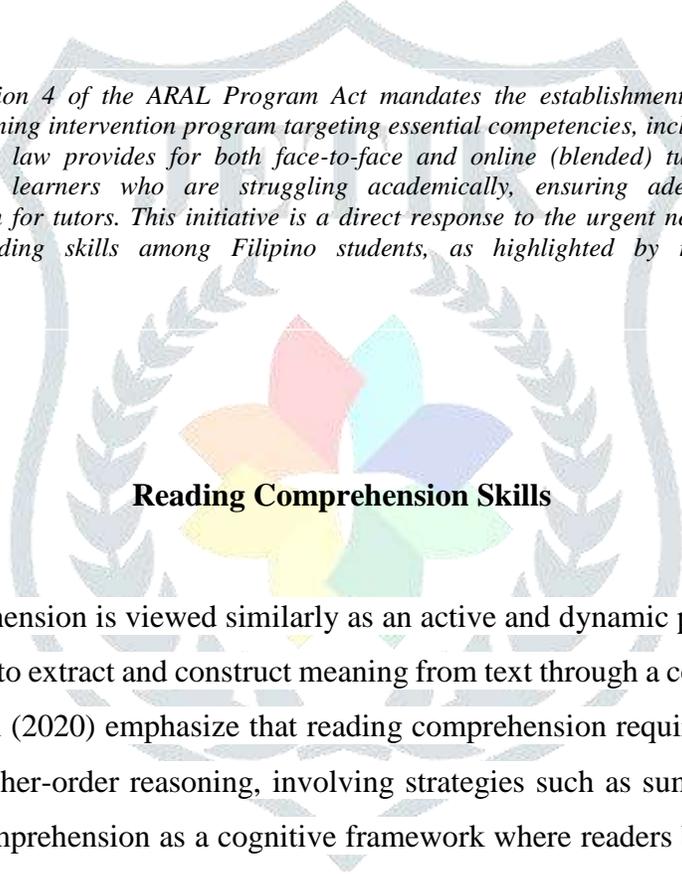
Also, Santos (2021) examines the correlation between vocabulary and fluency levels and their effects on comprehension abilities among primary school students. Through standardized assessments and qualitative interviews with both students and teachers, the research reveals that students with robust vocabulary knowledge demonstrate higher fluency and better comprehension skills. The findings suggest that explicit vocabulary instruction—such as integrating new words into contextually rich sentences and providing regular opportunities for practice—can significantly enhance reading proficiency. He recommends that teachers incorporate vocabulary-building activities into daily lessons to foster a richer linguistic environment.

On the other hand, Torres (2023) assesses the effectiveness of the "Bawat Batang Bicolano Bihasang Bumasa" initiative in improving reading proficiency among students in the Bicol Region. Utilizing participant feedback, focus group discussions, and academic performance data, the research reveals that the initiative significantly

enhances engagement and comprehension skills through targeted interventions tailored to local contexts. The researcher emphasizes the importance of community involvement and support, suggesting that local leaders collaborate with educators to sustain and expand literacy programs.

Wexler and Coyle (2022) investigated the impact of teacher training programs on reading instruction effectiveness. The study analyzed various professional development initiatives aimed at improving teachers' reading instruction strategies. Findings indicated that teachers who participated in specialized training demonstrated improved instructional practices, leading to better student reading proficiency and comprehension levels. The authors emphasize the necessity of ongoing professional development to equip educators with the skills needed to address diverse learning needs in literacy instruction.

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### Reading Comprehension Skills

In foreign literature, comprehension is viewed similarly as an active and dynamic process. Snow (2021) defines comprehension as the ability to extract and construct meaning from text through a complex interplay of cognitive processes. Duke and Pearson (2020) emphasize that reading comprehension requires readers to engage in both word-level decoding and higher-order reasoning, involving strategies such as summarization and questioning. Kintsch (2019) describes comprehension as a cognitive framework where readers build a mental representation of the text's meaning, utilizing their knowledge and the text's structure.

Creative comprehension is characterized by its emphasis on imaginative engagement with texts. According to McGuinness (2021), fostering creative comprehension involves encouraging students to visualize and create scenarios that extend beyond the text. Strategies such as creative writing exercises and artistic interpretations can help enhance this form of comprehension. Duke and Pearson (2020) also emphasize the importance of play-based learning to nurture creativity and imagination in reading.

Evaluative comprehension is essential for developing critical thinking skills. According to Snow (2021), this type of comprehension enables readers to assess the validity and reliability of the information presented. They suggest that teachers encourage students to engage in discussions about the quality of evidence within texts and its

implications. In addition, Fisher and Frey (2020) advocate for the use of rubrics to help students evaluate the effectiveness of arguments and claims in various texts.

According to Wexler et al. (2020), structured literacy programs, which incorporate explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, and comprehension strategies, are essential for developing reading proficiency, particularly for struggling readers. These programs systematically build students' skills, enabling them to make connections between sounds and letters while also fostering comprehension. Similarly, the National Reading Panel (2020) emphasizes the importance of integrating fluency training within reading interventions. The panel recommends strategies such as repeated reading and performance feedback, which can significantly improve students' reading fluency and comprehension.

Al Otaiba and Fuchs (2019) examined the relationship between early reading skills and subsequent comprehension outcomes in a diverse population of elementary students. Utilizing a longitudinal approach, the study assessed phonemic awareness, decoding, and comprehension skills through standardized measures. Results indicated that phonemic awareness and decoding proficiency were significant predictors of later comprehension abilities. The findings emphasize the importance of early intervention and suggest that targeted phonics instruction can enhance foundational reading skills, leading to improved academic performance in later grades.

Baker and Fuchs (2020) focused on the impact of vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension among second graders. The researchers implemented a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the effectiveness of explicit vocabulary teaching methods that integrated contextually rich sentences and active engagement strategies. Analysis of student performance revealed that those receiving explicit vocabulary instruction demonstrated substantial gains in comprehension skills. The study highlights the critical role of vocabulary development in literacy education and calls for educators to incorporate vocabulary-rich activities into their curricula.

Meanwhile, Chamberlain and Kearns (2021) investigated the effectiveness of structured reading interventions designed to improve fluency and comprehension among struggling readers. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the researchers collected data through assessments and classroom observations over an academic year. The results indicated that students participating in targeted interventions experienced significant improvements in both reading fluency and comprehension skills. This study underscores the necessity of implementing structured, evidence-based interventions in classrooms to address the diverse needs of learners and enhance overall literacy outcomes. Gough and Tunmer (2019) discussed the Simple View of Reading, a theoretical framework that posits reading comprehension as the product of decoding skills and language comprehension. The authors reviewed empirical studies supporting this model and its implications for literacy instruction. They argued that both components are essential for successful reading outcomes and that neglecting either aspect could hinder student progress.

Kershaw and Schmitt (2020) also analyzed the influence of reading engagement on comprehension outcomes among elementary students. Through surveys and observational data, the study identified key factors that promote student engagement, such as choice in reading materials and supportive classroom environments. The findings revealed a strong correlation between engagement levels and students' abilities to comprehend texts. The authors advocate for instructional strategies that enhance student motivation and involvement in reading activities, thereby improving comprehension and fostering a lifelong love of reading.

While Lai and Kuo (2021) examined the effectiveness of phonics instruction on literacy skills among first-grade students. Using a randomized controlled trial, the researchers compared the reading outcomes of students receiving phonics instruction to those in a control group. Results demonstrated that phonics instruction significantly enhanced students' decoding and comprehension abilities. The study supports the integration of systematic phonics approaches in early literacy curricula, highlighting the importance of foundational reading skills in promoting overall academic success. McKeown, Beck, and Blake (2019) explored the relationship between vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension among third graders. The study utilized a combination of assessments and qualitative interviews to gather data on students' vocabulary knowledge and comprehension skills. Findings indicated that robust vocabulary knowledge was a strong predictor of comprehension success, suggesting that vocabulary instruction should be prioritized in reading programs. The authors recommend instructional practices that focus on vocabulary development to enhance students' reading comprehension abilities.

## Methodology

This study employed descriptive-correlational method. Descriptive method was used to determine the proficiency level of learners along accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness and decoding; determine the comprehension level of learners along literal, inferential, critical, creative, and evaluative levels; and discuss the reading intervention program to improve the proficiency and comprehension of learners.

The correlational method was used to measure the relationship between the level of reading proficiency and comprehension skills and the extent of influence of the reading proficiency to the comprehension skills of the learners. This study employed total enumeration sampling where the researcher examined the entire population of the Grade 5 Learners of Compra Elementary School, Pasacao District for school year 2024-2025. The respondents were composed of 25 officially enrolled grade 5 learners.

## Results and Discussion

### Reading Proficiency Level of Grade 5 learners

The analysis and interpretation of the reading proficiency level of Grade 5 learners along accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness, and decoding focus on assessing foundational literacy skills crucial for academic success. By examining these specific components, educators gain insights into the strengths and challenges faced by learners in their reading development. This assessment provides a basis for designing targeted interventions aimed at improving overall reading proficiency and closing identified gaps.

Table 1 provides an analysis of the reading proficiency levels of Grade 5 learners across five key areas such as accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness, and decoding. The mean score for accuracy is 1.80, interpreted as Did Not Meet Expectation (DNME). Vocabulary has a mean score of 2.96, also falling under DNME. Fluency shows a higher mean score of 3.52, which is interpreted as Satisfactory. Phonemic awareness has a mean score of 2.56, categorized as DNME. Decoding has a mean score of 3.24, interpreted as Fairly Satisfactory. Overall, the combined mean score for these aspects is 14.08, with an interpretation of Fairly Satisfactory. The standard deviation (SD) values indicate a relatively homogenous performance among grade 5 learners in vocabulary (SD=0.509) and fluency (SD=0.823), while decoding (SD=1.137) shows more variability. This indicates that while some areas like fluency and decoding show satisfactory performance, other areas such as accuracy, vocabulary, and phonemic awareness need improvement. These suggests that while learners perform relatively well in certain aspects like fluency and decoding, significant improvements are needed in accuracy, vocabulary, and phonemic awareness.

**Table 1**  
**Reading Proficiency Level of Grade 5 Learners**

Reading Proficiency	NI	Mean	SD	PL	Interpretation
Accuracy	5	1.80	0.91	36.00	DNME
Vocabulary	5	2.96	0.51	59.20	DNME
Fluency	5	3.52	0.82	70.40	S
Phonemic Awareness	5	2.56	0.92	51.20	DNME
Decoding	5	3.24	1.14	64.80	FS
<b>Overall</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14.08</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>56.32</b>	<b>FS</b>

SD > 3.00 Heterogenous

SD < 3.00 Homogenous

Legend:

Scale	Interpretation
90-100	Outstanding (O)
85-89	Very Satisfactory (VS)
80-84	Satisfactory (S)
75-79	Fairly Satisfactory (FS)
Below 75	Did not meet Expectation (DNME)

The data reveals a disparity in the reading skills of the Grade 5 learners, highlighting a stronger performance in fluency and decoding relative to other aspects. The lower mean scores and interpretations for accuracy, vocabulary, and phonemic awareness indicate foundational gaps that could hinder broader reading comprehension. Overall, the average transmuted PL score was 74.80, falling within the Fairly Satisfactory range.

The assessment of reading proficiency levels, including accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness, and decoding, is supported by literature emphasizing the multidimensional nature of reading skills. Study like those by Bautista and Manalo (2020) underscore the critical role of decoding and fluency in building a strong reading foundation, while local initiatives such as the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) assess these competencies to identify gaps.

Schema Theory helps explain the variations in students' reading proficiency, as their ability to process and comprehend texts is shaped by the strength and breadth of their mental schemas. Students who perform well in fluency and decoding likely have developed strong linguistic and phonological schemas, allowing them to recognize words and read smoothly. However, areas like accuracy, vocabulary, and phonemic awareness suggest that these students may lack sufficient schemas in these domains, hindering their performance in these areas.

### **Reading Comprehension Level of Grade 5 learners**

The comprehension level of Grade 5 learners is evaluated across different dimensions, including literal, inferential, critical, creative, and evaluative understanding. This analysis aims to identify how well students engage with, interpret, and derive meaning from texts at various depths of comprehension. Understanding these levels allows educators to tailor instructional strategies that foster higher-order thinking and deepen overall reading comprehension.

Table 2 outlines the comprehension levels in five areas: literal, inferential, critical, creative, and evaluative comprehension. The mean score for literal comprehension is 2.56, interpreted as Did Not Meet Expectation (DNME). Inferential comprehension has a mean score of 1.88, also falling under DNME. Critical comprehension shows a lower mean score of 1.12, categorized as DNME. Creative comprehension has a mean score of 1.48, which is interpreted as DNME. Evaluative comprehension has a mean score of 1.80, again falling under DNME. Overall, the combined mean score for these aspects is 8.84, with an interpretation of DNME. The SD values for comprehension levels suggest that literal comprehension (SD= 1.083) and inferential comprehension (SD= 0.8812) have moderate variability, indicating differences in learners' abilities in these areas. This indicates that all areas of reading comprehension need significant improvement.

The low performance in all comprehension categories signals a critical need for educational interventions aimed at improving reading comprehension. The especially low mean scores for inferential, critical, creative, and evaluative comprehension underscore specific challenges that may affect learners' ability to engage deeply with texts. Overall, this data suggests that the comprehension levels of these learners lag significantly behind

proficiency standards, potentially impacting their overall academic performance and highlighting the urgency of tailored instructional strategies.

**Table 2**  
**Reading Comprehension Level of Grade 5 learners**

<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	<b>NI</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Literal	5	2.56	1.083	51.2	DNME
Inferential	5	1.88	0.8812	37.6	DNME
Critical	5	1.12	0.781	22.4	DNME
Creative	5	1.48	0.823	29.6	DNME
Evaluative	5	1.8	0.817	36	DNME
<b>Overall</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>8.84</b>	<b>2.421</b>	<b>29.333</b>	<b>DNME</b>

SD > 3.00 Heterogenous

SD < 3.00 Homogenous

*Legend:*

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
90-100	Outstanding ( <b>O</b> )
85-89	Very Satisfactory ( <b>VS</b> )
80-84	Satisfactory ( <b>S</b> )
75-79	Fairly Satisfactory ( <b>FS</b> )
Below 75	Did not meet Expectation ( <b>DNME</b> )

The evaluation of comprehension levels in areas like literal, inferential, critical, creative, and evaluative understanding aligns with extensive research on reading comprehension as a multifaceted skill. McKeown et al. (2029) highlight effective comprehension strategies, including questioning and graphic organizers, as vital for improving student understanding across these levels. Studies by Reyes (2022) emphasize that a reader's comprehension performance is closely linked to their ability to engage with texts both analytically and creatively. Moreover, the K-12 curriculum guidelines by DepEd stress the importance of comprehensive comprehension development as a key learning outcome, ensuring students can think critically and creatively as they navigate complex texts.

Relating to Flavell's Metacognitive Theory, the results also reflect that none of the comprehension areas achieved a satisfactory performance level, indicating that metacognitive challenges are pervasive across all comprehension domains. The students' performance reflects deficiencies in both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation. They may struggle with monitoring their understanding, identifying breakdowns, and selecting appropriate strategies.

## Significant Relationship between the Reading Proficiency level and Comprehension Skills

A strong reading proficiency level often lays the foundation for effective comprehension, as fluency and accuracy enable readers to focus more on extracting meaning rather than struggling with individual words. Conversely, well-developed comprehension skills enhance reading experiences, making them purposeful and meaningful.

Table 3 presents the test on significant relationship between the level of reading proficiency and comprehension skills. It can be gleaned from the table that in terms of literal aspect only fluency and decoding signified a significant relationship based from the obtained r-values of 0.63 and -0.45 and p-values of 0.00 and 0.03 respectively (less than the 0.05 level of significance) while no significant relationship was noted along accuracy, vocabulary and phoenemic awareness based from the computed r-values ranging from -0.19 to 0.32 and p-values ranging from 0.12 to 0.60 (greater than the 0.05 level of significance). In the aspect of inferential, no significant relationship was noted along the 5 aspects of level of comprehension skills as described by the r-values ranging from -0.10 up to 0.23 and p-values ranging from 0.28 up to 0.97 respectively. Likewise, critical aspect, no significant relationship was also noted in accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness, and decoding based on the computed r-values. For creative level, accuracy ( $r = 0.43$ ,  $p = 0.03$ , S) signifies a significant weak positive correlation and vocabulary ( $r = 0.50$ ,  $p = 0.01$ , S) signifies a significant medium positive relationship. Lastly, for evaluative level, decoding ( $r = 0.44$ ,  $p = 0.03$ , S) signifies a positive and significant relationship other components such as accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, and phonemic awareness show very weak, non-significant correlations ( $r\text{-values} \leq 0.16$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

The findings suggest that reading proficiency plays a more prominent role in literal comprehension, particularly through fluency and decoding. However, its influence appears to diminish when it comes to higher-order comprehension skills such as inferential and critical aspects. These results may indicate that additional cognitive or contextual factors, beyond basic reading proficiency, contribute to more complex comprehension processes.

**Table 3**

**Test on Significant Relationship between the Reading Proficiency Level and Comprehension Skills**

Level of Reading proficiency	Level of Comprehension skills	r-value	p-value	Int.
Literal	Accuracy	0.32	0.12	NS
	Vocabulary	-0.19	0.36	NS
	Fluency	0.63	0.00	S
	Phonemic Awareness	0.11	0.60	NS
	Decoding	-0.45	0.03	S
Inferential	Accuracy	-0.10	0.64	NS
	Vocabulary	0.12	0.55	NS
	Fluency	0.01	0.97	NS
	Phonemic Awareness	0.23	0.28	NS
	Decoding	0.17	0.42	NS

Critical	Accuracy	0.06	0.79	NS
	Vocabulary	-0.15	0.49	NS
	Fluency	0.31	0.14	NS
	Phonemic Awareness	0.00	0.99	NS
	Decoding	-0.36	0.08	NS
Creative	Accuracy	0.43	0.03	S
	Vocabulary	0.50	0.01	S
	Fluency	-0.07	0.74	NS
	Phonemic Awareness	0.10	0.65	NS
	Decoding	0.22	0.28	NS
Evaluative	Accuracy	0.16	0.45	NS
	Vocabulary	0.13	0.54	NS
	Fluency	-0.07	0.74	NS
	Phonemic Awareness	-0.08	0.72	NS
	Decoding	0.44	0.03	S

**Legend:**

p-value &lt; 0.05 Significant

p-value ≥ 0.05 Not Significant

**Computed r - value**

Less than +/- 0.19

+/- 0.20 to +/- 0.39

+/- 0.40 to +/- 0.69

+/- 0.70 to +/- 0.89

+/- 0.90 to +/- 0.99

+/- 1.00

**Interpretation**

Negligible Correlation (NC)

Low Correlation (LC)

Moderate Correlation (MC)

High Correlation (HC)

Very High Correlation (VHC)

Perfect Correlation (PC)

Research by Reyes and Ocampo (2022) contradicts with the findings of the study. Former researchers suggest that variations in reading proficiency, such as phonemic awareness and vocabulary are significantly related to comprehension abilities. Findings by Guerrero (2021) reinforce the notion that strong foundational skills, like fluency and accuracy, are relationship difference between these aspects, as reflected in studies on literacy development, points to the need for balanced instruction that addresses gaps between proficiency and comprehension.

The findings align with Flavell's Metacognitive Theory, emphasizing that while reading proficiency facilitates literal comprehension, metacognitive abilities are crucial for mastering inferential and critical comprehension. Educators should therefore prioritize interventions that combine skill-based reading instruction with the development of metacognitive strategies to foster well-rounded, effective readers.

### Extent of Influence of Reading Proficiency on the Comprehension Skills

The discussion on the extent of influence of reading proficiency on comprehension skills explores the intricate relationship between foundational reading abilities and higher-order comprehension processes. Reading proficiency, encompassing components like accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness, and decoding, serves as the groundwork for effective comprehension. Each element contributes to the reader's capacity to decode and interpret texts efficiently, facilitating various comprehension levels such as literal, inferential, critical, creative, and evaluative understanding.

Table 4 presents the Extent of Influence of Level of Reading Proficiency on the Comprehension skills of Students. Data revealed that in terms of literal, only fluency had a medium effect as describe by the  $r^2$  value of 0.40, weak influence in decoding based on the  $r^2$  value of 0.20, and very weak influence in accuracy, vocabulary and phonemic awareness based on the computed  $r^2$  values of 0.10, 0.04 and 0.01 respectively. In inferential aspect signified very weak influence along the five aspects as showed on their  $r^2$  values ranging from 0.00 up to 0.05. Likewise with critical aspect showed a very weak influence on the five aspects based from the computed  $r^2$  values ranging from 0.00 to 0.13. Moreover, on creative aspect signified a very weak influence along accuracy, fluency, phonemic awareness, and decoding as described by the  $r^2$  values of 0.18 ,0.00, 0.01 and 0.05 respectively while weak influence on vocabulary based from the  $r^2$  value of 0.25. Additionally in evaluative aspect had a very weak influence in all 5 aspects as indicated in the computed  $r^2$  values of ranging 0.01 to 0.19.

Data presented suggest that Literal comprehension benefits most from reading proficiency, particularly fluency. For higher-order comprehension skills (inferential, critical, creative, and evaluative), the relationships with reading proficiency are weak or very weak, suggesting the need for additional skills like metacognition, reasoning, and vocabulary expansion. Vocabulary on the other hand, appears as an outlier in its stronger role in creative comprehension. These findings reinforce the notion that reading proficiency is foundational but not sufficient for mastering complex comprehension skills.

**Table 4**  
**Extent of Influence of Reading Proficiency Level on the Comprehension Skills of Students**

Level of reading proficiency	Level of comprehension skills	r-value	r <sup>2</sup> -value	Int.
Literal	Accuracy	0.32	0.10	Very Weak
	Vocabulary	-0.19	0.04	Very Weak
	Fluency	0.63	0.40	Medium
	Phonemic Awareness	0.11	0.01	Very Weak
	Decoding	-0.45	0.20	Weak
Inferential	Accuracy	-0.10	0.01	Very Weak
	Vocabulary	0.12	0.02	Very Weak
	Fluency	0.01	0.00	Very Weak
	Phonemic Awareness	0.23	0.05	Very Weak
	Decoding	0.17	0.03	Very Weak
Critical	Accuracy	0.06	0.00	Very Weak
	Vocabulary	-0.15	0.02	Very Weak
	Fluency	0.31	0.09	Very Weak
	Phonemic Awareness	0.00	0.00	Very Weak
	Decoding	-0.36	0.13	Very Weak
Creative	Accuracy	0.43	0.18	Very Weak
	Vocabulary	0.50	0.25	Weak
	Fluency	-0.07	0.00	Very Weak
	Phonemic Awareness	0.10	0.01	Very Weak

Evaluative	Decoding	0.22	0.05	Very Weak
	Accuracy	0.16	0.03	Very Weak
	Vocabulary	0.13	0.02	Very Weak
	Fluency	-0.07	0.01	Very Weak
	Phonemic Awareness	-0.08	0.01	Very Weak
	Decoding	0.44	0.19	Very Weak

Legend:

Range of $r^2$ -value	Interpretation
0.80-1.00	Very Strong
0.60-0.799	Strong
0.40 – 0.599	Medium
0.20-0.399	Weak
0.00-0.199	Very Weak

The influence of reading proficiency on comprehension is well-documented, with studies such as Rivera and Corpuz (2020) showing how decoding, fluency, and vocabulary mastery directly affect comprehension outcomes. By strengthening core skills, students can better process and engage with texts across comprehension levels.

Schema Theory provides a compelling framework to explain the findings, as it emphasizes the role of prior knowledge and mental frameworks (schemas) in understanding and interpreting text. The findings explain why fluency supports literal comprehension but falls short for higher-order skills. Complex comprehension tasks depend on well-developed schemas, which require more than basic reading proficiency. Enriching students' schemas through experiences, vocabulary development, and critical thinking practice is key to fostering advanced comprehension abilities.

## Conclusions

The highest mean score among the reading proficiency aspects is for fluency which is Satisfactory. This indicates that the learners are relatively strong in their ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. This also indicates that while learners are somewhat able to understand and recall basic information from texts, there is still a significant need for improvement. Fluency and decoding show significant relationships with literal comprehension, indicating that these skills are crucial for understanding basic information in texts. Also, fluency has the strongest influence on literal comprehension, highlighting the importance of fluent reading in understanding basic information.

## Recommendations

The result highlights the need for improvement in word accuracy. Targeted interventions, such as phonics exercises, decoding practice, guided reading, and corrective feedback, can help enhance this skill. The researcher highlights a significant need for improvement in the learners' ability to analyze and evaluate information critically. To address this, interventions should focus on enhancing higher-order thinking skills through activities like critical thinking exercises, discussions that promote questioning and reasoning, and tasks that involve evaluating arguments and evidence. Incorporating more complex texts into the curriculum can also help develop these skills. It is also recommended to implement activities that promote critical analysis and evaluation, such as engaging students in discussions, debates, and tasks that require them to assess arguments and evidence critically. Additionally, incorporating more complex and thought-provoking texts into the curriculum can support the development of critical comprehension skills.

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