

FACTORS INFLUENCING READING PROFICIENCY OF STUDENTS

Rachel C. Macawile¹, Dr. Jocelyn Sabas Castro²

^{1,2}Eastern Samar State University-Guiuan Campus, Graduate School, Guiuan, Eastern Samar, Philippines

Email: rachel.macawile@deped.gov.ph¹, castrojoceelyndones@yahoo.com

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: 20th February, 2025

Accepted: 13th March, 2025

Published: 30th April, 2025

KEYWORDS: Reading Proficiency;
Philippine Informal Reading Inventory
(Phil-IRI); Frustration Level

PUBLISHER: Empirical Research
Institute of Nigeria – (ERIN)

This work is licensed under the Creative
Commons Attribution International
License (CC BY 4.0).



Open Access

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

ABSTRACT

Conventional masonry pieces are simple construction elements used to The Junior High School students in the southern municipalities of Eastern Samar, Philippines. Utilizing a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design, the study aims to determine how various teacher, student, home, and environmental factors affect students' oral reading performance in English. Data were gathered from 14 secondary schools using the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) for the School Year 2024–2025 and a researcher-developed, validated questionnaire. The Phil-IRI tool assessed students' word recognition and reading comprehension, while the questionnaire explored perceptions of influencing factors. Descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation were used to analyze the data. Results show that teacher-related and environmental factors are perceived as the most influential in shaping reading proficiency, while home-related factors have the least perceived impact. However, all four domains exhibit statistically significant, albeit negligible, correlations with reading proficiency, with home and environmental factors showing slightly stronger associations. The study further reveals that a large portion of students remain at the frustration level in reading, pointing to a critical need for comprehensive, data-driven interventions. These findings emphasize the importance of a multi-contextual approach that includes effective instruction, enriched learning environments, and greater family and community engagement to support students' literacy development and promote equitable learning outcomes.

Keywords: Reading Proficiency; Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI); Frustration Level

1. Introduction

The call for efficient reading comprehension is significant and is a necessity in most of the aspects in learning. During early age, students are taught at school how to read then later trained to comprehend what they read. Though many students have learned to read, Rutzler (2020) showed a disparity by stating that “the act of reading and the act of comprehending what you read are two very different things”, cited in Abbas (2021). Reading comprehension is defined by Veeravagu, et. Al., (2010) as cited by Abbas (2021) as “a thinking process by which the reader selects facts, information, or ideas from printed materials; determines the meanings the author intended to transmit; decide how they relate to previous knowledge; and judge their appropriateness and worth for meeting the learners’ own objectives.”

The cornerstone of all academic learning is reading. A child's success in school and in life after childhood depends on their ability to read, write, and count. The Department of Education (DepEd) has improved literacy as one of its top priorities. This is built on the Department's flagship initiative, the "Every Child A Reader Program," which seeks to develop the reading and writing skills of every Filipino child at the grade level appropriate for them as stated in the DepEd Order 14 series of 2018. According to Estremera and Estremera (2017) the complex process of reading encompasses sensation, perception, comprehension, application, and integration. It is the process of constructing and deriving meaning from written symbols and words. A method of communication, as well as a source of knowledge and ideas, is reading. Thus, reading proficiency is a key concern. Thompson et al. (2019), remarked that, “reading proficiency, as an ability founded in school, cannot be taken for granted, for the access to words to make sense depends on the reader's interest and intelligence to understand and comprehend which draw the reality of a reader to be strong or weak. Additionally, McGinnis (2019) added that reading proficiency depends on the influence of the many factors surrounding the learner which include the teacher factor, learner factor, environment factor and home factor. These causal factors may be related to each other as was observed by Aranda (2019). Meanwhile, Serenado, et.al (2021) Parents and peer’s assistance in reading plays a very important role in learning process of children. Reading serves as the basis in the learning process. Another study by Braaksma et al. (2020) highlights the impact of school libraries on students' reading habits and overall academic success. The importance of reading and the need to improve learners' reading abilities in the Philippine education system.

Ocampo and De Castro (2019) found PHIL-IRI to be an effective tool for assessing students’ reading needs and designing targeted interventions, which led to significant improvements in reading proficiency and academic performance. The strategies or methods used by teachers and parents are still static and classic. Teachers and parents still consider students who experience reading errors to be considered normal without any treatment. The role of teachers and parents in analyzing reading skills is to determine the extent to which students can read and if they have difficulties, they can be helped by providing a reading stimulus to students. Furthermore, the findings of this research will serve as the foundation for developing an intervention program aimed at enhancing students' academic performance and supporting the existing National Reading Program in the region.

1.1 Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To determine the demographic profile of Junior High School students in terms of gender, age, and family income.
- To assess the frequency of identified factors that influence students' reading proficiency, including teacher-related, student-related, environmental, and home-related factors.
- To evaluate the current reading proficiency levels of Junior High School students.
- To examine the significant relationship between the identified influencing factors (teachers', students', environmental, and home) and the reading proficiency of students.

1.2 Research Gap

The research gap in this study lies in the limited localized investigation into the specific factors influencing reading proficiency among Junior High School students, particularly in the southern municipalities of Eastern Samar. While existing literature emphasizes the importance of reading comprehension as foundational to academic success (Tanczikne, 2017; Gershon, 2022) and highlights national initiatives such as DepEd's Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP), there is a noticeable lack of contextual studies that examine how teacher, student, home, and environmental factors uniquely contribute to students' reading performance within this geographic and demographic context.

Most previous studies focus on general reading difficulties at the elementary level (Buenaventura, 2019; Buendia, 2019) or present broad statistical data on reading comprehension challenges (K12 Reader, 2018), without correlating these with specific influencing factors in secondary education. Furthermore, while studies such as Tolentino (2019) show a link between reading proficiency and academic performance, they do not fully explore the interplay of various external and internal influences—especially those shaped by local socio-economic conditions, educational resources, and community engagement.

This study seeks to fill this gap by adopting a descriptive-correlational design that quantitatively examines the relationship between students' reading proficiency and a range of influencing factors within a specific regional setting. By doing so, it aims to provide more targeted insights for designing effective interventions and instructional strategies tailored to the needs of students in Eastern Samar.

2. Literature Review

Reading comprehension is getting increasing attention because modern information-based society requires excellent reading comprehension skills. Thus, reading is fundamental in every academic discipline. Better understanding of reading skills can help develop more effective teaching programs. Reading abilities develop overtime, readers gradually realize that meaning is often more complex than a single word, a sentence, or even a paragraph, in the end they learn how to read between the lines. (Tanczikne, 2017)

Reading Comprehension has been simply defined by the K12 Reader Reading Instruction Resources (2018) as act of understanding what you are reading. While the definition can be simply stated the act is not simple to teach, learn or practice. Reading comprehension is an intentional, active, interactive process that occurs before, during and after a person reads a particular piece of writing.

The Department of Education (DepEd) as well as every educator dreamt of producing learners who are effective readers. This is why in 2002, DepEd Order No. 45, s.2002 enforce the policy “Every Child A Reader Program” (ECARP) to ensure that every child is a successful reader at the end of Grade III. Knowledge and wisdom root from the ability to read and comprehend. The ability to read is the foremost foundational skill that every learner must acquire, without this ability, students will not be able to attain academic skills and competencies taught in the educational curriculum (Gershon, 2022). Similarly, Buenaventura (2019) has observed that there are a number of Grade 3 pupils who have reading difficulties. Based from the new Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) Manual of 2018 Group Screening Test result, it was found out that half of the class are non-independent readers.

Likewise, Buendia (2019) noted, reading should be given an utmost attention in enhancing the learning capacity of students especially in elementary grades. Slow reading leads to less reading overall, and less reading leads to less growth. Slow reading also interferes with comprehension and causes frustration. Rate can be improved with instructional activities such as repeated readings, poetry, readers’ theatre, paired reading, or buddy reading and finding appropriate text for the reader. The positive change in the pupils’ ability to word read and comprehend could really help them feel confidence and at least follow lessons and discussions especially, when reading materials are used. Parents’ cooperation and cooperation absolutely helped. Reading exercises and audiovisual materials also helped. Espiel and Carretero (2022)

Serenado (2023) in Adapon and Mangila (2020) added that in the Philippines, education is hindered by poverty, technology and lack of motivation and inspiration, especially reading education. Despite the socio-economic status, many Filipinos are unable to learn. The living conditions of families have significantly changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous findings have found that students are inactive in learning in-home isolation relative to their success in their educational institutions. (Tus, 2021). Tolentino (2019) found that Grade 7 students had a developing level of reading proficiency and a satisfactory performance in English, Math, and Science. A significant relationship was observed between reading proficiency and academic performance, suggesting that teacher-developed workbooks tailored to students’ reading needs can effectively enhance their reading skills.

It is recommended that Grade 7 students engage in more activities focused on identifying the main idea using the provided workbook. English teachers should collaborate with content area teachers to develop instructional materials aligned with students’ reading needs and learning styles. Emphasizing reading across subjects and allocating time for reading instruction can strengthen basic competencies. Contextualized and localized texts, as encouraged by the K to 12 curriculum, should be used when appropriate. Finally, active parental involvement is crucial in monitoring and supporting students’ reading development both at home and in school. (Tolentino, 2019)

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach, specifically utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, to examine the relationship between students' word recognition, reading comprehension, and their overall reading proficiency. The research was conducted across fourteen (14) secondary schools in the southern part of Eastern Samar during the School Year 2024–2025. Cluster random sampling was employed to select junior high school students officially enrolled as respondents. Data were collected using the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) to assess word recognition and reading comprehension, and a researcher-developed questionnaire to examine influencing factors categorized under teacher, student, home, and environmental domains. The questionnaire underwent a rigorous process of development, including content validation by experts, pilot testing, and reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha to ensure internal consistency. Data gathering involved obtaining permissions from the Schools Division Office and school principals, administering the tools with adviser guidance, and following strict scoring protocols based on the Phil-IRI guidelines. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and ranking, as well as Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to identify relationships between variables at a 0.05 significance level.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. *Gender of the Respondents*

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	177	42.14
Female	217	51.67
Prefer Not to Say	26	6.19
Total	420	100.00

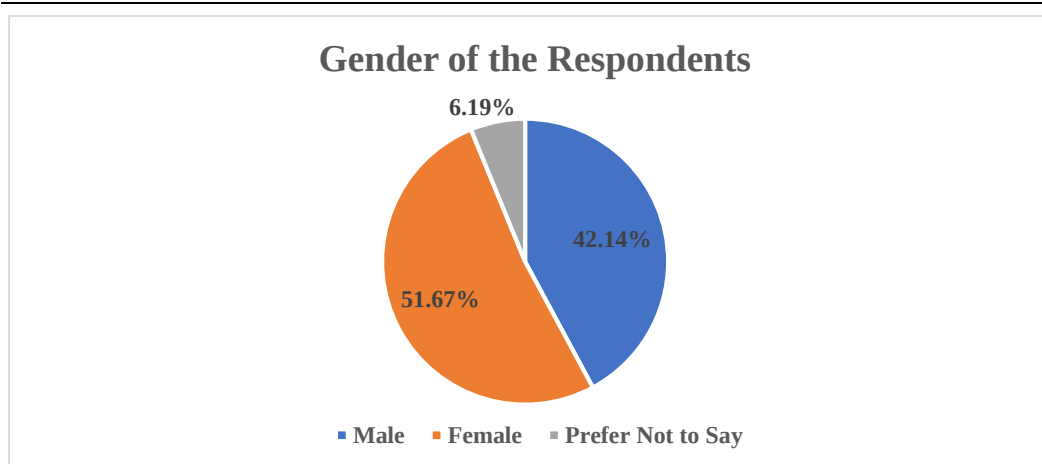


Figure 1. *Gender of the Respondents*

The demographic data in Figure 1 reveals the gender distribution of the respondents in the study. It shows that majority of the respondents are female, accounting for 51.67% of the total sample, followed by male students at 42.14%. A smaller portion, 6.19%, preferred not to disclose their gender. The gender distribution of respondents, with a slight majority of female participants and the inclusion of those who preferred not to disclose their gender, reflects both demographic trends and the study's commitment to inclusivity and respondent privacy. This distribution provides a meaningful context for examining differences in reading proficiency among junior high school students in the study area. Extensive literature highlights that female students often outperform their male counterparts in reading-related domains, which may stem from factors such as cognitive development, reading habits, and socialization. Nonetheless, reading proficiency is influenced by a broader array of variables, including instructional methods, learning environments, and parental support. Understanding these multifaceted influences is essential to interpreting the results within a gender-informed framework.

The findings suggest a need for differentiated and inclusive literacy strategies that support all learners. Should further analysis confirm significant gender-related disparities in reading proficiency, targeted interventions—such as interest-based reading materials or interactive methods—may enhance male students' engagement. At the same time, gender-inclusive policies and pedagogies must ensure equitable opportunities for literacy development across all gender identities.

Table 2. *Age of the Respondents*

Category	Frequency	Percentage
11 – 12 years old	149	35.48
13 -14 years old	203	48.33
15 – 16 years old	67	15.95
17 – 18 years old	1	0.24
19 years old or older	0	0.00
Total	420	100.00

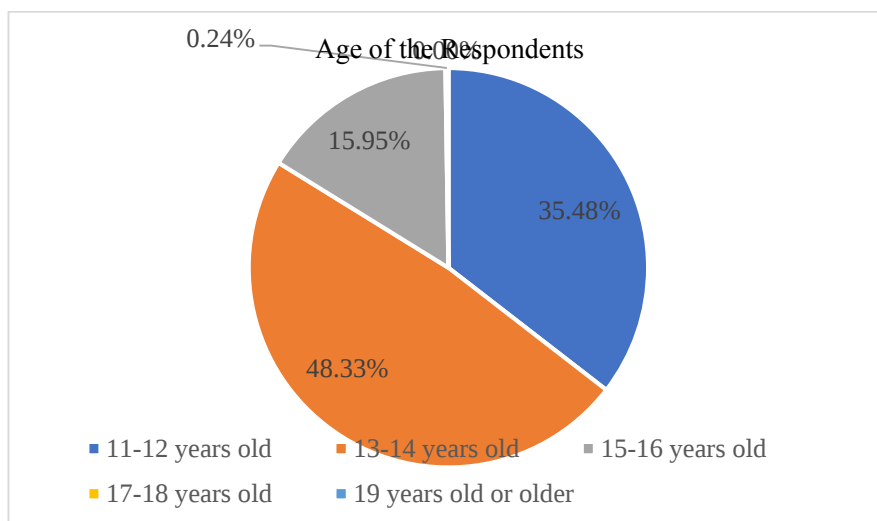


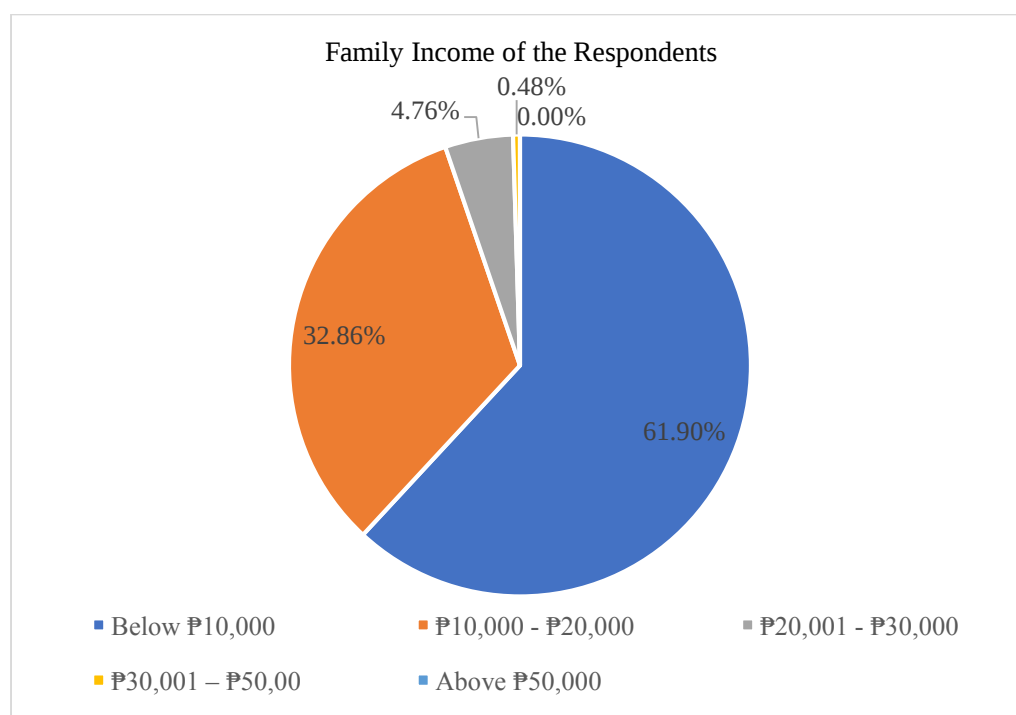
Figure 2. Age of the Respondents

The age distribution of Junior High School students in the southern municipalities of Eastern Samar, as presented in Figure 2, provides information into their academic progression and potential reading proficiency challenges. The majority of respondents fall within the 13-14 years old category (48.33%), followed by 11-12 years old (35.48%), and a smaller percentage belongs to the 15-16 years old group (15.95%). Notably, only one respondent (0.24%) is within the 17-18 years old range, and no respondents are aged 19 or older. The age distribution of respondents aligns with the typical range for Junior High School students, suggesting that most learners are advancing through the educational system at an expected pace. The presence of an older student, however, points to possible instances of delayed school entry or grade retention, factors which may have implications for reading proficiency outcomes and academic support needs.

Age plays a critical role in literacy development, as cognitive and academic abilities evolve with maturity. The inclusion of younger students aged 11–12 may reflect early advancement, which, while indicative of strong academic performance, can also present challenges if these students are unprepared for more complex reading tasks. Conversely, older students aged 15–16 and the lone 17–18-year-old respondent may have experienced setbacks in progression, potentially contributing to gaps in literacy skills that warrant targeted intervention. Given the range of ages represented, differentiated reading strategies are essential to address varying developmental needs. Younger students may benefit from scaffolding techniques that ease their adjustment to Junior High-level texts, while older students may require remedial support to reinforce foundational skills. Additionally, investigating how age interacts with factors such as teacher support, home literacy environments, and access to resources could provide valuable insights for designing effective, age-responsive literacy programs.

Table 3. *Family Income of the Respondents*

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Below ₱10,000	260	61.90
₱10,000 - ₱20,000	138	32.86
₱20,001 - ₱30,000	20	4.76
₱30,001 – ₱50,00	2	0.48
Above ₱50,000	0	0.00
Total	420	100.00

Figure 3. *Family Income of the Respondents*

The data in Figure 3 presents the family income distribution of Junior High School students in the southern municipalities of Eastern Samar. The majority of respondents, 260 students (61.90%), come from families earning below ₱10,000 per month indicating a significant portion of students belong to low-income households. A considerable number, 138 students (32.86%) fall within the ₱10,000 - ₱20,000 income bracket. Meanwhile, only 20 students (4.76%) have a family income ranging from ₱20,001 - ₱30,000, and just 2 students (0.48%) belong to families earning ₱30,001 - ₱50,000. Notably, no students reported a family income above ₱50,000 highlighting the economic limitations in the region.

Family income plays an important role in a student's academic performance, particularly in reading proficiency. Learners from low-income households often face barriers such as limited access to reading materials, minimal educational support at home, and financial challenges affecting school participation and resources. The high percentage of students from families earning below ₱10,000 indicates that economic hardship is prevalent and may limit access to books, supplementary reading programs, and digital tools. Financial strain can also result in poor nutrition, inadequate study environments, and increased household responsibilities, all of which hinder literacy development.

Given the respondents' economic background, schools and teachers should adopt targeted interventions to assist students from low-income families. Enhancing school-based reading programs, expanding library resources, and using technology for literacy support can help close the access gap. Community partnerships and government initiatives could further offer free learning materials, tutorials, and parental literacy workshops to foster a more supportive reading environment at home. These findings underscore the need to examine how financial instability affects reading proficiency and literacy outcomes.

Frequency of the Identified Factors Affecting Junior High School Students

Table 4. *Teachers' Factors Affecting Junior High School Students*

Statement	Mean	Scale	Interpretation
1. My teacher explains reading strategies clearly and effectively.	4.37	Strongly Agree	Very High
2. My teacher provides individual attention to improve my reading skills.	3.97	Agree	High
3. My teacher uses diverse teaching methods to make reading lessons engaging.	3.40	Neutral	High
4. My teacher gives constructive feedback on my reading performance.	4.38	Strongly Agree	Very High
5. My teacher motivates me to develop a habit of reading regularly.	3.81	Agree	High
Overall Mean	3.99	Agree	High

The results in Table 4 highlight the teacher-related factors affecting the reading proficiency of junior high school students in the southern municipalities of Eastern Samar. The overall mean of 3.99, classified as 'high extent' in the reading proficiency interpretation, suggests that students generally perceive their teachers as supportive in enhancing their reading skills. This shows that teachers significantly influence students' reading proficiency through strategies, feedback, and motivation. The highest mean score (4.38) for "My teacher gives constructive feedback on my reading performance" reflects that students highly value feedback, which helps them identify strengths and areas for improvement in reading. The second-highest score (4.37) for "My teacher explains reading strategies clearly and effectively" also highlights the importance of structured instruction in literacy development. However, the lowest mean score (3.40) for "My teacher uses diverse teaching methods to make reading lessons engaging" suggests that while students appreciate clear explanations and feedback, some find reading lessons lacking variety or engagement. This indicates that interactive approaches, such as digital tools or group activities, may be underutilized.

These findings emphasize the need to strengthen engaging and varied instructional methods in reading lessons. Since teachers are effective in feedback and strategy instruction, schools should build on these strengths by encouraging more diverse teaching techniques. Professional development in innovative reading instruction can help teachers use interactive strategies that boost interest and comprehension. Incorporating technology, real-world applications, and collaboration can further enhance student engagement.

Table 5. *Student's Factors Affecting Junior High School Students*

Statement	Mean	Scale	Interpretation
1. I feel confident in my ability to comprehend texts I read.	3.51	Agree	High
2. I allocate sufficient time to practice reading outside of school hours.	2.91	Neutral	Moderate
3. I actively participate in classroom reading activities.	4.10	Agree	High
4. I can easily focus on reading tasks without being distracted.	3.38	Neutral	Moderate
5. I have a personal interest in improving my reading skills.	4.07	Agree	High
Overall Mean	3.60	Agree	High

The results in Table 5 highlight the student-related factors affecting reading proficiency among junior high school students in the southern municipalities of Eastern Samar. The overall mean score of 3.60, interpreted as 'High,' suggests that students' attitudes and behaviors significantly influence their reading proficiency. This implies that while students recognize the importance of reading, some areas still need improvement. The highest mean score (4.10) for "I actively participate in classroom reading activities" indicates that students are engaged in reading lessons, which enhances comprehension and vocabulary. Similarly, strong interest in improving reading skills (4.07) highlights the role of motivation in proficiency. However, the lowest mean score (2.91) for "I allocate sufficient time to practice reading outside of school hours" suggests that students may lack time or motivation for independent reading due to limited access to materials or home distractions. The neutral rating for "I can easily focus on reading tasks without being distracted" (3.38) further points to concentration challenges for some students.

These findings stress the need to promote a stronger reading culture beyond the classroom. Schools should encourage independent reading by providing access to libraries, digital platforms, and structured programs. Students struggling with focus may benefit from strategies like guided reading, interactive exercises, and set reading schedules.

Table 6. *Environmental Factors Affecting Junior High School Students*

Statement	Mean	Scale	Interpretation
1. My school provides a quiet and conducive environment for reading.	3.98	Agree	High
2. My school library has a variety of books that cater to my interests and reading level.	4.21	Strongly Agree	Very High
3. The availability of reading materials in the classroom helps me practice reading.	4.02	Agree	High
4. Noise levels in my school environment do not interfere with my reading activities.	3.38	Neutral	Moderate
5. The physical arrangement of my classroom promotes an effective reading experience.	3.72	Agree	High
Overall Mean	3.86	Agree	High

The results in Table 6 highlight environmental factors influencing the reading proficiency of junior high school students in the southern municipalities of Eastern Samar. The overall mean score of 3.86, interpreted as 'High,' suggests that the school environment plays a crucial role in shaping reading proficiency, though some areas may need further improvement. The highest mean score (4.21) for "My school library has a variety of books that cater to my interests and reading level" reflects that students view their school libraries as well-stocked with materials that support their reading needs, which is crucial for fostering literacy. Similarly, the availability of classroom reading materials (4.02) indicates that accessible resources contribute to reading engagement. However, the lowest mean score (3.38) for "Noise levels in my school environment do not interfere with my reading activities" suggests that some students struggle with distractions, highlighting the need for quiet spaces or better classroom management to minimize disruptions.

These findings emphasize the importance of enhancing supportive reading environments. Since the library is seen as a strong resource, schools should expand book collections and digital resources. Noise levels can be addressed by creating quiet zones, soundproofing, or scheduling silent reading periods. While classroom reading materials are beneficial, they should be regularly updated, engaging, and accessible to all students. Schools could also explore interactive spaces like reading corners to enrich the reading experience.

Table 7. *Home Factors Affecting Junior High School Students*

Statement	Mean	Scale	Interpretation
1. My family encourages and supports my reading habits.	4.05	Agree	High
2. I have access to reading materials, such as books or magazines, at home.	3.50	Agree	High
3. A quiet space is available in my home for reading and studying.	3.44	Agree	High
4. My parents or guardians monitor my reading progress and provide help when needed.	3.41	Agree	High
5. Reading is a regular activity in my family, and I am encouraged to join.	3.04	Neutral	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.49	Agree	High

The results in Table 7 highlight home factors influencing the reading proficiency of junior high school students. The overall mean score of 3.49, interpreted as "High," suggests that students generally perceive their home environments as supportive of reading and literacy development, though some areas show moderate engagement, indicating room for improvement.

The highest mean score (4.05) for "My family encourages and supports my reading habits" highlights the key role family support plays in fostering students' reading engagement and confidence. Similarly, access to reading materials at home (3.50) and a quiet space for reading (3.44) were rated "High," indicating that many students have a conducive environment for focused reading. Parental involvement in monitoring reading progress (3.41) also contributes to consistent reading habits. However, the lowest mean score (3.04) for "Reading is a regular activity in my family" suggests that while students are encouraged individually, reading is not yet a regular family activity, limiting its reinforcement as a valued practice.

These findings emphasize the need to strengthen the home as a learning environment. Schools could partner with parents to promote family-based reading activities like shared reading times or book clubs. Workshops on supporting reading at home could further enhance literacy development. Encouraging a family-wide reading culture not only motivates individual students but also fosters a deeper appreciation for reading as a lifelong skill.

Table 8. *Summary of Identified Factors Affecting Junior High School Students*

Category	Mean	Interpretation
Teachers' Factors	3.66	High
Student's Factors	3.52	High
Environmental Factors	3.51	High
Home Factors	3.49	High
Grand Mean	3.55	High

Table 8 presents a summary of factors affecting the reading proficiency of junior high school students in the southern municipalities of Eastern Samar. The findings indicate that all categories—teachers' factors, students' factors, environmental factors, and home factors—have a 'High' level of influence on students' reading proficiency. Among these, teachers' factors recorded the highest mean (3.66), emphasizing the significant role of instructional strategies, feedback, and motivation. Meanwhile, Home factors (3.49) were the least influential but still 'High,' indicating that while family support is important, it may not be as consistently strong as school-related factors. The grand mean of 3.74 confirms that all these factors collectively have a high level of influence on students' reading proficiency. The findings underscore the need for a holistic approach to improving literacy, with particular emphasis on teacher training in differentiated instruction and student engagement. The moderate influence of student-related factors suggests the need for initiatives to boost student motivation and self-directed reading habits, such as reading campaigns and peer tutoring programs. While schools provide a relatively conducive reading environment, further improvements can be made by expanding library resources, creating quiet reading areas, and minimizing distractions.

Finally, the lowest rating for home factors (3.49) highlights the importance of strengthening home-based literacy support. Schools can engage parents through literacy workshops, encourage home reading activities, and provide take-home reading materials to bridge the gap between school and home learning. The findings emphasize the need for collaboration between teachers, students, schools, and families to enhance reading development, particularly by addressing student motivation and home support to improve reading outcomes.

Reading Proficiency Level of Junior High School Students

Table 9. *Reading Proficiency Level of the Respondents*

Proficiency Level	Frequency	Percentage
Frustration	198	47.14
Instructional	140	33.33
Independent	82	19.52
Total	420	100.00

The results in Table 9 reveal concerning trends in the reading proficiency of Junior High School students in the southern municipalities of Eastern Samar. Nearly half of the students (47.14%) fall under the Frustration level, indicating severe difficulties in reading comprehension and fluency. Additionally, 33.33% are at the Instructional level, requiring teacher support, while only 19.52% are at the Independent level, able to read without assistance. This highlights the need for urgent reading intervention programs to support struggling readers. Schools should implement remedial reading programs, literacy workshops, and one-on-one interventions to strengthen reading skills. Teachers must enhance their instructional strategies with scaffolding, guided reading, and differentiated instruction, incorporating evidence-based approaches like SQ3R and reciprocal teaching. The low percentage of Independent readers suggest a lack of sufficient reading outside the classroom, emphasizing the need for stronger home and community support to foster a reading culture.

Improving the school environment is crucial in addressing reading difficulties. Enhancing library resources, providing varied reading materials, and minimizing classroom distractions will encourage independent reading. Schools should also collaborate with parents, libraries, and local government units to create a reading-friendly environment at home and in the community. Immediate action is needed to enhance reading instruction and foster a culture of reading to improve students' reading proficiency and academic success.

Significant Relationship Between the Identified Factors and the Reading Proficiency Levels of the Students

Table 10. *Significant Relationship Between the Teachers Factors and the Reading Proficiency Levels of the Students*

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation	P value	Interpretation
Teacher Factors	Reading Performance	.110	Negligible Correlation	.024	Significant

The results from Table 10 indicate a negligible positive correlation of 0.110 between teacher factors—such as how teachers explain reading strategies, provide individual attention, use diverse teaching methods, give constructive feedback, and motivate students—and reading performance. While this correlation is weak, the p-value of 0.024 suggests that the relationship is statistically significant, meaning the effect is small but unlikely to have occurred by chance. This indicates that teacher factors influence reading proficiency to some extent, but their impact is not overwhelming. The weak correlation suggests that while effective teaching practices may contribute to better reading performance, they are not the sole determinants. Other elements, such as student characteristics, home environment, and the overall curriculum, likely also play a significant role. While teacher factors are important, they should not be seen as the dominant factor in determining reading outcomes.

These findings imply that, despite the modest effect, teacher practices matter in improving reading performance. This emphasizes the need for professional development to refine teaching strategies, particularly in areas like reading strategies, individualized support, and feedback. However, given the weak correlation, a more holistic approach is needed, combining effective teaching with factors such as student engagement, home support, and access to resources. Further research is also needed to understand how teacher factors interact with other influences on reading proficiency.

Table 11. *Significant Relationship Between the Student Factors and the Reading Proficiency Levels of the Students*

Variable 1	Variable 2	Critical Value	Interpretation	P value	Interpretation
Student Factors	Reading Performance	0.88	Negligible Correlation	.070	Not Significant

The results presented in Table 11 show a negligible but statistically significant positive correlation of 0.88 between student factors—such as confidence in reading ability, time spent reading outside of school, classroom participation, focus during reading tasks, and interest in improving reading skills—and reading performance. The p-value of 0.070 indicates that this relationship is statistically not significant, suggesting that student factors don't play a role in influencing reading proficiency in this study, although the effect is modest. Despite the weak correlation, the significance of the relationship suggests that student factors have a measurable impact on reading performance. However, this impact is not substantial enough to be considered the primary driver of differences in reading proficiency. The results imply that while student factors can influence reading performance to some extent, other factors, particularly those related to teaching practices, may be more significant.

Given the importance of teacher-related factors, such as how effectively teachers explain reading strategies, provide individualized attention, use diverse teaching methods, offer constructive feedback, and motivate students to read regularly.

Table 12. *Significant Relationship Between the Environmental Factors and the Reading Proficiency Levels of the Students*

Variable 1	Variable 2	Critical Value	Interpretation	P value	Interpretation
Environmental Factors	Reading Performance	0.24	Negligible Correlation	.558	Not Significant

The results presented in Table 12 show a negligible positive correlation of 0.24 between environmental factors—such as a quiet reading environment, access to a variety of books in the school library, availability of reading materials in the classroom, minimal noise distractions, and the physical arrangement of the classroom—and reading performance. The p-value of 0.558 indicates that this relationship is statistically not significant, suggesting that environmental factors don't have a measurable, though modest, impact on reading proficiency. While the correlation is weak, the significance of the relationship suggests that a conducive learning environment may contribute to reading performance. However, other factors, particularly teacher effectiveness and student motivation, are likely to have a stronger influence on reading proficiency. These findings imply that while environmental factors are important, interventions should also prioritize enhancing teaching practices and student engagement to maximize improvements in reading proficiency.

Table 13. Significant Relationship Between the Home Factors and the Reading Proficiency Levels of the Students

Variable 1	Variable 2	Critical Value	Correlation	Interpretation	P value	Interpretation
Home Factors	Reading Performance	0.172	Negligible Correlation	0.000	.000	Highly Significant

The results in Table 13 show a negligible positive correlation of 0.172 between home factors—such as family encouragement of reading, access to reading materials, a quiet space for reading, parental monitoring, and family reading activities—and reading performance. The p-value of 0.000 indicates that this relationship is highly statistically significant, meaning that home factors do influence reading proficiency, but their overall effect is modest. While home factors like family support and access to reading materials positively contribute to reading habits, they are not the sole determinants of reading proficiency. Other factors, such as the school environment, teaching quality, and student motivation, likely play a more significant role. This suggests that while family engagement is important, it should be considered as part of a broader, holistic approach to improving reading performance. Schools should encourage parents to foster a reading-friendly home environment and promote family reading activities.

5. Research Future Opportunities

While this study offers significant insights into the demographic, teacher-related, student-related, environmental, and home factors influencing reading proficiency, several areas warrant further investigation:

- **Longitudinal Studies on Literacy Development:** Future research could adopt a longitudinal design to explore how various factors influence reading proficiency over time, particularly as students progress through different educational stages.
- **Intervention Effectiveness:** Studies assessing the impact of specific reading intervention programs and teaching strategies on students at different proficiency levels would help determine best practices for literacy improvement.
- **Parental Involvement and Home Literacy Environment:** Further research is needed to examine how specific forms of parental support and the quality of the home literacy environment contribute to reading development, especially in low-income households.
- **Multi-Factor Interaction Studies:** Research exploring the interaction effects among teacher, student, environmental, and home factors could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how these variables collectively influence reading outcomes.
- **Community-Based Literacy Programs:** Investigating the role and effectiveness of community-based literacy initiatives in complementing school-based efforts could provide insights into how broader social support structures impact student reading proficiency.

6. Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing reading proficiency among Junior High School students in the southern municipalities of Eastern Samar. Demographic data reveal a generally balanced gender distribution and age alignment with grade level, though some instances of delayed progression and widespread financial constraints may hinder students' access to educational resources. These challenges highlight the need for targeted support, particularly for learners from low-income households.

Findings indicate that teacher-related and environmental factors are perceived as the most influential in shaping reading proficiency, with teachers playing a particularly critical role. Student-related factors hold moderate relevance, while home-related factors are perceived as least impactful. Despite this perception, the analysis reveals that all four domains exhibit statistically significant—albeit negligible—correlations with reading proficiency, with home and environmental factors showing slightly stronger associations. This suggests that literacy development is shaped by multiple, interacting influences.

Given that a large proportion of students remain at the frustration level in reading, there is a pressing need for structured, evidence-based interventions. These findings underscore the importance of adopting a holistic, multi-contextual approach that includes effective instruction, enriched learning environments, and active engagement from families and communities. Such an integrated strategy is essential to support students' literacy growth and promote equitable educational outcomes.

Acknowledgment: The researchers would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to those who became part of the completion of this study: to the Schools Division Office of Eastern Samar, the school administrators, teachers, and Junior High School students from the participating secondary schools in the southern municipalities of Eastern Samar for their valuable cooperation and support; to the experts who validated the research instrument and provided insightful guidance throughout the research process; and to their families and friends whose encouragement, understanding, and moral support greatly contributed to the successful completion of this endeavor.

Data Availability Statement: The data supporting the findings are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Funding Statement: This research did not receive any specific funding.

Conflicts of Interest Statement: The authors declare that they have no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that may have influenced the research, its outcomes, or the content of the manuscript.

Ethics and Consent Statement: In adherence to ethical standards, this study ensured the protection of participants' identity, privacy, and security. Informed consent was obtained after providing clear information about the study's purpose and procedures, in compliance with Republic Act 10173 – Data Privacy Act of 2012. All data were treated confidentially, with identities anonymized and participation voluntary. Interviews were conducted privately, and any data sharing will follow ethical guidelines with explicit participant consent.

REFERENCES

- Abbas, K.-D. A. (2021). Factors influencing students' reading comprehension difficulties amidst the use of modular distance learning approach in Mindanao State University Sulu – Senior High School. *Open Access Indonesia Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(6).
- Adapon, M. T., & Mangila, B. B. (2020). Helping struggling readers to read: The impact of the care for the non-readers (CRN) program on Filipino pupils' reading proficiency. *ETERNAL (English, Teaching, Learning, and Research Journal)*, 6(2), 195-218.
- Braaksma, M. A., Snow, K. A., & Norris, S. P. (2020). School libraries and reading achievement: A critical review of the literature. *Educational Researcher*, 49(3), 195-208. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20904774>
- Department of Education. (2002). *DepEd Order No. 45, s. 2002: Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP)*. Retrieved from <http://www.deped.gov.ph/2002/06/07/deped-order-no-45-s-2002-every-child-a-reader-programecarp>
- Department of Education. (2018). *Policy guidelines on the administration of the revised Philippine informal reading inventory (Phil-IRI)*. Retrieved from <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2018/03/26/do-14-s-2018-policy-guidelines-on-the-administration-of-the-revised-philippine-informal-reading-inventory>
- Espia, E. B. A., & Cortezano, G. P. (2022). Reading comprehension and academic performance in English among Grade Seven. *Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR)*, 30–31 July 2022.
- Ocampo, M. C., & De Castro, R. L. (2019). Effectiveness of Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) in improving the reading proficiency level of Grade 2 students. *International Journal of Instruction*, 12(4), 343-358. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12422>
- Serenado, E. M., et al. Factors affecting the non-readers of Grade 7 students.
- Thompson, S., et al. (2019). *State literacy standards, practice, and testing: Exploring accessibility (Technical Report 38)*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.
- Tolentino, Beverlyn V. (2019). Reading Skills of Grade-7 of La Paz National High School: Basis for Workbook Development. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, ISSN 2348-3164 (online) Vol. 7, Issue 1, pp: (116-121), Month: January - March 2019.