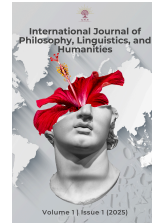







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### Research Article

# Reading Practices and Reading Environments Among Grade 6 Pupils In A Public Elementary School

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### Abstract

This study examined the reading practices and reading environments of Grade 6 pupils at a public school in Alamada, Philippines. It focused on their socio-demographic characteristics, reading practices and environments, and the support they receive at home and school. Employing a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 36 pupils using a validated survey questionnaire. Findings indicate that most pupils frequently engage in enjoyable reading activities, such as reading as a hobby or selecting materials they like. However, limited access to public libraries, insufficient parental involvement, and inadequate support in the home environment are the challenges that hampered further development of their reading practices. Statistical analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between reading practices and reading environments ( $r = 0.635$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), underscoring the importance of motivation, parental support, and access to resources in fostering literacy. The study concluded that while socio-demographic factors had minimal influence on reading practices, the reading environment significantly affected pupils' habits and attitudes toward reading. Recommendations include incorporating regular library visits, guided reading activities, and stronger parental engagement to support pupils' reading development. The study highlights the need for resource allocation and supportive interventions to create conducive reading environments for elementary pupils. Future research should explore broader demographics and environmental factors to provide deeper insights into enhancing literacy practices among young learners.

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## Introduction

Reading is an essential skill that supports academic success and active participation in society. As Karami & Bowles (2019) emphasized, reading is a cognitive activity involving decoding symbols to derive meaning, fostering vocabulary development, and enabling the acquisition of new knowledge. Beyond academic contexts, reading is integral to lifelong learning and critical thinking. However, despite its importance, reading practices and competencies among Filipino pupils have declined in recent years, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms (Aranda, 2022; Domingo, 2020; Etcoy et al., 2023). This issue is especially pronounced in foundational literacy skills, where students struggle with vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension due to inadequate early literacy experiences and weak motivational support from schools and homes (Derby et al., 2022; Dong et al., 2020; Liu & Chung, 2022).

The role of the home environment in shaping reading habits and attitudes is critical. Kalb & van Ours (2014) and Minero (2019) found that parental involvement, such as reading aloud and engaging children in shared reading activities, significantly influences cognitive skill development and academic achievement. However, research has highlighted gaps in the home reading environment, with many families in the Philippines reporting limited time and resources for reading activities (Johari et al., 2013; Thompson, 2014). Motivation also plays a crucial role in fostering reading habits. Ahmadi et al. (2013) argued that both parents and educators must actively encourage learners to develop a positive attitude toward reading, as motivation enhances comprehension and supports long-term literacy growth.

Reading environments, encompassing attitudes, exposure, and support, directly impact pupils' reading competence and comprehension. Morni & Sahari (2013) noted that while many students recognize the importance of reading, time constraints and limited access to engaging

materials hinder consistent practice. Similarly, Estremera & Estremera (2018) found that classroom factors such as instructional resources and teacher support are significant determinants of reading performance. These findings align with studies by Cadiong (2019) and Lazarus (2020), which identified socio-demographic factors, including parents' education levels and family income, as critical predictors of reading competence.

The relationship between reading practices and academic outcomes is well-established. Alghonaim (2020) highlighted that consistent engagement in reading activities enhances comprehension, self-confidence, and overall academic performance. Abdelhalim (2017) further demonstrated that pre-reading activities fostering engagement and critical reflection significantly improve comprehension levels. However, local contexts, such as in a remote school in Alamada, remain underexplored, leaving gaps in understanding how socio-demographic factors, reading practices, and environments intersect to influence literacy development.

To address these gaps, this study specifically aimed to:

1. determine the socio-demographic characteristics of Grade 6 pupils, focusing on their sex and age;
2. assess the reading practices of the pupils in terms of their background and habits.
3. evaluate the home reading environment of pupils in terms of attitude, motivation, exposure, and support;
4. analyze the significant relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of pupils and their reading practices;

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5. examine the significant relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of pupils and their home reading environment; and 6. determine the significant relationship between the reading practices and reading environments of the respondents.

## Materials and Methods

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational approach with a non-experimental quantitative method to explore relationships between socio-demographic characteristics, reading practices, and reading environments among Grade 6 pupils. Specifically, it examined how reading environments relate to the reading practices of these pupils. As Mohajan (2020), Bauer et al. (2021), and Rashid et al. (2021) noted, descriptive-correlational research is designed to systematically explore and analyze relationships between variables using quantitative data, allowing for statistical evaluation. This approach systematically collected numerical data through surveys and analyzed correlations between variables to produce measurable outcomes (Aithal & Aithal, 2020; Dehalwar & Sharma, 2023). Thus, it was deemed appropriate to use in the study to describe and investigate the relationships between socio-demographic characteristics, reading practices, and reading environments.

The study involved 36 Grade 6 pupils from a public school in Alamada, Philippines. The inclusion criteria ensured that respondents were enrolled pupils at the school and were vaccinated at the time of the conduct to ensure safety. A complete enumeration method was employed, where all enrolled Grade 6 pupils were included as respondents. The sampling method was used to get a good generalizability of the results within the study subjects (Ortega & Sumayo, 2024).

To measure variables, the study adapted a survey questionnaire from Johari et al. (2013), validated by three experts in the field of education. The experts evaluated the instrument using a content validation form adapted from the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, College of

By investigating these objectives, this study provides insights into the reading practices and environments of Grade 6 pupils studying in a public school in Alamada, North Cotabato, Philippines, giving us a chance to get insights into practical recommendations for parents and elementary teachers to enhance literacy development and mitigate support systems.

Education, University of Southern Mindanao, Kabacan, Cotabato. Although reliability testing, such as Cronbach's alpha, was not performed, the experts reviewed and assessed each item for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. Based on their evaluations, modifications were made to improve the questionnaire's comprehensibility and content validity. The content validation forms confirmed that the instrument was valid for use in the study's context. This approach aligns with practices outlined in related research, such as Tanoja & Sumayo (2024), where expert validation was utilized to ensure the appropriateness of survey instruments for data collection.

Data collection followed a structured process. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the school principal, and conducting the study upon approval was with the help of the Grade 6 teacher. A consent letter was also distributed to parents to ensure that they have allowed their voluntary participation (Esto & Poralan, 2021). Once consent was granted, the first author administered the survey to the pupils in the teacher's presence to guarantee correct completion. Throughout this process, the study adhered to the University of Southern Mindanao Research Ethics Committee standards to ensure ethical compliance. This process was patterned after the studies of Esto (2024) Jugas (2024), Cayang & Ursabia (2024), and Magbanua (2024), ensuring data were used exclusively for the study's objectives while maintaining the utmost confidentiality.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and percentages were used to summarize socio-demographic characteristics, reading practices, and reading environments.

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Pearson's correlation coefficient (R) was applied to determine relationships between these variables. Statistical analysis was conducted using appropriate software to ensure the accuracy and reliability of results.

By employing a robust and well-thought methodology, this study provided a

comprehensive exploration of the interaction between socio-demographic characteristics, reading practices, and reading environments among pupils.

## Results and Discussions

### 3.1. Socio-demographic Profile of the Pupils

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents' profiles in terms of sex. As shown in the table, 15 (41.67%) were female, and 21 (58.33%) were male. The table presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents' profiles

categorized by age. The data presented in the table indicates that the most common age among the pupil respondents is 11 years old, with a frequency of 29 (80.56%). In contrast, the age of 13 years old shows the lowest frequency, recorded at 1 (2.78%).

**Table 1.** Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents vis-à-vis of sex and age

Sociodemographic Profile		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	21	58.33%
	Female	15	41.67%
Age	11	29	80.56%
	12	6	16.6%
	13	1	2.78%

### 3.2. Reading Practices of the Pupils

The weighted mean distribution regarding the level of reading practices, categorized by background and habits, is illustrated in Table 2. The statement "I like what I read" received the highest mean score of 4.17, accompanied by a verbal description of frequently, indicating that students tend to read with regularity. The final statement with the lowest mean was, "I go to the

public library," which had a mean of 1.17, indicating a verbal description of never, suggesting that students were not visiting a public library at all.

**Table 2.** Reading Practices of the Pupils

Statements	Weighted Mean	Description
1. I like what I read.	4.17	Frequently
2. I read as a hobby.	4.14	Frequently
3. I feel worried if I am not sure about it.	3.72	Frequently
4. I read at home.	3.67	Frequently

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5. My parents buy reading materials for me.	3.28	Sometimes
6. Reading in English is a problem.	3.22	Sometimes
7. I have a quiet place to read at home.	3.19	Sometimes
8. My family collects reading materials.	3.11	Sometimes
9. My sibling(s) often read at home.	3.00	Sometimes
10. Reading is not fun.	2.97	Sometimes
11. My family does not read at home.	2.86	Sometimes
12. My family reads English materials at home.	2.83	Sometimes
13. I do not have sufficient time to read at home.	2.75	Sometimes
14. My family reads English materials at home.	2.67	Sometimes
15. My family speaks English at home.	1.19	Never
16. I go to the public library.	1.17	Never
<b>Total Mean</b>	<b><u>2.99</u></b>	<b><u>Sometimes</u></b>

The level of reading practices was assessed based on various dimensions. Statements such as "I like what I read" and "I read as a hobby" received high mean scores of 4.17 and 4.14, respectively, indicating frequent engagement in reading activities. However, statements like "I go to the public library" and "My family speaks English at home" scored the lowest means of

1.17 and 1.19, highlighting a lack of external resources and support for reading practices. According to Kaiper-Marquez et al. (2020), Knutson and Crowley (2022), and Marabe and Petalla (2023), parental involvement and the availability of resources are critical for improving children's reading skills.

### 3.3 Reading Environments of the Pupils

#### 3.3.1. Reading Environments of the Pupils vis-à-vis Attitude and Motivation

The weighted mean distribution of the reading environment concerning attitude and motivation is presented in Table 3. The statements "I want to learn how to become a better and more effective reader" and "Reading is fun" received the highest mean score of 4.53, indicating that students strongly agree with these assertions.

The most recent negative remarks include "It is a pain to read in English" and "Reading is a waste of time." The mean for both is 2.42, indicating a description of disagreement. This suggests that students do not perceive reading English as a burdensome task or consider it a waste of time.

**Table 3.** Reading Environment vis-à-vis Attitude and Motivation

Statements	Weighted Mean	Description
1. I want to learn how to become a better and more effective reader.	4.53	Strongly Agree
2. Reading is fun.	4.53	Strongly Agree
3. I learn to read more at school than at home.	4.50	Strongly Agree
4. I always make time for reading.	4.22	Strongly Agree
5. I enjoy reading English materials.	4.17	Agree

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6. I enjoy the challenge of reading and doing reading activities.	4.08	Agree
7. My family motivates me to read.	4.03	Agree
8. Reading in English is too difficult.	3.06	Undecided
9. Reading is not really important.	3.03	Undecided
10. I am good at reading in English.	2.94	Undecided
11. Learning how to read properly and effectively is not important.	2.42	Disagree
12. It is a pain to read in English.	2.42	Disagree
13. Reading is a waste of time.	2.42	Disagree
<b>Total Mean</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Pupils' attitudes and motivations toward reading were also examined. Statements such as "I want to learn how to become a better and more effective reader" and "Reading is fun" received the highest mean scores of 4.53. Conversely, "It is a pain to read in English" and "Reading is a waste of time" scored 2.42, indicating that most

pupils held positive attitudes toward reading. This information supports the findings of Andini and Yukamana (2024), Samsuddin et al. (2020), and Usmani and Mukhlis (2023), who highlighted the importance of motivation and a supportive environment in fostering positive reading attitudes.

### 3.3.2. Reading Environments of the Pupils vis-à-vis Exposure and Support

Table 4 presents the weighted mean distribution of the reading environment in terms of exposure and support. The statement "My parents tell me about the importance of reading" got the highest mean of 4.44 with a corresponding description of strongly agree to imply that pupils strongly agree that their parents told them about the importance of reading.

The lowest statement is "My parent took me to the library when I was a child," with a mean of 1.72 corresponding to the description of strongly disagree, implying that pupils strongly disagree that their parents took them to the library at a young age.

**Table 4.** Reading Environments vis-à-vis Exposure and Support

Statements	Weighted Mean	Description
1. My parents tell me about the importance of reading.	4.44	Strongly Agree
2. My parents support me in reading.	4.31	Strongly Agree
3. My parents taught me how to read when I was a child.	4.19	Agree
4. My parents help me with my homework.	4.06	Agree
5. Family often has a quiet reading session together.	3.19	Undecided
6. My parents buy English materials for me.	2.92	Undecided
7. My family does not place an emphasis on reading.	2.78	Undecided
8. My parents actually force me to read.	2.64	Undecided
9. Reading is not part of family culture.	2.58	Disagree

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10. I do not have good reading habits because my parents do not expose me.	2.28	Disagree
11. I am not good at reading because I get no support from my family.	2.17	Disagree
12. My parent took me to the library when I was a child.	1.72	Strongly Disagree
<b>Total Mean</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>Undecided</b>

Regarding exposure and support, the highest-rated statements were "My parents tell me about the importance of reading" (mean = 4.44) and "My parents support me in reading" (mean = 4.31). In contrast, "My parent took me to the library when I was a child" scored the

lowest mean of 1.72, suggesting limited early exposure to reading materials outside the home. Samsuddin et al. (2020) and Usmani and Mukhlis (2023) emphasized that interest and parental involvement significantly drive reading motivation.

### 3.4. Relationship of the pupils' socio-demographic characteristics and reading practices

Table 5 shows the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics, age, and reading practices. Age,  $r = -0.181$ , means a very weak relationship exists between socio-demographic characteristics, age, and

reading practices. Sex,  $r = 0.201$ ; that is, there is a very weak relationship between socio-demographic characteristics regarding sex and reading practices.

**Table 5.** Relationship of the Pupils' Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Reading Practices

Socio-demographic Characteristics	Pearson r	Significance
Age	-0.181	0.292
Sex	0.201	0.239

The relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and reading practices was analyzed. Age showed a very weak negative correlation ( $r = -0.181$ ), indicating that age is not a strong determinant of reading practices. Similarly, sex had a very weak positive

correlation ( $r = 0.201$ ), suggesting that gender differences had minimal impact on reading behaviors. The findings imply that factors beyond socio-demographics, such as parental support and access to reading materials, play a more significant role.

### 3.5 Relationship of the Pupils' Socio-demographic Characteristics and Reading Environment

The results indicate that socio-demographic factors, specifically age and sex, have limited predictive power concerning the reading environment of Grade 6 pupils. The relationship between age and the reading environment, with a correlation coefficient of -0.145 and a

significance value of 0.400, reflects a very weak negative relationship that is not statistically significant. This suggests that age does not meaningfully influence the pupils' reading environment. On the other hand, the relationship between sex and the reading environment shows

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a weak positive correlation ( $r = 0.374$ ) that is statistically significant ( $p = 0.025$ ). While this suggests that sex plays a small but meaningful

role in shaping the reading environment, the weak correlation implies that it is not a strong predictor.

**Table 6.** Relationship of the Pupils' Socio-demographic Characteristics and Reading Environment

Socio-demographic Characteristics	Pearson r	Significance
Age	-0.145	0.400
Sex	0.374	0.025

These findings emphasize that neither age nor sex substantially determines the reading environment, highlighting the need to explore other potential factors, such as the home environment, teaching practices, and access to reading resources, which may have a greater

impact on improving pupils' reading environments just like what was reported by Çigdemir & Akyol (2022) on their study in Turkey. They revealed that these variables are likely to affect the reading engagement of the pupils.

### ***3.6 Relationship between Reading Practices and Reading Environments***

Table 7 shows the results on the relationship between reading practices and reading environments. The  $r = 0.635$  shows that there is

a strong positive relationship between reading environment and reading practices.

**Table 7.** Relationship of the Pupils' Reading Practices and Reading Environment

Frequency	Pearson r	Significance
36	0.635	0.000

A strong positive relationship was found between reading practices and the reading environment ( $r = 0.635$ ). This current data underscores the importance of creating a conducive reading environment where pupils are motivated, supported by parents, and exposed to diverse reading materials. Hafina et al. (2024), Jacques et al. (2022), and Wu and Yang (2022) stressed that reading contributes to individual and societal well-being, highlighting the need to prioritize reading as an essential life skill.

Therefore, the study demonstrates that while socio-demographic characteristics have a limited impact on reading practices and the reading environment, factors such as motivation, parental support, and access to resources are crucial. Encouraging positive attitudes and fostering a supportive reading environment can significantly enhance pupils' reading practices, ultimately contributing to their overall literacy skills.

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## Theoretical Implications

This academic research stresses the gargantuan and pivotal role of social interactions and environmental contexts in shaping literacy practices, as informed by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Learning Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Human Development. Specifically, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Learning Theory explicitly highlights the importance of social interactions and scaffolding in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). For instance, the strong positive relationship ( $r = 0.635$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between reading practices and environments in this study aligns with the theory's assertion that learning occurs most effectively with guidance from more knowledgeable others. Moreover, parental and teacher support, serving as scaffolding, enables children to transition from dependent to independent literacy behaviors. This situation reflects the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where external assistance helps children achieve tasks beyond their current abilities (Vygotsky, 1986).

On the other hand, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory emphasizes the interplay of various environmental systems on child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In particular, this study reveals that while socio-demographic factors had minimal impact, the microsystem—comprising home and school environments—was crucial in shaping literacy practices. Furthermore, barriers like limited library access highlight the exosystem's influence, showing how external factors indirectly shape children's opportunities and resources for literacy development.

Taken together, Vygotsky's focus on immediate social interactions and Bronfenbrenner's emphasis on broader environmental systems together provide a comprehensive understanding of literacy development. Ultimately, this integration underscores the need to support micro-level interactions while addressing systemic barriers to create equitable literacy opportunities.

## Conclusions

This study explored the reading practices and environments of Grade 6 pupils at a remote elementary school in Alameda, Philippines. The findings revealed that most respondents were male and 11 years old. It was also gleaned that pupils generally demonstrated frequent engagement in reading activities they enjoyed, such as reading as a hobby or selecting materials they found interesting. However, their reading practices were hampered by limited access to public libraries, insufficient parental

involvement, and inadequate support in the home environment. A strong positive relationship between reading practices and reading environments highlights the importance of creating a supportive environment that fosters positive attitudes, motivation, and engagement in reading activities.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, teachers should consider incorporating regular library-based activities into the school schedule to provide pupils with access to a wider variety of reading materials. These activities could include guided reading sessions where pupils select books that interest them, followed by discussions or reflections to enhance comprehension and critical thinking.

Teachers can also foster a love for reading by modeling reading behaviors and integrating vocabulary-building activities into classroom instruction. Parents are encouraged to actively support their children's reading habits by ensuring a quiet space for reading at home, discussing the importance of reading, and occasionally providing reading materials. Simple

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actions, such as spending time reading with their children or encouraging their interest in books, can significantly improve pupils' motivation and engagement in reading. The school administration should consider strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, such as the

Parent-Teacher Association or the Barangay Council, and even with non-governmental organizations to establish or improve library facilities. Providing even basic reading resources at school could address the pupils' limited access to materials.

## Limitations of the Study and Future Research

The study was limited to 36 Grade 6 pupils in a single school, which may not fully represent the reading practices and environments of other pupils in other schools in the area. Biases are also inevitable since the study used self-reported questionnaires that may have influenced the respondents to provide socially desirable answers rather than reflecting their actual practices. Additionally, this study focused only on reading practices and environments without accounting for other factors, such as socio-economic factors, school activities, reading acumen, and reading self-efficacy, which may influence reading behavior. The findings represent a snapshot of the pupils' reading experiences at one point in time, limiting the ability to capture changes or trends over time.

Future studies should expand the scope to include multiple schools across the municipality

of Alamada and even in the nearby municipalities to enhance the generalizability of findings. Investigations could explore the specific contributions of socio-economic factors, parental education, reading acumen, reading self-efficacy, and co- and extracurricular activities to pupils' reading practices and environments. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insights into how changes in reading environments affect literacy development over time. Future research might also evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, such as Catch-up Friday, an initiative of the Department of Education, in improving pupils' reading habits and attitudes. By addressing these areas, future studies can offer more contextualized and tailored-specific recommendations for enhancing literacy development among elementary pupils.

## Author Contributions:

**Christopher Reyno Quintano:** The first author conceptualized the study, carried out the research, and was responsible for data collection, tallying, and analysis. He authored the results and discussion sections, crafted the conclusions, and formulated the recommendations reviewed and agreed upon by the second and third authors. Additionally, he prepared the reference entries using the required citation style.

**Jomar Billones Esto, LPT, PhD:** The second author helped conceptualize the study, checked the presentation of the review of related literature and the methodology section, and validated and enhanced the results and

discussion sections prepared by the first author. He also provided insights during the writing of the conclusion and recommendation sections.

**Gideon Sindad Sumayo, LPT, PhD:** The third author reviewed all the sections prepared by the first and second authors. He also provided insights into the recommendations, adding the limitations of the study and its future research directions. Furthermore, he edited the paper, with the help of the second author, to align it with the format and guidelines of the *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Higher Education*.

All the authors reviewed and approved the final research article for submission.

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