

The Relationship Between Academic Performance and Reading Ability among Grade 7 Students

Carlos A. Buraga

Makati High School, Makati, Philippines

Author Email: carlos.buraga@deped.gov.ph

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Abstract. This study addressed the issue of poor reading comprehension among Grade 7 students in the City Division of Makati, which directly impacted their academic performance across core subjects. The research aimed to examine the relationship between students' reading ability and academic achievement and develop an intervention program to support struggling readers. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, and data were gathered from a stratified sample of students to ensure representation across different schools. Reading ability was assessed using standardized tests, which measured decoding, vocabulary understanding, inferencing, and overall comprehension skills. Academic performance was measured through students' final English, Science, Mathematics, and Araling Panlipunan grades. Trained teachers administered the assessments during scheduled sessions to ensure consistency and reliability in the data collection process. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between reading proficiency and academic performance. Students with higher reading comprehension consistently performed better academically than those with lower reading skills. These findings underscore the importance of reading as a foundational skill that impacts learning across all subjects. The study concluded that a comprehensive reading intervention program was necessary to address literacy gaps. The program should focus on differentiated instruction tailored to individual student needs, employ teacher-led reading strategies, and include regular formative assessments to track progress. To ensure effective implementation, the intervention should be integrated into the regular curriculum, supported by ongoing teacher training, and periodically evaluated for impact. The proposed program holds the potential to enhance reading comprehension and, in turn, significantly improve academic achievement for junior high school learners. By addressing students' literacy challenges, this intervention could foster long-term academic success and better prepare students for future educational demands.

Keywords: Academic achievement; Comprehension; Intervention program; Literacy skills; Student performance.

1.0 Introduction

Teachers play a crucial role in developing students' literacy skills, which are essential for academic success. Among these, reading comprehension is particularly critical, as it directly influences students' ability to engage with subject content, solve problems, and think critically. Despite its importance, reading proficiency remains a significant challenge in many educational settings, including in the Philippines. The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) revealed that Filipino students scored below the minimum proficiency level in reading, highlighting the persistent gaps in literacy that hinder their academic performance. These results underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to address reading deficiencies.

Research consistently shows a strong relationship between reading ability and academic achievement. Cambria and Guthrie (2010) emphasized that reading is a key vehicle for learning, while Richards (2016) argues that comprehension is vital for understanding texts and connecting new information to prior knowledge. However, many students struggle with reading comprehension, especially in the Philippines. The National Achievement Test (NAT) results from 2019 to 2023 corroborate the PISA findings, demonstrating that many Filipino students lack the necessary reading skills to meet academic demands. These findings reinforce the need to address reading comprehension challenges within the educational system.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study used a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between reading ability and academic performance among Grade 7 students in the City Division of Makati. This design was suitable because it allowed the researchers to describe current reading comprehension levels without manipulating variables and determine the strength and direction of the relationship between students' reading performance and their overall academic performance.

2.2 Research Participants

The participants were Grade 7 students and reading teachers from the nine public high schools in Makati for the 2022–2023 school year. Stratified sampling was used to ensure representation across different reading comprehension levels. Out of a total population of 7,416 Grade 7 students, 865 students (12%) were selected using Slovin's formula to obtain a reliable sample size with an acceptable margin of error. The sample was proportionally divided into three categories: Independent level (330 students or 38%), Instructional level (369 students or 43%), and Frustration level (166 students or 19%). All 34 Reading teachers (100%) teaching English across these schools were included as respondents for the qualitative portion of the study.

2.3 Research Instrument

To assess students' reading abilities, the study employed the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) Comprehension Test, a standardized tool developed by the Department of Education. Based on their comprehension scores, the test categorized students into Independent, Instructional, or Frustration levels. A researcher-made interview questionnaire was also developed to gather qualitative data from Reading teachers. This questionnaire focused on challenges encountered in addressing students' reading difficulties. It underwent face validation by experts in reading education, based on criteria such as relevance, clarity, and alignment with the research objectives, and was refined according to their feedback.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure and Analysis

A structured data collection process was followed to ensure accuracy and ethical compliance. Formal requests for permission were submitted to the Schools Division Office of Makati and the school principals. After receiving approval, orientations were conducted for students, parents, and teachers to explain the study's purpose and procedures, emphasizing voluntary participation and the confidentiality of data. The Phil-IRI Comprehension Test was administered during Reading classes using the Department of Education's standard protocol. Based on their test scores, students were categorized into the three reading levels mentioned earlier. Structured interviews with Reading teachers were conducted face-to-face, lasting approximately 15–20 minutes each. Interview responses were recorded with consent, transcribed, and verified for accuracy. All assessment and interview data were carefully organized, encoded, and analyzed.

Quantitative data from the Phil-IRI Comprehension Test were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize reading levels and academic performance. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between reading ability and academic performance. For qualitative data, teacher interview responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns that describe the challenges encountered in addressing students' reading difficulties.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

This research complied with national and international ethical guidelines, including the Declaration of Helsinki. Approval was secured from the Schools Division Office of Makati (Protocol No. 2020-ED-045). Informed consent forms were distributed to students and signed by their parents or guardians. Teachers also signed written consent forms before participating. Participant confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and all respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequence. No personally identifiable information was included in the report or analysis.

3.0 Results and Discussion

The findings of this study revealed a notable relationship between students' reading comprehension levels and their academic performance, as measured by the Phil-IRI Comprehension Test and their General Weighted Averages (GWA). The results indicate that students with stronger reading comprehension skills tended to perform better academically, supporting the hypothesis that reading ability plays a crucial role in overall academic success.

3.1 Academic Performance

Table 1 presents the student-respondents' profiles in terms of academic performance as measured in their general weighted average.

Table 1. Profile of the Student-Respondents in terms of General Weighted Average (GWA)

School Code	Mean	SD	Interpretation
School A	86.85	5.91	Very Satisfactory
School B	85.96	6.16	Very Satisfactory
School C	87.64	4.97	Very Satisfactory
School D	86.31	4.93	Very Satisfactory
School E	87.08	5.89	Very Satisfactory
School F	86.72	6.16	Very Satisfactory
School G	87.50	6.19	Very Satisfactory
School H	87.44	5.91	Very Satisfactory
School I	87.00	6.40	Very Satisfactory
Overall	86.95	5.83	Very Satisfactory

Scale: 90% and above=Outstanding; 89%-85% =Very Satisfactory; 84%-80% =Satisfactory;
79%-75% =Fairly Satisfactory; 74% and below=Did not meet expectations (Source: DepEd order 31, S. 2012)

Table 1 summarizes the academic performance of students across the nine schools. The overall mean GWA was 86.95, categorized as "Very Satisfactory." The GWA scores were relatively consistent across the schools, with a slight standard deviation (SD) indicating that students' scores clustered closely around the mean. School C had the highest mean score of 87.65, while School B had the lowest at 85.97, within the "Very Satisfactory" range. The small SD across schools suggests that student performance was uniform, with minimal score variation. Teachers from School C attributed their students' success to well-organized lessons designed to close learning gaps, providing a key insight into the importance of effective teaching methods. Despite the general trend of "very satisfactory" academic performance across the schools, those with lower mean scores, such as School B, may benefit from introducing more innovative teaching strategies and comprehensive intervention programs, especially for students at the frustration level. The interview with teacher-respondents further emphasized the importance of engaging students through varied teaching methods and providing adequate learning materials. The literature supports this, with Nemenzo (2016) and Margaret and Nkem (2016) emphasizing that mastering basic reading skills is foundational to academic success in other disciplines.

Table 2 presents the students' reading comprehension levels based on the Phil-IRI Comprehension Test, focusing on the Independent Level. The results showed that most students performed independently, with a composite mean of 6.85, which corresponds to a high level of reading ability where students can read and comprehend texts without assistance. School E had the highest mean score at 6.91, while School C had the lowest mean at 6.81. The low SD values across schools further indicate slight variation in how students scored on the test, suggesting consistent comprehension abilities among the students at each school. The results suggest that students in the Independent Level can read fluently, understand most of what they read, and correctly answer 90% or more of the questions. These students typically engage deeply with reading materials and demonstrate critical thinking skills, contributing to their strong academic performance. Teachers observed that students in this group were

motivated, engaged in reading activities, and showed greater perseverance than those in the Instructional or Frustration levels.

Table 2. Phil-IRI Comprehension Test of Students in terms of Independent Level

School Code	Mean	SD	Interpretation
School A	6.90	0.32	Independent Level
School B	6.85	0.30	Independent Level
School C	6.81	0.35	Independent Level
School D	6.82	0.32	Independent Level
School E	6.90	0.32	Independent Level
School F	6.86	0.29	Independent Level
School G	6.87	0.30	Independent Level
School H	6.81	0.28	Independent Level
School I	6.82	0.32	Independent Level
Composite	6.85	0.31	Independent Level

Scale: 8.10-6.00=Independent Level; 5.99-4.31=Instructional Level; 4.30-2.40=Frustration Level

These findings align with Mohan's (2010) assertion that applying effective reading strategies is crucial for success. Students at the independent level are proficient in using strategies such as skimming and annotating texts, which enhances their comprehension. It is recommended that teachers continue to integrate activities that foster these skills to support students' growth as independent readers. In conclusion, this study's findings emphasize the importance of reading ability in academic performance. By fostering reading skills in the classroom, teachers can help students improve their reading comprehension and performance across all subjects. Further interventions, especially targeting students at the Instructional and Frustration levels, may help bridge the gap in academic achievement.

Table 3 presents the results of the Phil-IRI Comprehension Test in terms of the instructional level of the students. The scores across all schools show slight variation, indicating similar overall reading comprehension levels. Among the schools, School C had the highest mean score of 5.27, while School E had the lowest mean score of 5.08. The mean scores across all schools were close to each other, with low standard deviations (less than 1 unit), reflecting homogeneity in the test results. The overall composite mean was 5.19, with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.40497, placing the students in the "instructional level" range (4.31–5.99).

Table 3. Phil-IRI Comprehension Test of Students in terms of Instructional Level

School Code	Mean	SD	Interpretation
School A	5.22	0.42	Instructional Level
School B	5.22	0.47	Instructional Level
School C	5.27	0.39	Instructional Level
School D	5.22	0.39	Instructional Level
School E	5.08	0.38	Instructional Level
School F	5.18	0.39	Instructional Level
School G	5.15	0.37	Instructional Level
School H	5.16	0.37	Instructional Level
School I	5.21	0.42	Instructional Level
Composite	5.19	0.40	Instructional Level

Scale: 8.10-6.00=Independent Level; 5.99-4.31=Instructional Level; 4.30-2.40=Frustration Level

At the instructional level, students can read and comprehend texts with some teacher assistance. They can use word recognition strategies and techniques. However, they may face challenges with new or unfamiliar vocabulary. Most students at this level demonstrate diligence and responsibility in their studies, taking time to complete assigned tasks.

Table 4 presents the results of the Phil-IRI Comprehension Test in terms of the frustration level of students. Scores in this category were similarly low across the schools, with the highest mean score of 3.46 observed in School E, and the lowest mean score of 3.32 in School B. The composite mean for the frustration level was 3.38 with a standard deviation of 0.21. Students in the frustration level have significant difficulty reading and comprehending texts. Their reading is characterized by errors such as word substitutions, repetitions, and omissions. The frustration level indicates that students struggle with understanding ideas from the text, particularly due to

limited vocabulary and background knowledge. Factors such as unfamiliar words and topics that do not interest the students contribute to these challenges.

Table 4. *Phil-IRI Comprehension Test of Students in terms of Frustration Level*

School Code	Mean	SD	Interpretation
School A	3.39	0.22	Frustration Level
School B	3.32	0.20	Frustration Level
School C	3.40	0.21	Frustration Level
School D	3.33	0.21	Frustration Level
School E	3.46	0.19	Frustration Level
School F	3.34	0.20	Frustration Level
School G	3.44	0.21	Frustration Level
School H	3.37	0.25	Frustration Level
School I	3.33	0.21	Frustration Level
Composite	3.38	0.21	Frustration Level

Scale: 8.10-6.00=Independent Level; 5.99-4.31=Instructional Level; 4.30-2.40=Frustration Level

In interviews, teachers reported that students at this level often lack the vocabulary to understand the text. Reading strategies should be taught explicitly to these students to help them improve. Cognitive strategies like SQ3R, KWL charts, and Reading Graphic Organizers could be helpful in teaching comprehension skills such as sequencing, story structure, and making inferences.

3.2 Relationship Between Students' Reading Comprehension Levels and Academic Performance

Table 5 examines the relationship between students' reading comprehension levels and academic performance. Pearson's r found a high positive correlation between the two variables across all schools, with r -values ranging from 0.88 to 0.94. The composite r -value was 0.91, indicating a strong relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance. This positive correlation implies that students with higher reading comprehension tend to perform better academically. Conversely, students with lower reading comprehension will likely have lower academic performance. These findings align with previous research (Ponkshe, 2013; Bastug, 2014), indicating that stronger reading comprehension abilities predict better academic achievement.

Table 5. *Relationship between the Reading Comprehension Level and Academic Performance*

School Code	r	Degree of Correlation	p	Decision Ho	Interpretation
School A	.91	High	<.001	Reject	Significant
School B	.91	High	<.001	Reject	Significant
School C	.89	High	<.001	Reject	Significant
School D	.88	High	<.001	Reject	Significant
School E	.91	High	<.001	Reject	Significant
School F	.93	High	<.001	Reject	Significant
School G	.93	High	<.001	Reject	Significant
School H	.91	High	<.001	Reject	Significant
School I	.94	High	<.001	Reject	Significant
Composite	.91	High	<.001	Reject	Significant

Degree of Correlations: ± 1.00 =Perfect; Between ± 0.75 to ± 1.00 =High; Between ± 0.25 to ± 0.75 =Moderate; Between 0 to ± 0.25 =Low

3.3 Challenges Encountered

The data from Table 6 showed that most teacher-respondents (59%) agreed that students at the independent and instructional levels demonstrated efficient study habits, allotting enough time for tasks at school and home. In contrast, frustration-level students (29%) tended to prioritize distractions like mobile games over their reading tasks, which significantly affected their study habits. These results highlighted the importance of developing stronger reading habits, particularly for struggling readers, to improve academic performance. Regular reading practices needed to be encouraged, especially for those at the frustration level. These findings were consistent with Villanueva's (2012) assertion that systematic teaching and fostering a love for reading were essential for improving reading proficiency. Moreover, studies have shown that regular engagement with reading materials can enhance time management and task completion, especially in academic contexts (Bastug, 2014).

Table 6. Problems and Challenges Encountered by Teachers Regarding Study Habits

Recurring Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Independent and instructional level students allocate sufficient time for reading and tasks.	20	59.00
Frustration level students often lack focus and prefer mobile games over reading.	10	29.00
Students at independent and instructional levels exhibit more responsibility and focus.	4	12.00
Total	34	100

3.4 Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Motivation in Reading Activities

As shown in Table 7, most teacher-respondents (88%) emphasized the importance of presenting reading materials that were engaging and relatable to students' everyday experiences. Students, particularly those at the frustration level, required additional motivation to engage in reading tasks, with incentives or relevant materials often necessary to spark their interest. Teachers highlighted that students were more likely to engage with reading when they saw its relevance. These findings aligned with McGinnis and Smith's (2012) research on the impact of motivation and interest on a child's reading ability. Motivation was crucial for reading development, and teachers needed to adopt flexible and creative strategies to maintain student interest.

Table 7. Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Motivation in Reading Activities

Recurring Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Reading materials should be engaging and relevant to students' lives to motivate them.	30	88.00
Frustrated students needed extra motivation and incentives to engage in reading.	2	6.00
Students required further justification of the importance of reading materials.	2	6.00
Total	34	100

3.5 Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Attraction to Reading Tasks

Table 8 shows that 47% of teacher-respondents believed students were likelier to engage with reading tasks relevant to real-life situations. However, frustration-level students often found long texts complex to engage with and preferred interactive, engaging materials, such as games and videos. Providing tasks relating to students' experiences significantly improved their involvement in reading activities. Ciampa (2010) supported this, highlighting that incorporating relatable content and e-books can increase student engagement, particularly for struggling readers. Similarly, Ireneo (2012) found that using interactive and multimedia materials could motivate struggling readers to engage more with the content.

Table 8. Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Attraction to Reading Tasks

Recurring Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Reading tasks should have been relatable and reflected real-life situations.	16	47.00
Interactive materials increased attraction to reading, especially for frustration-level students.	9	26.50
Frustrated students did not enjoy reading long materials.	9	26.50
Total	34	100

3.6 Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension

As shown in Table 9, 41.2% of teacher-respondents observed that students' difficulties in comprehending reading tasks were linked to struggles with word recognition and understanding the text. Frustration-level students, in particular, faced challenges due to limited vocabulary, unfamiliarity with words, and difficulties in word recognition. These issues led to frustration and hindered students' ability to express themselves fluently. Teachers recommended building vocabulary skills and teaching cognitive strategies such as SQ3R, the KWL chart, and Reading Graphic Organizers to address these challenges. These strategies promote comprehension skills like sequencing, story structure, and inference-making, which benefit not only reading comprehension but also writing. Mohan (2010) noted that textbook reading challenges arise from factors like abstract vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and textbooks' non-narrative nature, requiring readers to engage in deeper interpretation.

Table 9. Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension (Word Recognition and Vocabulary)

Recurring Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Difficulty in comprehending text due to unfamiliar words and a lack of vocabulary skills.	10	29.40
Frustration-level students struggle with reading activities due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge and failure to apply vocabulary development strategies.	10	29.40
Students, especially at the frustration level, have difficulty with word recognition to understanding the text and need more time and attention.	14	41.20
Total	34	100

3.7 Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Difficulty in Sentence Construction and Cohesion

Table 10 highlights that 59% of teacher-respondents noted that students at the independent and instructional levels could construct sentences with minimal grammatical errors, mostly using simple, compound, and complex sentences. However, frustrated students struggled to form basic sentences, reflecting their limited vocabulary and grammar exposure. Teachers noted that these difficulties were influenced by a lack of vocabulary, inadequate grammar knowledge, and insufficient writing practice. To tackle these issues, teachers recommended using guide questions to help students stay on track and reduce misunderstandings. Sentence completion exercises and outlining were also suggested as effective strategies. These techniques assist students in starting sentences and identifying key ideas in paragraphs, improving their sentence construction and cohesion skills. Teachers also emphasized the importance of mastering outlining as a reading skill. Once students grasp this skill, they can easily identify themes in the texts they read or write, boosting their reading comprehension and writing abilities.

Table 10. Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Difficulty in Sentence Construction and Cohesion

Recurring Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Students under independent and instructional levels can construct sentences with minimal grammatical errors, primarily in simple, compound, and complex sentences. Frustration-level students struggle to form even simple sentences.	20	59.00
Many students, particularly those at the frustration level, lack a solid understanding of sentence structure, parts of speech, and grammar. Their difficulty in constructing sentences is influenced by a limited vocabulary, poor grammar knowledge, and lack of written exercises.	10	29.00
Outlining is a critical reading skill that students need to master. Once they master this skill, they can easily identify themes in paragraphs they read or write.	4	12.00
Total	34	100

3.8 Challenges Encountered by Teachers Regarding Students' Difficulty in Using Reading Strategies

As shown in Table 11, most teacher-respondents (88%) reported that students face frustration-level challenges in applying reading strategies.

Table 11. Challenges Encountered by Teachers Regarding Students' Difficulty in Using Reading Strategies

Recurring Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Frustration-level students struggle with using reading strategies due to limited experience with books, speech and hearing problems, and poor phonemic awareness.	2	6.00
Teachers believe students need activities encouraging reading strategies, such as annotating texts and skimming, to find the main idea.	2	6.00
Independent and instructional-level students apply reading strategies when prompted, while frustration-level students avoid using strategies, opting for the easiest way to finish reading.	30	88.00
Total	34	100

These students struggle with limited book exposure, speech and hearing problems, and poor phonemic awareness. On the other hand, students at the independent and instructional levels successfully apply reading strategies when prompted. Teachers emphasized the importance of engaging students in activities that encourage the use of reading strategies, such as annotating texts and skimming for the main idea. These activities help

students practice and internalize effective reading strategies. Teachers also noted that consistent use of these strategies improves students' comfort and familiarity with them, ultimately boosting their reading comprehension. To support frustration-level students, teachers proposed a gradual, focused approach: strategies are introduced slowly and practiced repetitively to build familiarity and understanding.

3.9 Challenges Encountered by Teachers Regarding Students' Difficulty in Concentration

Table 12 highlights that 88% of teacher-respondents identified concentration issues as a significant challenge, particularly for frustration-level students. These students often struggle with focusing on reading tasks due to social media, lack of interest, and short attention spans. Teachers observed that disengaged students tend to have trouble concentrating, which is most pronounced among frustration-level readers. Additionally, 6% of respondents noted that distance learning has exacerbated this issue. Students frequently juggle household chores and other distractions while attempting to read, which further reduces their ability to focus. In contrast, only 6% of teachers mentioned other distractions contributing to concentration difficulties. This shows that students face a variety of challenges when it comes to maintaining focus during reading activities.

To tackle these challenges, teachers suggested strategies to minimize distractions and create a more engaging learning environment. Incorporating active learning techniques, setting clear expectations, and fostering a supportive atmosphere are key to helping students stay focused. Teachers also recommended limiting distractions like social media and encouraging students to designate dedicated reading time to enhance concentration and reading comprehension.

Table 12. Challenges Encountered by Teachers Regarding Students' Difficulty in Concentration

Recurring Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Social media, lack of interest, and short retention span contribute to difficulties in concentration, especially among frustration-level students.	2	6.00
Students are distracted during distance learning because they must manage household chores alongside their reading tasks.	2	6.00
Other distractions, such as multitasking and a lack of focus in reading activities, can be problematic.	30	88.00
Total	34	100

3.10 Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Reasoning and Background Knowledge in Reading Activities

As shown in Table 13, 59% of teacher-respondents noted that independent and instructional-level students tend to engage more with reading tasks and demonstrate strong reasoning and background knowledge. However, frustrated students often face challenges due to their limited exposure to diverse reading genres, which affects their ability to think critically and respond logically to reading tasks. Teachers emphasized the need to expose these students to various genres and teach critical thinking skills to improve their reading abilities. Additionally, teachers highlighted that schema-based pre-reading activities help activate students' background knowledge, making them more engaged with the material. This approach boosts comprehension and helps students better connect with the content. Schmitt (2000) emphasized the importance of prior knowledge in interpreting texts, suggesting that readers rely on their background knowledge and past experiences to adjust their reading expectations.

Table 13. Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Reasoning and Background Knowledge in Reading Activities

Recurring Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Independent and instructional students have sound reasoning and background knowledge in reading tasks, as they engage more than frustration-level students.	20	59.00
Frustration-level readers need exposure to different genres and critical thinking skills to respond logically to reading tasks.	10	29.00
Schema-based, pre-reading activities help activate students' background knowledge and engage them in the reading activity.	4	12.00
Total	34	100

3.11 Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Vocabulary Knowledge and Its Impact on Reading Comprehension

As shown in Table 14, 88% of teacher-respondents identified vocabulary limitations as a significant challenge in students' reading comprehension. Frustration-level students, in particular, struggle with vocabulary due to insufficient reading habits, often prioritizing social media or mobile games over engaging with English texts.

Teachers linked these vocabulary gaps to poor reading habits, negatively affecting students' comprehension and communication skills. Teachers suggested various strategies to enhance vocabulary development to address this issue, such as using flashcards, word games, and pronunciation guides. These activities help make vocabulary learning fun while aiding students in retaining and applying new words. Furthermore, teaching students about root words, prefixes, and suffixes can significantly expand their vocabulary. Flannigan and Greenwood (2007) emphasized the importance of considering students' needs when teaching vocabulary.

Table 14. Teachers' Perceptions on Students' Vocabulary Knowledge and Its Impact on Reading Comprehension

Recurring Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Frustration-level students lack a good command of the language due to insufficient reading time, preferring social media or mobile games over reading.	30	88.00
Internet colloquial expressions and limited reading time further hinder students' vocabulary development.	4	12.00
Total	34	100

3.12 Teachers' Perceptions on the Adequacy of Reading Materials for Students

As shown in Table 15, 88% of teacher-respondents expressed concerns about the adequacy of available reading materials. They observed that students often do not engage with books unless required, and the books available do not match students' interests. Additionally, some materials were inappropriate for students' reading levels, further hindering their engagement. Teachers recommended providing differentiated reading materials tailored to students' interests and reading abilities to address these concerns. Francisco (2013) emphasized that regular exposure to various genres can help students develop their reading skills. Offering engaging materials that are appropriately leveled can motivate students to read more and become more involved in reading activities.

Table 15. Teachers' Perceptions on the Adequacy of Reading Materials for Students

Recurring Responses	Frequency	Percentage
While books are available in the library, students rarely read unless required, and the available books do not align with their interests.	30	88.00
Some reading materials are not suitable for the students' reading level.	4	12.00
Total	34	100

4.0 Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between reading comprehension levels and academic performance among Grade 7 students in the nine public high schools of the Division of Makati during the School Year 2022–2023. The findings revealed a clear connection: students with higher reading comprehension skills achieved better academic outcomes, while those with lower reading proficiency faced significant challenges across various subjects. These results highlight the critical role that reading comprehension plays in academic success. The study also identified persistent reading difficulties, with a notable proportion of students classified at the Frustration and Instructional levels. Teachers emphasized key challenges, including a lack of study habits, low motivation to read, and limited application of effective reading strategies. These difficulties were particularly pronounced among students at the frustration level, indicating the need for targeted support. This underscores the importance of improving teaching practices and developing structured intervention programs tailored to struggling readers.

In response to these findings, the study proposes a Comprehensive Reading Intervention Program to address these gaps. The program would include targeted strategies for students at various reading levels, incorporating personalized reading plans, motivation-building activities, and teacher training on evidence-based reading interventions. Such a program has the potential to enhance both reading comprehension and overall academic performance significantly. For future research, it is recommended that long-term studies be conducted to assess the sustained impact of reading interventions. Additionally, experimental studies exploring technology integration into reading instruction could provide valuable insights into enhancing student engagement. Expanding the research to include other grade levels or divisions would offer a broader perspective on the effectiveness of reading programs and contribute to improving literacy policies.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The author conceptualized the study and was responsible for writing, editing, supervising the research, and interpreting the data. Additionally, the author handled data analysis, encoding, statistical interpretation, the development of the research instrument, and the data gathering process.

6.0 Funding

This research was self-funded and did not receive financial support from any external funding agency. The study was conducted in the Schools Division Office of Makati's ongoing efforts to enhance literacy programs among Senior High School students.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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