

# Factors Affecting the Reading Performance of Grade 3&4 Multi Grade Learners in Pudtol District: Basis for A Reading Program

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated the factors affecting the reading performance among Grade 3 and 4 learners in multi-grade classes in the upper barangays of Pudtol District. The central problem addressed was the persistent low reading performance among multi-grade learners, particularly those at the frustration level based on Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) results. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study gathered data from four multi-grade elementary schools, focusing on learner, teacher, home, and environmental factors influencing reading outcomes. Findings revealed that among the variables examined, learner-related factors, particularly the frequency of reading at home, had the most significant impact on reading performance. Results indicated that learners often lack regular reading habits, which may stem from motivational gaps, distractions, or an absence of structured routines. Additionally, home-related factors, such as limited parental involvement, were found to contribute negatively to students' reading habits and overall motivation. Based on these findings, the study recommends the development of a reading program that addresses behavioral and motivational barriers, includes the provision of developmentally appropriate reading materials, and actively involves parents or family members in home-based reading instruction. Such an approach is expected to foster a more supportive reading environment and cultivate a more positive attitude toward reading among learners.

**Keywords:** environment, multi-grade, parental involvement

## **INTRODUCTION**

Reading is a key resource of the social and cognitive life of individuals. It allows us to participate in society, the economy, politics and culture. As we read, we use our knowledge of words to make sense of the words we see, and that helps us learn even more. In the context of elementary learners, "reading" involves more than simply pronouncing words aloud. It's about developing a passion of reading and discovering the meaning of the words. They discover that the words they hear and life experiences are linked to the letters they see on the page. Reading as a whole according to Tomas, M. J. L., et al, (2021) is a means of communication and of information and ideas. Furthermore, reading involves developing a range of crucial skills which includes word recognition, comprehension and fluency. It is a complex skill that empowers individuals to access information, knowledge, and culture. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Studies (PIRLS) highlighted that strong reading skills are essential for future academic, economic, and social success as cited by Howie, S., et al. (2006). In the United States, research by Smith,

T. E., et al. (2022) identified teacher qualifications, classroom resources, and student engagement as key determinants of reading achievement of every learner. Similarly, a study conducted by Hu, R. (2023) found that the availability of appropriate reading materials teacher support, and parental involvement were significantly associated with students' reading performance.

In the unique context of multi-grade schools where children of different ages learn together, we need smart and adaptable reading strategies that not only work but also consider the specific factors that influence how well multi-grade learners perform in reading. Think about how the wide age range in a single classroom might affect reading instruction, the availability of age-appropriate reading materials, or how peer interaction can either support or hinder reading development. Understanding these factors that influence the reading performance of multigrade learners is crucial for developing effective instructional strategies and support systems and also is key to finding the best ways to help every child in a multi-grade classroom become a successful reader.

This study looks into research on effective ways to boost early literacy. When we consider the multi-grade setting, we can specifically explore how different factors like home and environment and parental involvement were significantly associated with students' reading performance in multi-grade settings.

By identifying these factors, the researcher offered a proposal on how to improve their performance through a Reading Program titled “**Project C-REAP: Comprehensive Reading Enhancement Activity Program.**” And help the respondents, the struggling reader learners in developing their reading skills and abilities, and create a positive attitude towards reading in these challenging learning environments. This reading program has four (4) components. First the Reading Assessment, to assess the learners using the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) to identify their reading level whether: a. frustration b. instructional and c. independent. Second is the Reading Instruction, Remediation and Intervention. For Frustration Level, improve the reading performance of Non-Readers (NR) and Syllable Readers (SR) using appropriate reading materials to be taken from the Marungko Approach, Phil-IRI materials and other contextualized materials in the Apayao Learning Enhancement Activity Program (Apayao LEAP).

### **Research Objectives**

This study aimed to determine the factors affecting the reading performance of Grade 3 & 4 multi-grade learners in the upper multi-grade schools of Pudtol District. Specifically, it sought to examine the learners' profiles in terms of sex, age, and socio-economic status, as well as to analyze the teachers' profiles based on sex, age, highest educational attainment, and length of service in multi-grade teaching. The study also aimed to assess home-related factors, including parental involvement and the home environment, that may influence learners' reading performance. Furthermore, it sought to evaluate the reading performance levels of Grade 3 & 4 multi-grade learners using the results of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI). Additionally, the study intended to determine the relationship between the profiles of both learners and teachers, home factors, and the learners' reading performance. Ultimately, the research aimed to develop a reading intervention program that could serve as a basis for enhancing literacy and fostering a positive attitude toward reading among multi-grade learners.

### **Methodology**

This study employed the descriptive-correlational research design to determine the factors affecting the reading performance of Grade 3 and 4 multi-grade learners in the upper multi-grade schools of Pudtol District. Descriptive research is concerned with the current status of a phenomenon, providing an accurate

account of characteristics, behaviors, or conditions as they naturally occur. According to Manuel and Medel (as cited in Course Hero, n.d.), descriptive research involves the description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of the present nature, composition, or processes of phenomena. It focuses on prevailing conditions or how a person, group, or object behaves or functions in the present. Since the study's objectives were to characterize the profiles of the teachers and students, pinpoint influential variables, and assess reading proficiency using data from the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), this approach was judged suitable for the research. The study's correlational component aimed to ascertain the degree of association between the variables that were identified, including reading performance levels, learner and teachers' profiles, and aspects associated to the home.

This method is particularly useful for identifying whether and how strongly pairs of variables are related without manipulating the study environment (Kalla, 2011). It supported the creation of a responsive reading intervention program by enabling the researcher to statistically evaluate the direction and strength of relationships between variables in an authentic educational environment. The participants of this study included Grade 3 & 4 learners and their respective multi-grade teachers from four elementary schools located in the upper barangays of Pudtol District. A total of 48 learners and 6 teachers were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that the participants met the criteria relevant to the study's objectives.

The table below shows the population of the respondents of this study comprising of the learners and the teachers together with the names of the four multi-grade elementary schools where these respondents are situated.

**Table 1: Population of the Research Respondents**

Multi-Grade Schools	Respondents			Teacher	Sample	
	Teacher	Learners			Learners	
		Gr. 3	Gr. 4		Gr. 3	Gr. 4
Aurora Elementary School	2	6	6	1	5	7
Aga Elementary School	2	7	8	2	7	5
Lower Maton Elementary School	2	10	6	1	7	6
Lt. Balag Elementary School	2	6	6	2	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>48</b>	

The study utilized two primary instruments which is the learners' questionnaire adapted from the standardized instrument developed by Guthrie and Wigfield (1999). The questionnaire assessed learners' reading habits, motivation, and frequency of reading at home. The instrument has been widely used in literacy studies and demonstrates strong construct validity. Teachers' questionnaire based on the framework of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2006) were also utilized. This questionnaire evaluated teacher-related factors such as classroom practices, instructional resources, and professional background. The instrument is internationally recognized for its rigorous development process and exhibits high content validity. Both instruments underwent pre-testing among a small group of teachers and learners with similar characteristics to the target population. This pilot testing helped identify ambiguities in language and ensure consistency in responses. Furthermore, internal consistency of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded satisfactory reliability coefficients

above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating that the items consistently measure the intended constructs.

Prior to data collection, the researcher asked permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Apayao, the Public Schools District Supervisor of Pudtol and the respective School Heads of the selected multi-grade schools for the proper conduct of the questionnaire. In addition, the researcher humbly asked the Phil- IRI results of grade 3 & 4 multi-grade learners from the school heads of the identified multi-grade schools. Informed consent was secured from all participants and, in the case of learners, from their parents or guardians. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher during break time to minimize disruption of classes. The collected data were subjected to descriptive analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the profiles of learners and teachers, as well as the home-related factors and reading performance levels.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. The Profile of the Grade 3&4 multi-grade learners

The profiles of the learners used in this study are the sex, age, and family income as reflected in the tables below.

**Table 2: Sex**

Sex	Freq	Percentage
Male	34	70.83
Female	14	29.17
<b>Total</b>	48	100

The data revealed that a majority of the respondents were male, comprising 70.83% of the sample, while female respondents accounted for only 29.17%. This notable disparity indicates a male-dominated sample, which may have implications for the interpretation of results, particularly if gender-related variables are considered relevant to the study's outcomes. While the present study does not primarily focus on sex-based comparisons in reading performance, the gender composition remains an important contextual factor in educational research. It is significant to highlight that more recent research has contested the old viewpoint that academic discrepancies are due to innate gender disparities. According to Hyde's (2005) Gender Similarities Hypothesis (GSH), men and women are more alike than different in most areas of psychology and cognition.

**Table 3: Age**

Age	Freq	Percentage
8	17	35.42
9	16	33.33
10	10	20.83
11	2	4.17
12 & above	3	6.75
<b>Total</b>	48	100

The age distribution revealed a pattern where most of the respondents are clustered in 8 – 12 age groups. Also, it was shown that representation decreases for older age groups, suggesting that the sample is more reflective of younger to middle-aged children. The table show that the age distribution revealed a pattern

where most of the respondents are clustered in 8 – 12 age groups. age of the learners’ respondents which revealed that majority of respondents are with age 8, with 17 respondents (35.42%). This indicates that the sample is primarily composed of young individuals. The study of Whitely, M., et al. (2021) revealed that younger students were significantly outperformed by their older classmates in various assessments, with the effect being most pronounced in earlier school years. Additionally, the study of Navarro, et al. (2015) indicated that older students within the same grade level tended to have higher academic performance compared to their younger peers. The phenomenon where older children within the same academic cohort tend to perform better than their younger peers is known as the **Relative Age Effect (RAE)**. This effect has been extensively studied and documented in educational research. For instance, a systematic review by Urruticoechea et al. (2021) analyzed data from 21 studies across 24 countries and found that relatively older students often achieve higher academic performance compared to their younger classmates. The review highlighted that younger learners are more likely to have lower test scores, higher repetition rates, and reduced socialization capacities. These disparities are particularly pronounced in early educational stages and can be influenced by factors such as socioeconomic status and family support. Similarly, a study of Thoren et al. (2016) on the RAE in mathematics and reading among German students revealed that relatively older students outperformed younger ones in Grade 2, with the effect diminishing by Grade 3 and disappearing or even reversing by Grade 8. This suggests that while the RAE is significant in early schooling, its impact may lessen over time.

**Table 4: Family Income**

Family Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
<b>above 15, 000</b>	2	4.17
<b>10,000-15,000</b>	4	8.33
<b>5,000-10,000</b>	18	37.50
<b>Below 5000</b>	24	50.00
<b>Total</b>	48	100

The data in the table reveals that the majority of the respondents (50%) belong to families with a monthly income below ₱5,000, while a significant portion (37.5%) earn between ₱5,000–₱10,000. This indicates that most families are in the low-income bracket, with only a small percentage (12.5%) earning above ₱10,000. This economic condition could have implications on access to resources, education, and overall quality of life for the families involved

**2. The Profile of the Grade 3&4 multi-grade teachers**

The profiles of the teachers used in this study are age, sex, educational attainment, teaching experience, relevant trainings and this is reflected in the following table

**Table 5: Sex**

Sex	Freq	Percentage
<b>Male</b>	1	16.67
<b>Female</b>	5	83.33
<b>Total</b>	6	100

Majority of the respondents as seen in the table below are female, with 5 respondents (83.33%). There was 1 male respondent (16.67%) which indicated that the sample is dominated by female participants. The big difference between male and female respondents implied that the sample is predominantly female, which may influence the overall findings and interpretations depending on the context of the study.

In a study focusing on teacher gender and pupil attainment in reading literacy in Hong Kong, Tse (2015) found that students taught by female teachers had more positive attitudes toward reading and higher reading scores compared to those taught by male teachers. The study suggested that female teachers might employ teaching strategies that better support reading development, although it also acknowledged that male teachers organized more reading instruction and activities.

In the context of multigrade classrooms, Alda and Gementiza (2023) conducted a narrative inquiry into the experiences of multigrade teachers in teaching reading. While their study did not focus explicitly on teacher gender, it highlighted the unique challenges faced by multigrade teachers in delivering effective reading instruction. The study emphasized the need for specialized training and support for multigrade teachers to enhance reading outcomes.

**Table 6: Age**

Age	Freq	Percentage
<b>30 &amp; below</b>	1	16.67
<b>31 – 40</b>	3	50.00
<b>41 - 50</b>	2	33.33
<b>Total</b>	6	100

The table revealed that majority of teacher respondents are with age range of 31 – 40, with 3 respondents (50.00%). This indicates that the sample is primarily composed of teachers who are in their mid-age range. The next largest group is those with age range of 41 – 50, having 2 respondents (33.33%). This implied that a significant portion of the respondents are in the next age level. Those with age 30 and below consisted of only one (1) respondent (16.67%), showing that young adults are moderately represented. The age distribution revealed a pattern where most of the respondents are clustered in 31 – 40 age groups. Also, it was shown that representation decreases for younger age groups, suggesting that the sample is more reflective of younger to middle-aged individuals.

Since age is frequently correlated with experience, adaptability, and acquaintance with modern pedagogical practices, it can have a major impact on how well multigrade teachers teach reading. Soliven and Lopez (2022) explored the experiences of multigrade primary teachers in teaching reading and found that challenges such as classroom management and the need for differentiated instruction were prevalent, regardless of the teachers' age. This indicates that while age may influence certain aspects of teaching, other factors like training and support systems play crucial roles in reading instruction effectiveness. Further, Ramrathan and Mzimela (2016) highlighted the importance of teacher agency and adaptive skills in multigrade reading instruction. Their study emphasized that the ability to make informed instructional decisions, often developed through experience, is vital in addressing the diverse needs of students in multigrade settings. This suggests that older teachers, with more years of experience, might possess enhanced capabilities in tailoring reading instruction to varied student levels. When taken as a whole, these results indicate that although younger educators could be more enthusiastic and receptive to novel approaches, older educators' expertise can be extremely helpful when negotiating the challenges of teaching reading to several grade levels.

**Table 7: Educational Attainment**

Educational Attainment	Freq	Percentage
<b>College Degree</b>	3	50.00
<b>Master’s Degree</b>	3	50.00
<b>Total</b>	6	100

The respondents are evenly split between those holding a College Degree and those with a master's degree. Each group comprising 50% (3 out of 6) of the total population. The data reveals a balanced distribution of respondents between those with college and master's degrees. This high level of educational attainment suggests that the participants are likely capable of providing well-informed insights, making them valuable contributors to studies involving professional practices, academic evaluation, or organizational assessments. One important aspect affecting the efficacy of reading instruction is the educational background of the teachers, especially in multigrade classrooms where teachers are teaching many grade levels at once. In a related study, Soliven and Lopez (2022) investigated the experiences of multigrade primary teachers in teaching reading. The findings underscored the challenges faced by teachers in multigrade settings, including the necessity for differentiated instruction and the importance of teacher preparedness. Although the study did not specifically focus on educational attainment, it suggested that higher qualifications could equip teachers with better strategies to address the diverse needs of students in multigrade classrooms. Further, research by Bashir, et al. (2020) examined professional growth pathways for primary school teachers in multigrade environments. The study found that instructors with higher educational qualifications and pedagogical expertise achieved better teaching and learning outcomes in multigrade classes. The authors recommended that educational administrations should facilitate training programs to enhance the pedagogical knowledge and proficiency of teachers in multigrade settings.

**Table 8: Number of years in Teaching MG Classes**

<b>Years in Teaching MG</b>	<b>Freq</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Below 1 year</b>	1	16.67
<b>1 – 5 years</b>	2	33.33
<b>6 – 10 years</b>	3	50.00
<b>Total</b>	6	100

The table in the next page revealed that the largest group consists of respondents with 6 - 10 years of teaching in the multigrade classes, having 3 respondents (50.00%). This suggests that a significant portion of the workforce have relatively mastered the work in a multi-grade class as a part of their roles. The second-largest group includes those with 1 – 5 years of teaching, having 2 respondents (33.33%). This indicates a steady retention of staff beyond the initial years of employment. Further observation of the data revealed that there is only 1 (16.67%) respondent with below 1 year of teaching in the multigrade. Effective reading instruction is significantly shaped by the length of service, or teaching experience, of multigrade teachers. In multigrade settings, when educators manage multiple grade levels concurrently, experienced teachers frequently develop adaptive skills and a deeper grasp of students' needs.

Alda and Gementiza (2023) highlighted in their study among public-school teachers handling reading instruction in multigrade classrooms that those seasoned teachers exhibited refined classroom management skills and employed diverse reading pedagogies to address the varied needs of students across different grade levels. The findings suggest that accumulated teaching experience enables educators to better navigate the complexities of multigrade reading instruction. Similarly, Soliven and Lopez (2022) explored the lived experiences of multigrade primary teachers in teaching reading. The study revealed that teachers with longer service years demonstrated enhanced capabilities in creating effective learning environments, establishing classroom routines, and implementing reading interventions. These competencies are attributed to the experiential knowledge gained over years of teaching in multigrade settings. When taken as a whole, these findings highlight how crucial teaching experience is to improving reading instruction in multigrade contexts. Years of experience help teachers build a toolkit of techniques

and perspectives that help them deal with the particular difficulties of multigrade classes, which eventually improves student reading results.

**3. Learner’s Reading Performance Level Based on Phil-IRI**

**Table 9: Learner’s Reading Performance Level**

Reading Level	Number of Learners			Percentage
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total	
<b>Frustration</b>	12	9	21	43.75
<b>Instructional</b>	6	8	14	29.17
<b>Independent</b>	6	7	13	27.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>48</b>	

The table provided the summary of the grade 3&4 multi-grade learner’s reading performance showing that almost half of the learners (43.75%) are at the Frustration reading level, indicating a need for significant reading intervention and support. Only 27.08% are reading independently, suggesting that less than one-third of the learners can read on their own with full comprehension. Grade 4 learners show slightly stronger performance, with more students at the instructional and independent levels compared to Grade 3. Further, the data implies that early reading interventions—especially for Grade 3 learners—are crucial to improve literacy outcomes and reduce the number of students at the frustration level.

**4. Factors that affect the reading performance of the Grades 3&4 Upper Multi-grade classes of Pudtol District in terms of:**

**Table 10: Parental Involvement**

Parental Involvement	Mean	Rank
<b>1. Reading with the Child</b>	2.94	1
<b>2. Allowing the Child to Read Independently</b>	3.78	2
<b>3. Providing a Quiet Place to Read at Home</b>	4.81	4
<b>4. Helping a Child in Reading Homework</b>	4.89	5
<b>5. Encouraging a Child to Read</b>	4.91	6
<b>6. Limiting a Child’s Screen Time to Allow More Time on Reading</b>	4.58	3
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.32</b>	

First in rank as shown in the table was Reading with the Child having a mean of 2.94. From the table, it can be seen that this is the only item with a mean below 3, suggesting that most parents rarely engage in shared reading sessions with their children. Involving parents is essential to improving elementary school students' reading abilities. A study of Çalışkan and Ulaş (2021) using quasi-experimental examined the effects of parent-involved reading activities on fourth graders' reading comprehension, motivation, and attitudes. The findings revealed that students whose parents actively participated in reading activities exhibited significant improvements in reading comprehension and developed more positive attitudes toward reading. Furthermore, they emphasized that parental involvement in reading activities do not only improve reading comprehension but also boosts students' motivation and attitudes toward reading.



In the Philippine context, Yopo (2024) explored the relationship between parental involvement and the reading performance of Grade VI students at Pajo Elementary School in Samar and found a significant correlation between the level of parental involvement and students' reading proficiency, emphasizing the importance of parental engagement in enhancing reading outcomes.

**Table 11: Learner’s Reading Habits at Home**

Learner’s Reading Habits at Home	Mean	Rank
1. Availability of Reading Materials at Home	3.40	2
2. Frequency/Number of Times Reading at Home	3.25	1
3. Access to Library Resources at Home	4.48	3
4. Encouragement of Parents/Guardians to Read	4.79	5
5. Conducive Place at Home for Reading	4.58	4
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.10</b>	

The table below revealed the lowest mean of 3.25 for *Frequency/Number of Times Reading at Home*, suggesting that while learners have some support and resources, they may not read frequently at home implied that learners do not read regularly at home despite having some materials. It further revealed that there are behavioral or motivational gaps which can be attributed to distractions or lack of routine.

A study by Silinskas et al. (2012) investigated the associations between the frequency of parents' reading-related activities at home and their children's reading-related skills during the transition from kindergarten to Grade 1. The results indicated that increased shared reading activities were associated with better word reading skills in children. Notably, in Grade 1, children with poorer reading skills received more frequent parental teaching and shared reading, suggesting a responsive adjustment by parents to support their children's reading development. In the Philippine context, Barluado et al. (2024) examined the influence of the home literacy environment on the early reading proficiency of Grade Three learners. The study found a significant correlation between a nurturing home literacy environment, which includes frequent reading activities, and improved reading skills among children. The findings underscore the importance of parental engagement and diverse literacy activities in enhancing children's reading performance.

**Table 12: Home environment**

Home Environment	Mean	Rank
1. Reading with Parents/Guardians	2.08	1
2. Parents/Guardians Helping in Reading Home Works	2.11	2.5
3. Access to Books and Other Reading Materials at Home	2.11	2.5
<b>Mean</b>	<b>2.10</b>	

The mean of 2.11, reading with parents/guardians is considered critical for supporting reading development, even if it doesn't occur as often. Helping with homework with mean 2.11 which is tied with access to books and other materials at home is a strong form of parental involvement but slightly less emphasized compared to simply reading together. The data suggests an opportunity to encourage more shared reading sessions at home to maximize children's reading development. In this case Reed, R. F. (2004) found in his study that the more time parents spend reading to their child at home the higher their scores should be on reading assessments.

**5. Relationship between the profile and the reading performance of Grades 3&4 multi-grade learners in the Upper Multigrade Schools in Pudtol District.**

**Table 13: Relationship between Profile and Learner’s Reading Performance**

Profile	X <sup>2</sup>	p	Interpretation
Learner’s Age	7.11 x 10 <sup>-31</sup>	1.000	No Significant Relationship
Learner’s Sex	5.36 x 10 <sup>-31</sup>	1.000	No Significant Relationship
Monthly Family income	0.000	1.000	No Significant Relationship
Teachers’ Age	0.310	0.990	No Significant Relationship
Teachers’ Sex	0.016	0.990	No Significant Relationship
Teachers’ Educational Attainment	0.095	0.950	No Significant Relationship
Teachers’ Years in Teaching Multigrade Classes	0.047	0.998	No Significant Relationship

The table showed the analysis of the data to determine whether selected learner and teacher profile variables are significantly associated with the learners’ reading performance level. The statistical tests performed were based on Chi-Square (X<sup>2</sup>) tests of independence. The significance level is tested using the p-values, with a common level of 0.05 for determining statistical significance. The table further revealed the p-values for all the variables listed which are greater than 0.05, with most being extremely close to 1.000. This indicates that there is no statistically significant association between the learners' reading performance level and any of the profile variables examined. In terms of the Learner-Related Variables, age, sex, and monthly family income show no significant relationship with reading performance. This implied that demographic and socio-economic factors of the learners do not significantly affect their reading levels in this context. With respect to Teacher-Related Variables, age, sex, educational attainment, and experience in multi-grade teaching also show no significant relationship. This points out that teacher characteristics do not significantly influence learners' reading performance levels in this particular study or population.

**6. Relationship between the identified factors and the reading performance of Grades 3&4 multi-grade learners in the Upper Multi-grade Schools in Pudtol District.**

**Table 14: Relationship between Factors and Learner’s Reading Performance**

Factors	ρ (rho)	p - value	Interpretation for ρ	Interpretation
Parental Involvement	-1.000	<0.01	Perfect Negative Correlation	Significant
Learner’s Reading Habits	-1.000	<0.01	Perfect Negative Correlation	Significant
Home Environment	-1.000	<0.01	Perfect Negative Correlation	Significant

The results of the study revealed a significant and unexpected relationship between home-related factors and the reading performance of Grade 3 & 4 multi-grade learners. Specifically, Parental Involvement showed a perfect negative correlation with reading performance, as indicated by a Spearman’s rho (ρ) value of -1.000. This result suggests that increased parental involvement, contrary to conventional assumptions, is strongly associated with decreased reading performance. While parental support is generally viewed as a positive influence on academic success, the finding implies that certain forms of

involvement—such as excessive pressure, over-monitoring, or engagement methods not aligned with a child’s learning style—may hinder rather than help reading development. These dynamics could reduce a learner’s motivation, autonomy, or confidence in reading activities. Similarly, the variable Learner’s Reading Habits showed a perfect negative correlation ( $\rho = -1.000$ ) with reading performance, indicating that higher self-reported reading habits were associated with lower reading achievement. This may suggest overestimation by learners or misalignment between reported habits and effective reading practices. It highlights the importance of assessing not just the frequency, but the quality and context of reading behaviors. The Home Environment variable also recorded a perfect negative correlation ( $\rho = -1.000$ ), suggesting that improvements in physical and emotional conditions at home were associated with a decline in learners’ reading performance. This counterintuitive outcome points to the possibility that other latent factors—such as digital distractions, household responsibilities, or emotional stressors—may coexist with seemingly favorable home environments, ultimately undermining the learner’s capacity to engage meaningfully in reading.

### Conclusion

This study investigated the factors influencing the reading performance of Grade 3 and 4 learners in multi-grade classrooms. Based on the results, the following conclusions were drawn: (a) demographic and profile variables were found not to be significant determinants of reading achievement within the context of the study; and (b) the home environment, particularly the extent of parental involvement, emerged as a critical factor in learners’ reading development. The absence of parental engagement—such as reading with children or modeling reading behavior—limits opportunities for learners to develop essential literacy skills. Consequently, a lack of such support may contribute to a weak home literacy environment, which negatively impacts reading performance.

Based on the findings, several recommendations were proposed. First, there is a need for focus for intervention and motivation and engagement strategies. Second, prioritize encouraging motivation and establishing a comfortable reading environment at home. Children are more likely to show a sincere interest in and love of reading when it is linked to good experiences, autonomy, and family ties. Reading habits that last a lifetime are encouraged by this internal drive. Third, investigate how reading is impacted by environmental and attitude factors by conducting additional qualitative study. Future studies should explore the long-term effects of parental involvement on literacy outcomes, considering variables such as socioeconomic status, cultural influences, and access to educational resources. Research could also examine the efficacy of specific parental engagement programs and interventions, providing data-driven insights to inform policy and practice.

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