

# Learners' Comprehension Skill and Performance

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## Abstract

This study assessed learners' comprehension skills and academic performance in elementary schools in the District of Dumangas II, Schools Division of Iloilo, Philippines, for School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it examined learner profiles, determined levels of comprehension and performance as assessed by teachers, identified significant differences across profile variables, and analyzed the relationship between comprehension and performance. A descriptive–correlational research design was employed using teacher assessments as primary data. Data were analyzed using mean, Mann–Whitney U test, and Spearman's rho correlation at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that learners' comprehension skills obtained an overall mean of interpreted as High, while their academic performance had an overall mean of 86.46, interpreted as Very Good. Significant differences in comprehension were observed based on teacher sex and length of service, whereas performance differences were significant only for teacher length of service. A moderate positive and significant relationship was found between comprehension skills and academic performance, indicating that higher comprehension predicts better academic outcomes. The study concludes that comprehension is a key determinant of academic performance and recommends instructional programs and professional development initiatives to enhance literacy and assessment practices.

**Keywords:** Comprehension Skill, Learner Performance, Elementary Schools, Teacher Assessment, Academic Achievement

## Introduction

Reading comprehension is a foundational component of literacy that enables learners to understand, interpret, and evaluate written texts. It is widely recognized as a strong predictor of overall academic performance and lifelong learning success (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Effective comprehension allows learners to construct meaning, connect new knowledge with prior understanding, and engage in higher-order thinking processes, which are essential across all subject areas (Snow, 2002).

Learners' comprehension skills involve a combination of cognitive and metacognitive processes, including decoding, vocabulary development, inferencing, summarizing, and monitoring understanding. Strong comprehension skills not only support academic achievement but also foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and independent learning (Pressley, 2006). Previous research highlights that learners with high comprehension skills generally perform better academically, whereas those with limited skills often struggle across multiple disciplines (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2017).

In the Philippine context, the Department of Education promotes early literacy and comprehension development through programs such as the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (ELLN) framework, aiming to strengthen reading skills and overall academic outcomes (DepEd, 2020). Despite these initiatives, many public elementary schools continue to face challenges in fostering comprehension and

academic performance, highlighting the need for targeted instructional strategies and teacher interventions.

This study aimed to examine the relationship between learners' comprehension skills and academic performance among 172 elementary learners in the District of Dumangas II, Iloilo, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. The findings provide insights into factors that enhance academic outcomes and inform effective teaching practices. Specifically, the study sought to: describe learner profiles; assess comprehension skills in vocabulary understanding, reading fluency, inferencing, and text analysis; evaluate academic performance in core subjects; identify differences based on learner profile variables; and determine the relationship between comprehension and performance.

### **Methodology**

A descriptive–correlational research design was employed to examine the relationship between learners' comprehension skills and academic performance. The respondents were 172 learners from Grades 1 to 6 in public elementary schools in the District of Dumangas II. Stratified random sampling ensured representation across grade levels, gender, and school sections.

Data were collected using a researcher-developed and expert-validated questionnaire assessing learners' comprehension skills, including vocabulary understanding, reading fluency, inferencing, and text analysis. Academic performance data were obtained from learners' grades in core subjects for the same school year. The comprehension instrument underwent pilot testing, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81, indicating acceptable reliability.

Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize comprehension skills and academic performance. Inferential statistics, including Mann–Whitney U, Kruskal–Wallis H, and Spearman's rho correlation, were used to examine differences across profile variables and the relationship between comprehension and performance. Ethical protocols, including voluntary participation, parental consent, and confidentiality, were strictly observed.

### **Results**

#### **Learners' Comprehension Skill**

The overall mean for comprehension was 35.42, interpreted as High. Learners assessed by male teachers ( $M = 36.1$ ) scored significantly higher than those assessed by female teachers ( $M = 34.7$ ;  $p = 0.037$ ). Learners taught by teachers with 10 or more years of experience ( $M = 36.0$ ) outperformed those taught by less experienced teachers ( $M = 34.9$ ;  $p = 0.045$ ). No significant differences were found based on teacher educational attainment, position, or school size.

#### **Learners' Academic Performance**

Overall academic performance was Very Good ( $M = 86.46$ ). Significant differences were observed only for teacher length of service, with learners taught by more experienced teachers scoring higher ( $p = 0.002$ ). No significant differences were observed for teacher sex, educational attainment, position, or school size.

#### **Relationship Between Comprehension Skill and Academic Performance**

Spearman correlation revealed a moderate positive and significant relationship between comprehension skills and academic performance ( $r = 0.526$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), indicating that stronger comprehension predicts better academic outcomes.

## Discussion

The findings indicate that learners possess strong comprehension skills, reflected in their high academic performance. Experienced teachers may employ strategies that better support comprehension and assessment, explaining differences based on length of service. Differences in comprehension by teacher sex may reflect variations in instructional style or interaction patterns. The consistency across other variables suggests that standard curricula and shared instructional approaches help maintain uniform performance levels. The moderate positive correlation highlights comprehension as a critical foundation for academic success. These results underline the importance of guided reading, scaffolded instruction, and formative assessment to strengthen comprehension and overall achievement.

## Conclusions

Learners in Dumangas II demonstrated high comprehension skills and very good academic performance, indicating strong reading and analytical abilities.

Significant differences in comprehension were observed based on teacher sex and length of service, suggesting these factors influence learner development.

Academic performance differences were significant only for teacher length of service, while educational attainment, position, and school size did not affect outcomes.

A moderate positive and significant relationship exists between comprehension and academic performance, confirming the predictive role of comprehension.

Comprehension is a crucial determinant of academic performance, emphasizing the importance of effective reading instruction.

## Recommendations

For Teachers: Enhance comprehension-focused strategies, such as guided reading, scaffolded instruction, vocabulary enrichment, and inferencing exercises.

For School Administrators: Provide professional development programs to strengthen teachers' instructional approaches, particularly for less experienced educators.

For the District Office: Ensure access to teaching resources, reading materials, and assessment tools to support comprehension and overall performance. Implement monitoring systems for targeted interventions.

For Future Research: Conduct longitudinal or experimental studies to explore the long-term impact of comprehension on academic performance and other literacy outcomes.

For Policy Makers: Develop policies prioritizing literacy development and teacher capacity-building initiatives to ensure all learners acquire foundational comprehension skills for academic success.

## References

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