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Research Article

### Perceived Personal and School Environment Factors and the Reading Ability of Grade Four Pupils

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the relationship between the reading ability and the personal and school environment factors of the grade IV pupils in Cluster III of Arayat East District during the school year 2014-2015. The descriptive correlational research method was used in this study to determine the reading ability of grade IV pupils based on the Phil-IRI result and survey questionnaire. Survey questionnaire consisted of the attitudes toward reading, study habits, teacher's concern and physical facilities. Two hundred twenty-seven grade IV pupils served as the respondents for the study. Frequency and percentage were used to find out the relationship of the variables to the reading ability of the respondents.

*Keywords: Attitude toward reading, Personal factors, Physical facilities, Reading ability, School environment.*

#### INTRODUCTION

“Every man who knows how to read has in its power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant and interesting” [1].

Reading has been considered basic since the school began. The importance of reading as the basis of learning has been emphasized because knowledge of reading is essential to all later learning in other fields. The ability to read in all fields of knowledge would enable the individual to attain higher goals. Thus, the greatest motivation that children have in reading is the desire to succeed.

Because illiteracy is associated with many social problems, society as a whole suffers from the consequences of poor reading among its citizenry. Many of the ills of society have been related to illiteracy. The unemployed, school dropouts,

juvenile delinquents and other concern of troubled parents all show some association with poor reading. Despite of numerous and countless innovative approaches and strategies implemented by the Department of Education (DEPED) such as the Philippines Informal Reading Intervention (PHIL-IRI), making children read and understand what they read remains a depressing problem of every school.

Arayat East District is far from being exempted from these problems. The recently administered Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, reading test scores in English reveal that most of the pupils fall under frustration level.

This scenario in Philippine education has prompted the researcher to conduct this study on the personal and environmental factors that affect pupils' reading ability.

*Review Of Related Studies:**Personal Factors:*

Reading ability includes understanding ability and reading speed. Understanding consists both surface structure and the deep meaning. Whether reading ability is good or not depends on reading speed as well as understanding level [9].

Hodgson [4] ran a survey about children's attitudes to reading. Two samples of pupils took part in the survey. The main sample was drawn from 61 schools in England and was nationally representative. In addition to this was a repeat sample which was drawn from 27 schools which had participated in the surveys in the previous years. Children taking part in the survey answered a questionnaire made up of 18 questions designed to gauge their enjoyment in reading. The survey gave rise to some interesting findings in terms of current attitudes to reading with regards to changes since 2003 survey. It was also revealed that children's fairly static between 2003 and 2007. Whilst it is good news that there has not been decline in children's attitude over this period, it is worth considering how to provoke an upturn attitudes and promote increased reading confidence and enjoyment.

Romero [8] made a study on student's study habits and its relationship to their reading ability. His study showed that there was a significant relationship between the student's study habits and their reading ability.

The study of Aquino [2] investigated the favorable and unfavorable study habits of the freshmen and determine its implication in formulating reading interventions programs. The survey of Study Habits was used to assess the study habits of the students. Results show that students generally do not approve teacher methods in teaching reading. Favorable and unfavorable study habits of the students were also revealed. Implications of these findings were discussed and the theory of confluent education was considered in designing a framework of reading interventions programs among HEIs.

*School Environment Factors:*

South African students generally perform poorly in international comparative assessment studies such as PIRLS, the Trends in International English Study and the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for the monitoring of Educational Quality (SACMEQ). Howie (2003) reports a number of factors specifically related to students' poor performance in South African classrooms in English. These factors include inadequate subject knowledge of teachers, lack of instructional materials, difficulties of teachers to manage classroom activities effectively, poor communication between policy makers and practitioners and lack of support due to shortage of professional staff in the ministry of education.

Dacillo and Tumang [3] looked at the problems

encountered by teachers in teaching the English language in secondary schools. Based on their findings, teacher-secondary agreed that their students had a weak foundation in English language and their English vocabulary was inadequate and they lacked interest in reading English books. This performance in English can be attributed to the reading instruction in the elementary level.

The study of Pineda [7] sought to determine the reading performance of the pupils of Dau Elementary School, assess their reading performance, reading speed and determine the effectiveness of Phil-IRI. The results of her findings gave the following recommendations: teachers should always find time for individualized instruction and remedial activities in reading; that more reading materials be provided in the learning resource for the pupils to read; that functional reading center in every classroom should put up for the pupils to read; that reading deficiencies of pupils be properly identified for proper instruction.

*Objectives:*

1. What is the reading ability of the pupils based on the Phil-IRI?
2. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of sex and family size?
3. How may the respondents' attitudes towards reading and their study habits and school environment factors be described?
4. What is the relationship between the reading ability per school and
  - a. attitude towards reading;
  - b. study habits;
  - c. teacher's concern; and
  - d. physical facilities?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the reading of the pupils and their
  - a. personal profile;
  - b. personal factors; and
  - c. school environment factors?

*Hypothesis:*

There is no significant relationship between the pupil's reading ability and personal and school environment factors.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS***4.1 Participants:*

The participants of the study were the total enumeration of Grade IV pupils in Cluster III of Arayat East District who belonged to the frustration level based on the Phil-IRI pre-test results.

*4.2 Instruments:*

Two research instruments were used to collect data for the study. The Phil-IRI form result where the rating of each respondent in reading appears to establish their reading ability level was considered. The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) is an initiative of the Bureau of Elementary Education-Department of Education that directly

addresses its thrust to make every Filipino child a reader.

The survey questionnaire on the attitudes towards reading and study habits consist of 10 statement and uses Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to strongly agree (5). While statement on teacher's concern and physical facilities utilize a Likert scale ranging from never (1) to always (5).

#### 4.3 Data Analysis:

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research method to determine the reading ability of Grade IV pupils based on the Phil –IRI result and survey questionnaire. Descriptive-correlation investigates the relationship between variables.

#### Results:

#### Findings:

Reading ability of the respondents in four elementary schools.

**Table 1:** Reading ability of the respondents.

School	Reading ability	Interpretation
A	2.26	Frustration
B	2.32	Frustration
C	2.47	Frustration
D	2.44	Frustration

Table 1 displays the respondents' reading ability based on the results of the Phil-IRI pretest which was conducted in August, school year 2014-2015. The average scores obtained by School A,

School C and School D were 2.26, 2.32, 2.47 and 2.44, respectively. The findings show that the reading ability of all respondents in the four schools were under the frustration level

**Table 2:** Profile of the respondents.

Profile Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Male	128	56.39
Female	99	43.61
Total	227	100.00

#### Family Size.

Family Size	Frequency	Percentage
1-2	20	8.81
3-4	127	55.95
5-6	48	21.15
7-8	22	9.69
9-10	7	3.08
10 and above	3	1.32
Total	227	100.00

As seen in table 2, out of 227 respondents 128 or 56.39% were males while 99 or 43.61% were females. Based on the data, the male respondents outnumbered the females by 29 Or 12.78%.

Table 2 also shows the frequency distribution and percentage of the respondents as to the family size. Out of 227, 20 came from a family having 1-2 children; 127 or 55.95% from 3-4 children family; 48 or 21.15 % from 5-6 children; 22 or 9.69 % from 7-8; seven or 3.08% were from 9-10 children; and three or 1.32% from 10 or more children family.

Based on the data gathered, a family size of 3-4 children had the biggest percentage among others. However, family of 10 and more children obtained the lowest percentage, which means that the most of the respondents came from a small family size. In this case, it may be assumed that there is a greater probability for the respondents to be given by their parents more time in reading since they belong to smaller family size as compared to the other respondents.

**Table 3a:** Respondents' attitude toward reading.

Statement	WA	DR
1. Reading is exciting and enjoyable	3.49	SA
2. Reading is entertaining	3.01	A
3. I am happy when I read.	3.39	SA
4. I like reading informative books	3.27	SA
5. Reading helps forget my problems.	3.14	A
6. Reading teaches me to become a good citizen.	3.30	SA
7. Reading presents knowledge related to studies	3.40	SA
8. I learn a lot of lessons in life through reading.	3.30	SA
9. Through reading, I learn from the mistakes of others.	2.96	A
10. Reading presents good moral value	3.20	A
GWM	3.25	Agree

Legend:

Descriptive rating      Mean range      Interpretation

Strongly agree (SA)	3.26-4.0	Very Good
Agree (A)	2.50-3.25	Good
Disagree (D)	1.75-2.49	Fair
Strongly disagree (SD)	1-1.74	Poor

As seen in table 3a, out of 10 statements about attitude toward reading, six were *strongly agreed* upon by the respondents and only four obtained a descriptive rating of *agree*. In general, the attitude

toward reading gained weighted mean of 3.25. This indicates that the respondents agreed that they have a good attitude toward reading.

**Table 3b:** Respondents' study habits.

Statement	WA	DR
1.I have a definite and quiet place to study.	3.43	SA
2.I have a specific time to study my lessons.	3.23	A
3.I focus on my lesson when I study.	3.23	A
4.I watch tv before I study my lesson	2.79	A
5.I know how to organize my studying so that I will finish it on time.	3.11	A
6.I worry when I don't study my lesson.	3.09	A
7.I regularly attend my classes	3.47	SA
8.I read other materials aside from textbooks	3.14	A
9.I find time to read during my spare time	3.32	SA
10.I patiently do the assignment given by my teachers.	3.26	SA
Grand WM	3.21	Agree

Based on the data gathered, the respondents strongly agreed to four statements on study habits and agreed to six statements. The grand weighted

mean was 3.21 with a descriptive rating of agree. This implies that the respondents had good study habits.

**Table 3c:** Perception of the respondents as to their teacher' concern.

Statement	WA	DR
1.He/She exercise fairness in giving grades.	3.06	O
2.He/She provide mini-library in our class.	3.07	O
3.He/She show varied reading interests.	2.57	O
4.He/She encourage activities to develop your reading interest and love for reading.	3.11	O
5.He/She diagnose reading difficulties.	2.94	O
6.He/she gives remedial instruction.	3.03	O
7.He/She gives suitable lessons based on our interests and needs.	2.96	O
8.He/She inspires us to read.	3.23	O
9.He/She encourage us to develop self-confidence.	3.12	O
10.He/She sympathizes with us when we have problems.	3.13	O
Grand WM	3.02	Often

Legend:

Descriptive rating	Mean range	Interpretation
Always (A)	3.26-4.0	Very Good
Often (O)	2.50-3.25	Good
Sometimes (S)	1.75-2.49	Fair
Never (N)	1-1.74	Poor

As seen in table 3c, the statements regarding teacher's concern gained almost the same weighted mean and ranked in descending order: 8(x=3.23); 10 (x=3.13); 9(x=3.12); 4 (x=3.11); 2 (x=3.07); 1(x=3.06); 6(x=3.03); 7(x=2.96); 5(x=2.94) and 3(x=2.57). In general, the sub-factor teacher's

concern gained a grand weighted mean of 3.02 which is described as often and interpreted as good. It implies that the respondents often show concern to their pupils when it comes to teaching them, especially in reading, and that this is generally a good practice among teachers.

**Table 3d:** Perception of the respondents as to their physical facilities.

Statement	WA	DR
1.Is your library properly lighted and ventilated?	2.54	O
2.Do you have enough tables and chairs in your library?	2.70	S
3.Do you get enough assistance from the librarian and staff whenever you need help?	2.47	S
4.Are there other places or corners in your school suitable for reading and studying your lesson?	3.03	O
5.Is your classroom conducive to learning?	3.30	A
6.Is your library adequately equipped with textbooks, references and other reading materials?	2.62	O
7.Do you have separate library for the Elementary users?	2.60	O
8.Is your library free from noise and distractions?	2.61	O
9.Do you ask the library staff to help you?	2.59	O
10.Do you get all the books you read?	2.97	O
Grand WM	2.74	Often

Table 3d displays the perception of the respondents in terms of physical facilities. The

respondents revealed a descriptive rating of always for the statement numbers 5 ( $x=3.30$ ), while number 4 ( $x=3.03$ ); 10 ( $x=2.97$ ); 2( $x=2.62$ ); 8( $x=2.61$ ); 7( $x=2.60$ ); 9( $x=2.59$ ); and 1( $x=2.54$ ) obtained a descriptive rating of often. Statement numbers 2 ( $x=2.70$ ); and 3 ( $x=2.74$ ) had a result of sometimes.

Based on the data, there was one statement

given the descriptive rating of always while there were seven for often and two for sometimes. The grand weighted mean was 2.74 which is described as often and interpreted as good.

This indicates that the respondents perceive that good and enough physical facilities play an important role in the development of pupils'.

**Table 4a:** Correlation results between respondents' perceptions of their attitude toward reading and their reading ability.

School	p-value	Remark
A Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.217	not significant
B Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.822	not significant
C Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.955	not significant
D Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.189	not significant

Legend: If p-value > 0.05=ns If p-value < 0.05=ns

Table 4a shows the correlation result of respondents, attitude toward reading and their reading ability. Results in School A revealed p-value of 0.217; school B, 0.22; school C, 0.955; and school D, 0.189 which are all greater than the critical value of 0.05 level of significance, indicating a no significant relationship between the respondents'

perceived attitudes toward reading and reading ability.

With these results, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the pupil's reading ability and personal factors is accepted.

**Table 4b:** Correlation results between respondents' perceptions of their study habits and their reading ability.

School	p-value	remark
A Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.291	not significant
B Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.272	not significant
C Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.356	not significant
D Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.130	not significant

Legend: If p-value > 0.05=ns If p-value < 0.05=ns.

As seen in table 4b, results revealed a p-values of 0.291 for school A, 0.272 for school B, 0.356 for school C and 0.130 for school D. The p-value are greater than the critical value 0.05 level of

significance.

The findings indicate that there is no significant relationship between the pupil's reading ability and personal factors.

**Table 4c:** Correlation results between respondents' perceptions of their teacher's concern and their reading ability.

School	p-value	remark
A Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.494	not significant
B Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.238	not significant
C Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.136	not significant
D Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.156	not significant

Legend: If p-value > 0.05=ns If p-value < 0.05=ns

Table 4c displays the result on the correlation between teacher concern and reading ability. The data shows the following; school A got a p-value of 0.494; school B, 238; school C 0.136; and school D 0.156. Four schools got a p-values greater than the

critical value of 0.05 level of significance.

With these results, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the pupil's reading ability and school environment factors is accepted.

**Table 4d:** Correlation results between respondents' perceptions of their physical facilities and their reading ability.

School	p-value	remark
A Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.133	not significant
B Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.291	not significant
C Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.211	not significant
D Pearson r Sig (2-tailed)	0.469	not significant

Legend: If p-value > 0.05=ns If p-value < 0.05=ns.

Table 4d illustrates the correlation result on physical facilities and reading ability of the respondents. The table presents the p-values obtained in four elementary schools: school A achieved 0.133; school B, 0.291; school c, 0.211; and

0.469, school D. The p-values gained in four schools are greater than the critical value of 0.05. The results mean that there is no significant relationship between physical facilities and the reading ability.

**Table 5a:** Correlational results between reading ability and profile.

Variable	p-value	Remark
Reading ability vs sex	0.512	not significant
Reading ability vs Family size	0.143	not significant

Legend: If p-value > 0.05=ns If p-value < 0.05=ns

Table 5a presents the correlational results to determine the relationship between the reading ability and the profile of the respondents. The p-values obtained between reading ability and sex was 0.512 which is higher than the critical value of 0.05, and 0.143 for reading ability and family size which are both greater than 0.05 level of significance.

This suggest that there is no significant relationship between the reading ability and the profile of the respondents indicating that no matter what the sex of the pupils is he/she has the ability to read. Family size cannot also be used as an indicator or basis for their ability to read.

**Table 5b:** Correlational results between reading ability and personal factors.

Variable	p-value	Remark
Reading ability vs Attitude toward reading	0.955	not significant
Reading ability vs Study habits	0.356	not significant

Legend: If p-value > 0.05=ns If p-value < 0.05=ns

Table 5b presents the correlational results to determine the relationship between reading ability and the personal factors which are attitude toward reading and study habits. A p-value of 0.955 was obtained for the relationship between reading ability and attitude toward reading; and a p-value of 0.356 was obtained for the relationship between reading

ability and study habits. Both values are higher than the critical value of 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is **no significant relationship** between the reading ability and the personal factors, showing that the attitude toward reading of the respondent is not a deterrent for them to develop their reading ability.

**Table 5c:** Correlational results between reading ability and school environment factors.

Variable	p-value	Remark
Reading ability vs Teacher's concern	0.136	not significant
Reading ability vs Physical facilities	0.211	not significant

Legend: If p-value > 0.05=ns If p-value < 0.05=ns

Table 5c displays the correlational results to determine the relationship between the reading ability and the school environment factors. The tabulated p-value for the factor teacher concern was 0.136 and 0.211 for the physical facilities. These results show that there is no significant relationship between the reading ability and school environment factor, thus accepting the null hypo these. Based on the data one can say that despite of many problems being encountered by the teachers everyday they can still manage to teach their pupils in reading. Likewise, physical facilities do not have a great effect on their pupil's reading ability.

Results on study habits, contradict Romero's study relating students' study habits to their reading ability. His study showed that there was a significant relationship between students' study habits and their reading ability.

Teacher's concern and physical facilities were described as good by the respondents. There is no significant relationship between personal factors and pupils' reading ability. School environment factors showed no significant relationship to the pupils' reading ability. There is no significant relationship between the reading ability and the respondents' profile, personal factors and school environment factors.

These seem to affirm the claims made by, Macalino about the factors affecting the reading ability of grade six pupils in Magalang, Pampanga and found no significant relationship between the physical facilities and reading ability. This result indicates that the rich environment where there are sufficient facilities and materials will improve and develop literacy level of pupils.

### 5.2 Discussion and Conclusion:

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions has drawn. The pupils' reading ability based on the Phil-IRI is frustration. There were more male respondents than females. The family size of 3-4 children had the biggest percentage among others. The respondents had good attitude towards reading and to their study habits.

Similarly, Hodgson 's study about children's attitudes to reading revealed that children's reading confidence and reading enjoyment have remained fairly static between 2003 and 2007. Whilst it is good news that there has not been decline in children's attitude over this period, it is worth considering how to provoke an upturn attitudes and promote increased reading confidence and enjoyment.

### 5.3 Recommendations:

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations may be taken into consideration.

Teachers must be aware of the reason why enormous number of pupils fell on frustration level. Moreover, they need to learn how to become more

effective in dealing with struggling pupils in their reading and what can be done to make them more successful. They should show more creativity in teaching reading to make the lessons more interesting and meaningful.

Reading lessons should be taught to pupils regardless of sex and family size. Developing correct study habits and attitude should be incorporated in school activities and pupils should be encouraged to prepare a workable time schedule for studying.

Pupils who regularly and punctually attend their classes and show great interest in reading should be given incentives and other forms of positive reinforcement.

Classroom and the school library should be well-maintained in order to make them always conducive to learning.

Parents should be encouraged to teach and provide their children basic materials to help their children cope with their reading activity, especially those that belong to a family size of 10 and more. Educators should exert effort for the development of effective study habits.

#### *Authors' Contribution:*

Ma. Leilani V. Agillon, thesis adviser, assisted Ms Clara P. Pangilinan, the main author in formulation of questionnaires and developed each part of the current study.

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