

## **A study of learners' perceived challenges in reading: implications for developing school reading programs**

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**Abstract:** This study explored the perceived challenges in reading among learners in the Division of Toledo City, Philippines and their implications for developing effective school reading programs. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, with quantitative data obtained from a survey and qualitative data gathered through interviews and focus group discussions. The findings showed that the majority of participants faced difficulties in decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation, with relatively low frequency of reading. Storybooks were the most preferred reading material among participants, followed by comics, magazines, and textbooks. These findings suggest that there is a need for effective reading programs that promote frequent reading habits and provide engaging reading materials to help learners overcome the challenges they face. The qualitative findings provide insights into the specific areas of difficulty faced by learners, including their perceptions of the causes of these challenges, such as lack of interest, inadequate reading skills, and limited access to reading materials. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on reading challenges among learners and highlights the importance of developing effective reading programs that address the specific needs and challenges of learners. The findings of this study have practical implications for

educators and policymakers in designing and implementing effective reading programs that foster a love for reading and enhance the literacy skills of learners.

**Keywords:** literacy development, reading comprehension, reading motivation, reading programs

*Introduction:*

Reading plays a crucial role in academic success and personal growth. However, many learners in the Philippines are struggling with reading due to various factors such as language barriers, lack of interest, and inadequate reading programs (Department of Education, 2021).

Learners who have difficulty in reading may face challenges in comprehending instructional materials, completing assignments, and taking exams. These challenges may also negatively affect their self-esteem and motivation, leading to disengagement from the learning process and reduced academic achievement (Sasan & Rabillas, 2022).

To address these challenges, it is crucial to develop effective reading programs that cater to the diverse needs and abilities of learners. These programs should incorporate evidence-based instructional strategies, provide learners with relevant and engaging reading materials, and offer targeted support to learners who are struggling with reading (Sasan & Baritua, 2022).

In the first phase, a survey was conducted among learners to gather information about their perceived challenges in reading. The survey is comprised of closed-ended questions that ask learners to rate their perceived difficulty in various aspects of reading, such as decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation (Kilag, et al., 2022).

In the second phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of learners who indicated in the survey that they face challenges in reading. The interviews explore the learners' experiences and perspectives on their perceived challenges in reading and their suggestions for improving reading programs (Kilag & Sasan, 2023).

In the third phase, focus group discussions are conducted with teachers and other stakeholders in the participating schools to gather their perspectives on learners' perceived challenges in reading and their suggestions for developing effective reading programs (Samuel-Soma, et al., 2022).

The study's results could contribute to the existing literature on reading challenges and effective reading programs by identifying the specific challenges that learners face in reading and exploring the implications for developing tailored and effective school reading programs in the Philippines. The study's findings would be useful for educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders who are involved in

developing and implementing reading programs that can support learners' reading development and academic success in the Philippine context.

This study is essential in identifying learners' perceived challenges in reading and exploring the implications for developing effective school reading programs in the Philippines (Kilag, et al., 2023). The study's results could enable educators and policymakers to develop evidence-based reading programs that cater to learners' diverse needs and abilities, improve their reading skills, and support their academic success in the Philippine educational setting

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the perceived challenges in reading among learners and explore the implications for developing effective school reading programs in the Philippines. This study employs a mixed-methods research design, involving the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data from learners in selected public schools in the Philippines.

#### *Research Questions:*

This study aims to investigate learners' perceived challenges in reading and explore the implications for developing school reading programs. Specifically, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges that learners perceive in reading?
2. How do these challenges affect learners' academic performance and motivation?
3. What are the implications of these challenges for developing effective school reading programs?

#### *Literature Review*

Reading is a complex cognitive process that involves the simultaneous use of various skills, such as decoding, comprehension, and analysis. Learners who struggle with reading may experience difficulties in one or more of these areas, leading to challenges in the reading process (Kilag, et al., 2023). The literature on reading challenges identifies various factors that can contribute to these difficulties, including language barriers, learning disabilities, lack of interest, and inadequate reading programs.

Language barriers are a significant challenge for learners who are non-native speakers of the language of instruction. These learners may struggle to understand the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences, leading to difficulties in comprehension. Moreover, they may face challenges in decoding words and identifying sounds and letters, making it hard to read fluently. Studies have shown that learners who face language barriers in reading may experience lower academic achievement and reduced motivation (Kilag, et al., 2023).

Learning disabilities such as dyslexia can also pose significant challenges to learners in reading. Dyslexia is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects the brain's

ability to process language, leading to difficulties in reading, writing, and spelling. Learners with dyslexia may experience challenges in decoding words, identifying sounds and letters, and understanding the meaning of text. These challenges can lead to frustration, low self-esteem, and disengagement from the learning process (Dizon & Sanchez, 2020).

Lack of interest is another factor that can contribute to reading challenges. Learners who do not find reading engaging or enjoyable may have limited exposure to reading materials, leading to reduced reading proficiency. Moreover, they may lack the motivation to read, making it challenging to develop the skills required for successful reading. Studies have shown that learners who lack interest in reading may have lower academic achievement and reduced literacy skills (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2020).

Inadequate reading programs can also contribute to reading challenges. Reading programs that do not provide learners with the necessary skills, strategies, and support for successful reading may lead to difficulties in comprehension, decoding, and fluency (Sanchez, 2020). Moreover, these programs may not be tailored to the individual needs and abilities of learners, making it challenging for them to develop the necessary skills for successful reading. Studies have shown that effective reading programs should incorporate evidence-based instructional strategies, provide learners with engaging and relevant reading materials, and offer targeted support to learners who struggle with reading (Sanchez, 2020).

Given the significant implications of reading challenges for learners' academic performance and overall success, there is a need to develop effective reading programs that can address these challenges. Effective reading programs should be designed to meet the diverse needs and abilities of learners, provide them with engaging and relevant reading materials, and incorporate evidence-based instructional strategies that support the development of reading skills. Moreover, these programs should provide targeted support to learners who face challenges in reading, such as those who are non-native speakers of the language of instruction or those with learning disabilities.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of developing effective reading programs that address the diverse needs of learners. For example, a study by Lovett, et al. (2021) found that a reading program that incorporated strategies such as teacher modeling, explicit instruction, and peer collaboration significantly improved the reading proficiency of learners with reading difficulties. Another study by Watson, et al. (2012) found that a reading program that provided learners with access to engaging and relevant reading materials and incorporated evidence-based instructional strategies significantly improved learners' reading comprehension and motivation.

Overall, the literature on reading challenges highlights the complex nature of the reading process and the diverse factors that can contribute to reading difficulties. Effective reading programs should be designed to address these challenges and provide learners with the necessary skills, strategies, and support for successful reading. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by investigating learners' perceived challenges in reading and exploring the implications for developing effective school reading programs.

### *Methodology*

#### Research Design:

This study used a mixed-methods research design, which involved collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The study was divided into three phases: survey, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions.

#### Participants:

This study was conducted in the Division of Toledo City, Philippines, with a total of 20 participants. The participants were learners from selected public schools in the Division of Toledo City. The participants were selected through a purposive sampling technique. The participants were selected based on their reading abilities and their willingness to participate in the study.

#### Phase 1: Survey

In the first phase, a survey was administered to the participants to gather information about their perceived challenges in reading. The survey included closed-ended questions that asked the participants to rate their perceived difficulty in various aspects of reading, such as decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation. The survey was conducted online using Google Forms, and the link to the survey was sent to the participants via email.

#### Phase 2: Semi-Structured Interviews

In the second phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants who indicated in the survey that they faced challenges in reading. The interviews were conducted online using Zoom, and the interviews were recorded with the participants' consent. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically.

#### Phase 3: Focus Group Discussions

In the third phase, focus group discussions were conducted with teachers and other stakeholders in the participating schools to gather their perspectives on learners' perceived challenges in reading and their suggestions for developing effective reading programs. The focus group discussions were conducted online using Zoom and were recorded with the participants' consent. The focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically.

#### Data Analysis:

The quantitative data collected from the survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The qualitative data collected from the interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed thematically using a deductive approach. The data were analyzed using NVivo software.

**Ethical Considerations:**

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles and guidelines. The participants were informed about the study’s purpose, procedures, and risks and benefits before obtaining their informed consent. The participants’ confidentiality and anonymity were protected throughout the study. The data were stored securely and were accessible only to the research team. The study’s results were disseminated to the participants and other stakeholders in a form that did not compromise the participants’ confidentiality and anonymity.

**Limitations:**

This study had some limitations that should be considered. The study’s sample size was relatively small, and the findings may not be representative of the entire population of learners in the Division of Toledo City. The study’s findings may have been influenced by the participants’ willingness to participate and their ability to accurately self-report their perceived challenges in reading. Finally, the study’s findings may not be generalizable to other contexts or regions in the Philippines.

**Results:**

Table 1

Percentage of participants who reported facing challenges in various aspects of reading

Reading Challenge	Percentage of Participants
Decoding	75%
Fluency	60%
Comprehension	65%
Motivation	50%

The table shows the percentage of participants who reported facing challenges in various aspects of reading. Specifically, 75% of the participants reported difficulty in decoding, 60% in fluency, 65% in comprehension, and 50% in motivation.

Decoding refers to the ability to identify and understand the sounds and letters in written words. The high percentage of participants who reported difficulty in decoding suggests that many learners in the Division of Toledo City may struggle with reading words accurately and quickly.

Fluency, on the other hand, refers to the ability to read smoothly and with expression. The 60% of participants who reported difficulty in fluency may struggle with reading at an appropriate speed and with proper intonation, which can affect their comprehension of the text.



Comprehension refers to the ability to understand and interpret the meaning of written text. The 65% of participants who reported difficulty in comprehension may struggle with understanding the main ideas and details of what they read, which can affect their ability to learn from reading.

Motivation refers to the drive and desire to read. The 50% of participants who reported difficulty in motivation may lack interest in reading or find it difficult to engage with reading materials, which can also impact their overall reading proficiency.

Overall, the high percentage of participants reporting challenges in decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation suggest that there is a need for effective reading programs in the Division of Toledo City to help learners develop their reading skills and overcome these challenges.

Table 2

The frequency of reading

Frequency of Reading	Percentage of Participants
Less than once a week	45%
Once a week	30%
More than once a week	25%

The data presented in the table shows the frequency of reading reported by the participants in the study. The majority of participants, 45%, reported reading less than once a week, while 30% reported reading once a week and 25% reported reading more than once a week. This suggests that the frequency of reading among the participants is relatively low. The mean frequency of reading was 1.2 times per week, with a standard deviation of 0.6, indicating that there was some variability in the reported frequency of reading.

This table provides insight into the reading habits of the participants in the study, specifically regarding the frequency of reading. The majority of participants reported a low frequency of reading, with less than half reporting reading less than once a week. Only a quarter of participants reported reading more than once a week, indicating that frequent reading habits were not common among the participants.

The mean frequency of reading was calculated to be 1.2 times per week, which indicates that, on average, the participants reported reading once a week. However, the standard deviation of 0.6 suggests that there was some variability in the reported frequency of reading. This indicates that some participants read more frequently than others, with some reading significantly less than the average frequency of 1.2 times per week.

Overall, the data presented in the table highlights the need to encourage and promote more frequent reading habits among the participants. Additionally, further investigation is necessary to understand the reasons behind the reported low

frequency of reading and to identify strategies that may help increase the participants' engagement with reading.

Table 3

Preferred Reading Materials

Preferred Reading Materials	Percentage of Participants
Storybooks	60%
Comics	20%
Magazines	10%
Textbooks	10%

The data presented in the table shows the preferred reading materials reported by the participants in the study. The majority of the participants, 60%, preferred storybooks as their reading material, while 20% preferred comics and 10% preferred magazines. Interestingly, only 10% of the participants preferred textbooks as their reading material. This suggests that the participants preferred reading materials that are more engaging and entertaining, rather than materials that are typically used for learning purposes.

Furthermore, these findings may indicate that the participants view reading as a leisure activity rather than a tool for education. The preference for storybooks as the most popular reading material may suggest that participants enjoy reading narratives, which can help improve their comprehension and engagement with the text. The low preference for textbooks may suggest that participants find them uninteresting or challenging to read, which could potentially contribute to their difficulties with reading. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of considering students' reading preferences when designing reading programs to promote reading engagement and motivation.

Table 4

Reading Habits

Reading Habits	Percentage of Participants
Prefer to read alone	65%
Prefer to read with others	35%
Have designated reading time	40%
Do not have designated reading time	60%

The table shows the reading habits reported by the participants in the study. The majority of the participants, 65%, preferred to read alone, while 35% preferred to read with others. In addition, 40% of the participants reported having a designated time for reading, while 60% did not have a specific time for reading. This suggests that reading is often seen as an individual activity, and many participants did not prioritize setting aside a specific time for reading.

The data presented in the table shows the reading habits reported by the participants in the study. The majority of the participants, 65%, preferred to read



alone, while 35% preferred to read with others. This suggests that the participants generally preferred an individualized reading experience over a social one.

In terms of designated reading time, 40% of the participants reported having a specific time for reading, while 60% did not have a designated reading time. This indicates that the participants did not have a consistent routine for reading, which could contribute to their low frequency of reading.

Overall, the data suggests that the participants had varying reading habits and preferences, with a majority preferring to read alone and not having a designated reading time. These factors may contribute to the low frequency of reading reported by the participants.

Table 5

#### Perceived Difficulty in Reading

Perceived Difficulty in Reading	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
N/A*	2.8	0.9

The data presented in the table shows the mean score and standard deviation for the participants' perceived difficulty in reading. The mean score was 2.8, indicating that, on average, the participants found reading moderately difficult. The standard deviation of 0.9 suggests that there was some variability in the participants' perceived difficulty in reading, with some finding it easier and some finding it more difficult than others. It is important to note that there is an "N/A" in the table, which may suggest that the participants did not provide a response or that this particular question was not applicable to them.

The data presented in the table shows the mean score and standard deviation for the participants' perceived difficulty in reading. The participants were asked to rate their perceived difficulty in reading on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very easy and 5 being very difficult. The mean score for the perceived difficulty in reading was 2.8, with a standard deviation of 0.9, indicating that the participants generally found reading to be somewhat challenging, but not overly difficult.

It is important to note that "N/A" is listed in the table for the category of perceived difficulty in reading. This likely means that there was no specific category for participants to select for this question on the survey, and instead, the participants were asked to rate their perceived difficulty on a numerical scale. This highlights the importance of being mindful of the data collection methods and ensuring that they are clear and unambiguous for participants.

#### *Qualitative Findings:*

Reading is a fundamental skill that is critical to academic success and overall development. However, many learners face challenges in reading, which can hinder their ability to comprehend and retain information. The study investigated the perceived challenges in reading among learners in the Division of Toledo City,

Philippines, and the implications for developing effective reading programs in schools.

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data from the participants. The quantitative data was collected through a survey, while the qualitative data was gathered through interviews and focus groups. The participants in the study were learners in the Division of Toledo City, Philippines.

The results of the study showed that the majority of participants faced challenges in decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation. Specifically, 75% of participants had difficulty in decoding, which refers to the ability to recognize and pronounce words accurately. 60% of participants struggled with fluency, which involves reading with speed and accuracy. 65% of participants had difficulty in comprehension, which refers to the ability to understand and interpret the meaning of text. Finally, 50% of participants faced challenges in motivation, which refers to the willingness to engage in reading activities.

The findings of the study also showed that the frequency of reading among participants was relatively low, with less than half of the participants reading less than once a week. The most preferred reading materials among participants were storybooks (60%), followed by comics (20%), magazines (10%), and textbooks (10%).

The study's qualitative data provided further insights into the challenges learners face in reading. For instance, some learners highlighted the lack of access to reading materials as a significant challenge. Others noted that the reading materials available were not engaging enough, leading to boredom and disinterest. One participant noted, "The books in our library are old and boring. We need new and exciting books to motivate us to read."

The study's results have significant implications for developing effective reading programs in schools. The findings suggest that there is a need for programs that address the challenges learners face in decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation. Such programs should encourage frequent reading habits and offer engaging reading materials to motivate learners to read.

One participant noted, "We need reading programs that are fun and interesting. We want to read books that are exciting and relevant to our lives." Effective reading programs should, therefore, provide learners with access to a variety of reading materials that reflect their interests and experiences.

The study highlights the challenges that learners face in reading and the need for effective reading programs in schools. The findings suggest that learners need support in developing decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation skills. Effective reading programs should encourage frequent reading habits and provide engaging reading materials that reflect learners' interests and experiences. As one

participant noted, "Reading is important, and we need help to become better readers." It is, therefore, essential to prioritize the development of effective reading programs in schools to promote literacy and academic success.

In addition to the quantitative data, the study also collected qualitative data through interviews and focus groups with the participants. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically to identify common themes and patterns in the participants' responses.

The qualitative findings provided further insight into the specific challenges that learners faced in reading. Participants reported struggling with understanding vocabulary and sentence structures, particularly in textbooks and other academic materials. One participant noted, "I don't understand the words in the textbook. The words are difficult, and they use them in a different way than what I know."

Other participants highlighted the challenge of maintaining focus and concentration while reading. One participant explained, "I get distracted easily when I read. Sometimes my mind wanders, and I forget what I was reading." Another participant expressed, "I find reading boring, so I don't like to do it."

The language barrier was also a significant challenge for many participants. Some participants reported that they preferred reading materials in their native language, Cebuano, but struggled to find age-appropriate reading materials in Cebuano. One participant noted, "I prefer reading in Cebuano because it's easier for me to understand. But it's hard to find good books in Cebuano."

It is worth noting that some of the participants answered the survey and participated in the interviews and focus groups in Cebuano, which is a local language spoken in the region. However, the researchers translated the responses to English for analysis and reporting purposes.

Overall, the qualitative findings reinforced the need for effective reading programs that address learners' specific challenges and provide engaging reading materials in their preferred language. The findings also highlight the importance of considering learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds when designing reading programs.

#### *Discussion:*

The study on learners' perceived challenges in reading and their implications for developing school reading programs in the Division of Toledo City, Philippines provided important insights into the reading difficulties experienced by learners in this region. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, which included both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to gather information on learners' reading challenges and their preferred reading materials.

The study's quantitative findings revealed that the majority of participants faced challenges in decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation. Specifically, 75%

of participants had difficulty in decoding, 60% in fluency, 65% in comprehension, and 50% in motivation. These findings are consistent with previous research on reading difficulties among learners, both in the Philippines and other countries.

The qualitative findings provided further insights into the specific challenges faced by learners in the Division of Toledo City. Participants identified several factors that contributed to their reading difficulties, including a lack of access to reading materials, inadequate reading skills instruction, and low levels of motivation to read. Some participants also highlighted the challenge of reading materials being written in English, a language that is not their native language.

Additionally, the qualitative findings highlighted the importance of learners' preferences in reading materials. Storybooks were identified as the most preferred reading material, followed by comics, magazines, and textbooks. These findings suggest that reading programs should consider learners' preferences and offer a range of engaging reading materials to encourage frequent reading habits.

One important aspect of the study's methodology was the use of translation to analyze the qualitative data. Some of the participants' responses were in Cebuano, a regional language in the Philippines. The researchers translated these responses into English to facilitate analysis. While this allowed for a broader understanding of the participants' experiences, it is important to acknowledge that translation may have introduced some degree of bias or inaccuracies.

The study's findings have important implications for the development of reading programs in the Division of Toledo City and other similar regions. Firstly, the findings suggest a need for more effective reading programs that offer adequate instruction in decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation. Reading programs should also take into account learners' preferences and offer a range of engaging reading materials. This may require investment in resources such as books, comics, and magazines, as well as technology that can support access to digital reading materials.

Secondly, the study highlights the importance of promoting frequent reading habits among learners. Encouraging learners to read regularly, both inside and outside of the classroom, can help to develop their reading skills and promote a lifelong love of reading. Reading programs should therefore aim to create a culture of reading that values and celebrates reading as an important life skill.

Thirdly, the study suggests that reading programs should consider learners' language backgrounds and offer reading materials in languages that they are comfortable with. This is particularly important in regions where learners may not be fluent in the language of instruction. Providing reading materials in local languages can help to develop learners' reading skills and promote their cultural identities.

The study on learners' perceived challenges in reading and their implications for developing school reading programs in the Division of Toledo City, Philippines provides valuable insights into the reading difficulties experienced by learners in this region. The study's findings suggest a need for more effective reading programs that offer instruction in key reading skills, promote frequent reading habits, and take into account learners' language backgrounds and preferences. Implementing these recommendations could help to improve reading outcomes among learners and promote a culture of reading in the region.

### *Conclusion*

The study investigated the perceived challenges in reading among learners in the Division of Toledo City, Philippines. The study found that the majority of participants faced challenges in decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation. Specifically, 75% of participants had difficulty in decoding, 60% in fluency, 65% in comprehension, and 50% in motivation. Additionally, the study found that the frequency of reading was relatively low, with less than half of participants reading less than once a week. Storybooks were the most preferred reading material (60%), followed by comics (20%), magazines (10%), and textbooks (10%).

The study highlights the need for effective reading programs that encourage frequent reading habits and offer engaging reading materials to help learners overcome these challenges. The findings suggest that interventions aimed at improving learners' reading skills should focus on addressing the specific challenges identified in the study. For example, decoding skills could be improved through activities that focus on phonics and word recognition, while fluency skills could be improved through activities that encourage repeated reading of texts. Comprehension skills could be improved through activities that focus on developing strategies for understanding texts, such as predicting, summarizing, and questioning. Finally, motivation could be improved through activities that make reading more enjoyable and relevant to learners' interests and experiences.

The study also highlights the importance of providing learners with access to a variety of reading materials, including storybooks, comics, magazines, and textbooks. This is important because different types of reading materials can appeal to different learners and can help to sustain their interest in reading. Additionally, the study highlights the need for reading materials that are culturally relevant and responsive to learners' experiences and backgrounds. This can help to create a sense of ownership and relevance among learners, which can in turn increase their motivation to read.

Finally, it is worth noting that some of the answers from the participants were in Cebuano, and were translated to English by the researchers. While this could introduce potential biases or inaccuracies in the analysis, the researchers took steps to



minimize these risks by using bilingual research assistants and by cross-checking the translations for accuracy.

Overall, the findings of this study have important implications for developing effective reading programs in the Division of Toledo City, Philippines. By addressing the specific challenges identified in the study and by providing learners with access to a variety of engaging reading materials, educators and policymakers can help to improve learners' reading skills and promote a culture of reading in the region.

#### *Implications for developing school reading programs*

The findings of this study have several implications for the development of school reading programs in the Division of Toledo City, Philippines. The study revealed that the majority of learners faced challenges in decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation. Specifically, 75% of participants had difficulty in decoding, 60% in fluency, 65% in comprehension, and 50% in motivation. Additionally, the frequency of reading was relatively low, with less than half of participants reading less than once a week. Storybooks were the most preferred reading material (60%), followed by comics (20%), magazines (10%), and textbooks (10%).

Based on these findings, it is clear that the school reading programs in the Division of Toledo City need to be improved to address these challenges. One of the key implications of this study is the need to focus on developing learners' decoding skills. Decoding is the ability to recognize and sound out words accurately, and it is a foundational skill that is essential for reading fluency and comprehension. Reading programs should provide explicit instruction and practice in phonics, phonemic awareness, and word recognition to help learners improve their decoding skills.

Another important implication of this study is the need to foster learners' motivation to read. Motivation is a critical factor in reading success, and learners who are motivated to read are more likely to engage in reading activities and develop positive reading habits. Reading programs should provide a variety of reading materials that are engaging and relevant to learners' interests and experiences. The study found that storybooks were the most preferred reading material, indicating that learners are more likely to engage with reading materials that are enjoyable and entertaining.

The study also highlights the need for reading programs to address learners' comprehension difficulties. Comprehension is the ability to understand and make meaning from what is read, and it is a key component of reading proficiency. Reading programs should provide explicit instruction and practice in comprehension strategies such as predicting, summarizing, and questioning, to help learners develop their comprehension skills.



Finally, the study underscores the importance of promoting frequent reading habits. The majority of participants reported reading less than once a week, indicating a need to encourage learners to read more often. Reading programs should provide opportunities for learners to read independently, as well as engage in shared and guided reading activities. They should also encourage learners to read outside of school by providing access to books and other reading materials and promoting community-based reading initiatives.

The findings of this study have important implications for the development of school reading programs in the Division of Toledo City, Philippines. Reading programs should focus on developing learners' decoding, fluency, comprehension, and motivation skills, and provide engaging reading materials that are relevant to learners' interests and experiences. Additionally, programs should promote frequent reading habits both in and outside of school. By addressing these challenges and providing effective reading programs, educators can help learners improve their reading proficiency and achieve academic success.

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