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***INFLUENCE OF READING FLUENCY AND HOME LITERACY ENVIRONMENT ON READING COMPREHENSION OF GRADE 1 LEARNERS***

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***ABSTRACT***

This study investigated the home literacy environment (HLE) of Grade 1 learners in terms of informal and formal literacy activities, passive literacy exposure, print access at home, and parental attitudes toward reading, alongside their reading fluency and comprehension levels. It also examined relationships among these variables. Employing a descriptive-correlational design, the research was conducted in public elementary schools under Panadtalan Elementary School, Maramag 2 District, Maramag, Bukidnon, during School Year 2025–2026. Respondents were randomly selected 95 Grade 1 learners (N unspecified). Data was gathered via a researcher-made survey questionnaire (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.961$ ), analyzed using means, standard deviations, and Pearson product-moment correlation. Findings revealed a very high HLE across all dimensions: very high informal/formal activities and parental attitudes, high passive exposure and print access. Most learners showed beginner fluency (monotone, word-by-word reading with little expression), with few reaching expressive levels. Reading comprehension was moderate to none. No significant relationships existed between HLE dimensions and comprehension, but a strong positive correlation linked fluency and comprehension. Conclusions indicate robust family support for literacy yet persistent fluency and comprehension gaps, with fluency as the key predictor of comprehension. Recommendations target fluency interventions for parents/learners, school administrators, curriculum planners, and future researchers via experimental and longitudinal studies. These results underscore prioritizing fluency training in early-grade Philippine education to enhance comprehension outcomes.

**KEYWORDS:** Reading fluency, Home Literacy, Reading Comprehension.

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most important fundamental skills that children should acquire in their early stages of formal education. It is not only a foundation in learning across all subject areas but an important skill that contributes to the academic tract, personal success, and lifelong success of the children. Among the key aspects, reading fluency and reading comprehension, which are closely related, are essential in ensuring that pupils can derive ideas and meaning from texts.

Home literacy environment (HLE) makes an important contribution to children's reading acquisition in the early years. Even though some research on children's perception exists, children's reports about HLE have been neglected. Parents' educational background was expected to predict perceived HLE. A positive impact of active HLE on literacy enjoyment and frequency were found. HLE also mediates the relation between parents' background and enjoyment. The importance of children's perspectives on HLE regarding family literacy programs is discussed. (Wiescholak, S., et al. (2017)

Reading fluency refers to the ability to read with appropriate speed, accuracy, and expression. For both children and adults, fluency is essential to achieving comprehension, whether the reading is done silently or aloud. In oral reading, fluent readers can group words into meaningful phrases and use proper intonation, making their reading smooth, natural, and expressive. As Felton A. (2024) states how fluency not only supports the mechanical aspect of reading but also enhances the overall meaning-making process, ultimately fostering deeper comprehension in young learners.

Reading comprehension is a critical skill in early education, serving as the foundation for learning across all subjects. Despite its importance, many Grade 1 pupils continue to face challenges in understanding what they read. Among the factors believed to affect reading comprehension are reading fluency and the home literacy environment. Reading fluency, which includes the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression, allows learners to focus more on understanding the text rather than decoding individual words. At the same time, a supportive home literacy environment, characterized by access to reading materials, parental involvement, and reading-related activities, can significantly contribute to a child's reading development. (Bacsal, J. R., et.al (2025)

However, it remains unclear how much these two factors-reading fluency and home literacy environment-individually or collectively influence reading comprehension at the Grade 1 level. Understanding this relationship is essential for educators, parents, and policymakers to design effective interventions that enhance literacy skills among young learners.

Research suggests that children who read fluently are more likely to comprehend text efficiently because they can focus on meaning rather than decoding each word. Furthermore, when children grow up in homes rich in books, storytelling, and reading-related activities, they are often more engaged readers. The interaction between these two variables, reading fluency and home literacy environment, can offer valuable insight into how young learners develop comprehension skills. Therefore, examining their combined influence on Grade 1 learners provides an opportunity to inform early literacy interventions, both at school and at home.

According to Rasinski et al. (2021), reading fluency serves as a critical bridge between word recognition and comprehension, making it an essential component of early reading instruction. Likewise, Senechal and LeFevre (2022) emphasize that parental involvement and exposure to books at home play a substantial role in shaping children's literacy development, especially in the early years. These studies suggest that both fluency and home literacy factors are not only interrelated but also jointly predictive of reading comprehension outcomes in young learners.

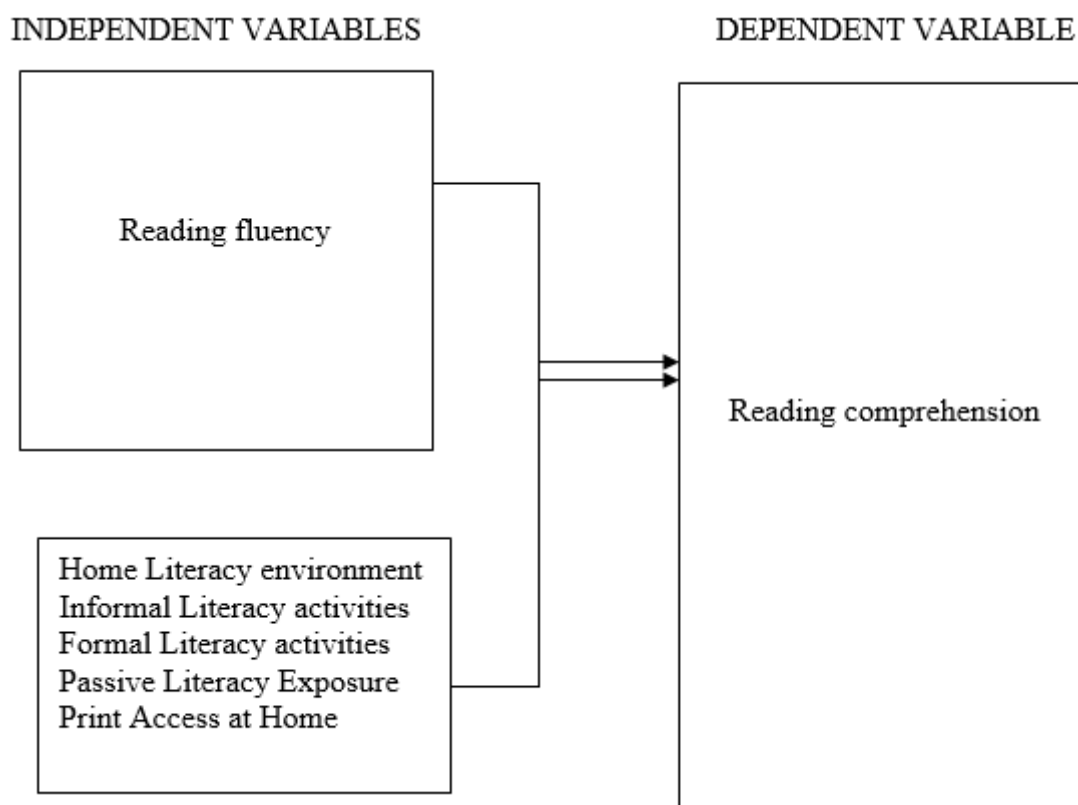
### ***Conceptual Framework***

This study was based on the idea that reading comprehension, as a complex literacy ability, is impacted by a variety of factors that interact to determine how learners construct meaning from text. Reading fluency and the family literacy environment are important considerations.

Reading fluency is a reliable indicator of reading comprehension. When infants can automatically decode and recognize words, they free up cognitive resources that may be used for higher-level tasks like analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating the text. Fluency—which includes accuracy, pace, and prosody—serves as a link between word recognition and understanding. A Grade 1 student who reads fluently and expressively is more likely to understand the material than one who struggles with decoding.

The basic exposure and assistance that young learners require to acquire reading abilities are provided by the Home Reading Environment (HLE). Positive parental attitudes toward literacy, shared reading, and availability to books and print materials are all examples of behaviors that are part of a rich HLE. In addition to improving vocabulary and background knowledge, these encounters foster a child's drive and preparedness for text engagement. In other words, kids who grow up in literacy-supportive homes are frequently more equipped to comprehend and appreciate the reading materials served in the classroom.

In this study, the dependent variable in this study was reading comprehension, whereas the independent factors are reading fluency and the literacy environment at home. According to the framework, reading fluency and HLE have a direct impact on students' text comprehension skills. The degree to which first-graders are able to derive meaning from their reading depends on the interaction of these variables.



**Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the study showing the interplay between the Independent and Dependent Variables.**

### ***Statement of the Problem***

This study aimed to investigate the influence of reading fluency and the home literacy environment on the reading comprehension of Grade 1 learners.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of home literacy environment of Grade 1 learners in terms of informal literacy activities ,Formal Literacy activities ,Passive literacy exposure , print access at home and parental attitude of Parents in reading comprehension of Grade I learners?
2. What is the level of reading fluency among Grade 1 learners?
3. What is the reading comprehension of Grade 1 learners?

4. Is there a significant relationship between reading fluency, home literacy environment, and the reading comprehension of Grade 1 learners?

### *Significance of the Study*

The findings of this study would provide school administrators with valuable insights into the factors that influence pupils' reading comprehension. This knowledge can guide them in reinforcing literacy programs and in supporting intervention projects that bridge home and school efforts in nurturing reading development.

To the learners. This study through increased attention and support from both home and school. By recognizing the impact of fluency and home literacy practices, children may be more motivated to practice reading and develop comprehension skills that will serve as a foundation for their academic success.

To the teachers. For teachers the results may support the development of more effective reading programs that are responsive to students' fluency levels. With a clearer understanding of how fluency and home literacy shape comprehension, teachers can better design instructional strategies, provide remedial support to struggling readers, and foster more engaging reading experiences in the classroom.

To the School Administration. School leaders and administrations may benefit to this study as it underscores the importance of reading fluency and reading comprehension of the learner through training programs and instructional supervision. By recognizing the importance of reading, administrators can better guide curriculum implementation, professional development, and resource allocation. The study may help them design school-wide initiatives that promotes innovation in teaching and inclusive educational practices.

To the parents. The study highlights the importance of cultivating a supportive literacy environment at home. It emphasizes their role in provide reading materials, modeling good reading habits, and engaging in literacy-related activities that can significantly improve their children's comprehension skills.

To the Future Researchers. This study may contribute to the body of research on early literacy development. It may served as a reference for future studies on reading fluency, home literacy, and comprehension, and may also inform curriculum design and policy development in early literacy instruction.

### ***Delimitation of the Study***

This study focused on the implementation and impact of reading fluency, home literacy environment and reading comprehension of the Grade 1 learners. It specifically covers Panadtalan Elementary School located in Maramag II District, Division of Bukidnon during the school year 2025-2026. It specifically examines the relationship between reading fluency, home literacy environment, and reading comprehension. The study does not cover learners from higher grade levels or those with identified learning disabilities. Additionally, it focuses solely on English reading skills and does not account for reading performance in other languages or subject areas. Data collection is limited to standardized reading tests and parent/guardian surveys regarding the home literacy environment.

The study was limited to public school learners enrolled in Elementary school at Panadtalan Elementary school; no learners from private institutions or other grade levels are included. This study was conducted with a limited amount of financial resources and time framework.

### ***Review of the Literature***

#### ***Reading Comprehension in Early Grades***

According to Dixon, M. (2024) he states that teacher knowledge and pedagogical practices around reading comprehension in primary classrooms across England. Findings showed many teachers favored explicit teaching of vocabulary and questioning over inferencing and self-monitoring, and were less confident teaching higher-order strategies. Teachers' knowledge and attitudes influenced reading outcomes, but critical comprehension strategies were inconsistently taught.

According to Johnson, W.F. (2025) states that teachers' approaches to diverse literature supported comprehension among early elementary students. Diverse text introductions helped situate students socially and broadened contextual understanding, supporting higher comprehension. Strategy instruction built on fluency to deepen meaning-making.

As Alzahrani, M.A. & Almalki, S.M. (2025) Stated that teachers' reading instruction placed strong emphasis on foundational skills like phonics and vocabulary, supporting overall comprehension success. While comprehension was considered essential, implementation focused mainly on explicit fluency and decoding, with less focus on higher-level comprehension strategies such as inference and evaluation.

### ***Reading Fluency and its Role in Comprehension***

According to Álvarez-Cañizo et al. (2015) Spanish primary school children were divided into groups based on oral and written comprehension levels and assessed for reading fluency parameters like accuracy, rate, pausing, and prosody. Children with poorer reading comprehension made more errors, inappropriate pauses, and had less developed prosodic features. Fluency skills—accuracy, speed, and expressiveness—were closely tied to successful text comprehension, confirming fluency as a prerequisite for deep understanding.

Also Inoue et al. (2020) states that 714 children across four nations (English, Dutch, German, Greek) from Grades 1 to 2, examining home literacy environment components—parent teaching, shared book reading, and access to literacy resources. Access to resources was a consistent predictor of vocabulary and emergent reading fluency, while parent teaching improved phonological awareness and letter knowledge in some contexts. Shared reading did not reliably predict outcomes. Early fluency mediated literacy growth, showing home environment's indirect but vital role.

According to Paguyan & Taoc (2022) states that factors influencing their reading performance. Findings revealed that vocabulary and background knowledge, bolstered by teacher and parental involvement, were the strongest predictors of reading achievement. The majority of pupils were described as "readers without comprehension," stressing the need for enhanced fluency and comprehension strategies.

Kim (2020) points out that while international studies have established clear connections between reading fluency and comprehension, fluency is still often overlooked in many theoretical models of reading. This omission highlights a critical gap, as fluency serves as a bridge between word recognition and understanding meaning. This insight underscores the necessity of considering fluency as a key component in developing comprehension skills. By recognizing the role of fluency alongside environmental factors, such as home literacy support, educators and researchers can better address the foundational needs of early readers.

According to Dr. Paige, D. et al. (2020) he states that reading fluency has been defined in various ways across research. It has been conceptualized as the rapid recognition of individual words, the accuracy with which words are read, the rate or speed of reading connected text, and the ability to read with appropriate expression. These dimensions of fluency highlight how mastery goes beyond speed alone. Accuracy, pacing, and expressive reading all contribute to deeper comprehension, showing that fluency is a multidimensional skill essential for young learners' overall reading development.

### ***Home Literacy Environment (HLE)***

The home literacy environment (HLE) plays a vital role in the development of preschool children's emergent literacy skills (Liu, Georgiou, & Manolitsis, 2018). Scholars have categorized HLE into informal and formal literacy experiences. Informal literacy experiences include activities where print is not the primary focus, such as shared reading and storytelling, while formal literacy experiences emphasize direct engagement with printed text, such as parental instruction in reading and writing (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002, 2014). More recently, Lai et al. (2024) expanded this framework by classifying HLE into three dimensions: formal literacy activity, informal language exposure, and passive literacy exposure. These perspectives highlight how the quality and variety of literacy-related experiences at home significantly shape children's reading fluency and comprehension outcomes.

According to Hamilton, L. G., Hayiou-Thomas, M. E., Hulme, C., & Snowling, M. J. et. al. (2016) states that the home literacy environment (HLE) influences early language and literacy development among children both at family-risk and not at risk of dyslexia. Results indicated that both informal (storybook exposure) and formal (parental teaching) aspects of the HLE predicted foundational language and literacy skills, including oral language, phoneme awareness, and emergent decoding. The impact of HLE was observable in reading comprehension and word-level literacy, and relationships between socioeconomic status, HLE, and literacy outcomes were also elucidated.

### ***Interplay of Fluency, HLE, and Comprehension***

In the simple view of reading, oral reading fluency refers to the ability to read words aloud with accuracy, appropriate speed, correct pronunciation, and expressive intonation. It is regarded as one of the essential components of reading, alongside phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. Fluency enables readers to allocate less cognitive effort to decoding and instead concentrate on constructing meaning from the text. In addition, Salarvand, Guimaraes, and Balaghali (2022) defined reading fluency as a skill that is strongly linked to reading comprehension. They emphasized that difficulties in fluency pose a significant barrier for learners, preventing them from achieving proficiency in both comprehension and overall reading competency. Highlights how challenges in fluency can directly hinder a child's ability to understand texts. Strengthening fluency, therefore, becomes an essential step toward fostering effective comprehension among early readers.

According to Boerma, I. E., Mol, S. E., & Jolles, J. et.al (2017). rich HLE kids typically have stronger reading comprehension skills. Higher-order cognitive abilities like mentalizing ability and more print exposure are examples of indirect routes in this connection, which can be both direct and indirect. In particular, HLE helps kids become more engaged with reading materials and develop cognitive capabilities beyond simple language skills, which in turn affects their reading comprehension.

According to Inoue, T. et. Al (2020) longitudinal research conducted in four languages (English, Dutch, German, and Greek), elements of HLE including parent instruction and literacy resource availability indirectly improve spelling and reading fluency by fostering emerging literacy abilities like vocabulary and phonological awareness. Surprisingly, there was no clear correlation between these outcomes and shared book reading. This implies that HLE-mediated fluency improvement is essential for subsequent understanding.

Additionally, Boerma, I. E., Mol, S. E., & Jolles, J et.al (2017). States that that a rich Home Literacy Environment (HLE) promotes higher reading comprehension in children via both direct and indirect paths. Indirect benefits frequently occur through higher-order cognitive abilities like mentalizing ability and more print exposure, which improve fluency and understanding. Parental engagement in collaborative literacy activities at home has a beneficial relationship with children's language comprehension development. Longitudinal multilingual studies also demonstrate that certain HLE components, like as parent instruction and availability to literacy materials, have an indirect impact on reading fluency and spelling through emerging literacy abilities like phonological awareness and vocabulary. These fluency-related abilities then improve comprehension results.

### ***Findings***

These were the findings of the study:

The level of the home literacy environment of Grade 1 learners in terms of informal literacy activities was very high, in terms of Formal Literacy activities was very high, in terms of passive literacy exposure was high, in terms of print access at home was high and in terms of parental attitude towards reading was very high.

Most of the learners was in the level of Monotone, word-by-word, little expression. Few were in in the level of Natural phrasing, smooth, expressive, appropriate intonation and Appropriate phrasing, some expression. Most of Grade 1 learners were within Moderate Comprehension to No Comprehension in terms of their reading comprehension.

There was no significant relationships between Grade 1 learners' Informal Literacy Activities, Formal Literacy Activities, Passive Literacy Exposure, Print Access At Home and Parental Attitude Towards Reading and reading comprehension. There exist a positive strong relationship between learners' reading fluency and their reading comprehension.

### ***CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

From the research findings, the following conclusions were formed.

The home literacy environment of Grade 1 learners proved very high in the multiple dimensions, with very high levels of informal and formal literacy activities, high levels of passive literacy exposure and print access at home, and very high parental attitudes toward reading, indicating strong foundational support for early literacy development within family settings.

Grade 1 learners predominantly exhibited beginning-stage reading fluency, characterized by monotone, word-by-word reading with little expression, while only a small proportion achieved more advanced levels such as natural phrasing, smooth expression, and appropriate intonation, highlighting a need for targeted fluency interventions.

Reading comprehension among Grade 1 learners was generally limited, falling within moderate to no comprehension levels, which underscores persistent challenges in achieving deeper understanding despite a supportive home literacy environment.

No significant relationships emerged between dimensions of the home literacy environment (informal activities, formal activities, passive exposure, print access, and parental attitudes) and reading comprehension; however, a strong positive relationship was observed between reading fluency and comprehension, suggesting that fluency serves as a critical proximal predictor of comprehension outcomes in this.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendation was drawn,

Parents and Grade 1 learners may prioritize daily fluency-building activities at home, such as repeated reading of familiar books aloud. This can include fun parent-child read-alongs or audio-guided reading apps to transition from word-by-word reading to smoother, expressive styles, fostering the fluency-comprehension link.

School and teachers may implement targeted fluency intervention programs, like small-group repeated reading sessions or fluency-focused tutoring for Grade 1 learners, given the predominance of beginner-level fluency and moderate-to-low comprehension despite robust home environments.

Curriculum planners may integrate explicit fluency instruction into Grade 1 learners reading programs, emphasizing practices like choral reading, reader's theater, and prosody development, as fluency emerged as the key predictor of comprehension rather than home literacy factors.

Since teachers and parents were partners in educating their children they may collaborate with each others in partnership with the home community in providing instructional materials and pamphlets in order to enhance the reading ability with comprehensive in that when they grow and get higher education they will be all literate and no child left behind. Future researchers may explore causal mechanisms between reading fluency and comprehension through experimental designs, such as randomized fluency interventions in diverse Philippine Grade 1 samples, building on the null home literacy effects and strong fluency-comprehension correlation.

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