

Parents' Competence as Reading Teachers at Home: Springboard for Enhancing Reading Literacy for Young-Minded Nurturers (ERLYN) Program

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Abstract

Parents play a crucial role in fostering their children's literacy development, with their competence as reading teachers significantly influencing reading success. This study employed a quantitative research approach, utilizing descriptive and inferential designs to assess parents' reading competence as a basis for developing the Enhancing Reading Literacy for Young-minded Nurturers (ERLYN) program—a school-based reading initiative for parents. The study involved 70 parents of Grade 1-3 learners in Tampakan District, South Cotabato Division during the school year 2024-2025.

Findings indicate that most parent respondents are aged 25-31, belong to lower-income brackets, and have attained high school-level education. In terms of reading competence, parents demonstrated independent-level oral reading but instructional-level reading comprehension. Demographic factors such as age, income, and educational attainment showed no significant influence on reading competence. The ERLYN program was rated highly acceptable, with strong approval for its objectives, session content, and methodology. These findings suggest that ERLYN is a well-structured and relevant intervention parents as reading teacher at home.

Keywords: *parental literacy competence, reading intervention, ERLYN program, home-based reading support, literacy development*

INTRODUCTION

Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children's literacy development, and their competence as reading teachers can significantly influence children's reading success. Competent parents know effective reading strategies that can help children develop essential literacy skills, such as phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Globally, parents' role as reading teachers is critical to children's literacy development. Early parental involvement fosters stronger language skills, vocabulary, and comprehension (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014). The home literacy environment, including books and storytelling, directly influences reading success (Niklas

& Schneider, 2017). In countries like the U.S., U.K., and Australia, creating literacy-rich environments enhances children's performance (Kalb & van Ours, 2014). In Western countries, parents emphasize reading aloud, while in places like China and South Korea, formal instruction is prioritized (Li, 2016). In lower-literacy contexts, storytelling is often used to promote literacy (Trudell & Young, 2016).

In the Philippines, parents are increasingly recognized as vital for children's literacy development, particularly in early childhood. Many actively promote literacy at home through storytelling, reading aloud, and supporting school activities. However, socio-economic disparities and regional differences significantly affect parents' ability to engage in these practices. Access to reading materials and a literacy-rich environment varies widely; urban parents often have better access to books, libraries, and digital resources, while those in rural and low-income areas face significant limitations. The Department of Education (DepEd) emphasizes the role of community-based libraries and reading centers in fostering a reading culture in disadvantaged areas (DepEd, 2019). Additionally, the multilingual context of the Philippines influences literacy development. Parents, especially in non-Tagalog regions, must navigate their mother tongue, Filipino, and English. The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy encourages supporting literacy in local languages, enhancing comprehension and facilitating later learning in Filipino and English (Nolasco, 2015). However, some parents feel unprepared or lack confidence in teaching reading in languages other than Filipino or English.

Locally, the Schools Division; through the Curriculum Implementation Division has launched a program called Summer Home Assistance on Reading by Parents also known as SHARP. It capacitated parents to be the reading teachers at home. Through this initiative, even full face-to-face implementation had already started, the Schools Division Office hopes that parents are still to guide their children particularly in reading. Parents raised their concerns about teaching their children because some of them have low-literacy level, and they are afraid that they might attribute less importance to children's literacy development or they may actually be less able to foster that development.

Despite existing school-based reading programs, early literacy skills remain a challenge, especially in marginalized communities. Many students enter school lacking foundational reading skills, possibly due to limited parental support and ineffective home-based reading practices (DepEd, 2019). In low-income or rural areas, parents often face barriers such as low literacy levels, limited access to reading materials, and a lack of knowledge about effective reading instruction (Bernardo & Mendoza, 2012). The rise of digital learning tools has added challenges, with parents feeling unequipped to use these resources for reading development (Zhang & Kudret, 2022). In multilingual regions, balancing instruction in the mother tongue, Filipino, and English further complicates literacy growth (Nolasco, 2015). The absence of structured training programs to enhance parents' competence as reading teachers may contribute to students falling behind in meeting reading benchmarks. This underscores the need for a study investigating how empowering parents in home-based reading instruction can support more effective school-based literacy programs.

While parental involvement in literacy is well-studied, limited research focuses on Filipino parents' competence in teaching reading at home, with most studies emphasizing school-based interventions (DepEd, 2019). Additionally, there is little research on how Filipino parents navigate multilingual literacy instruction in their mother tongue, Filipino, and English (Nolasco, 2015). A disconnect between home-based practices and school-based programs, such as ECARP, also exists, with few studies addressing how they align (DepEd, 2019).

Furthermore, there is a gap in capacity-building programs aimed at enhancing parents' home-based reading skills, particularly in marginalized communities.

This study examined the competence of Filipino parents as reading teachers at home and how this influences their children's literacy development. Specifically, the study aims to identify the challenges and strengths of parents in providing effective home-based reading instruction, particularly in marginalized communities.

Statement of the Problem

This study has determined the level of reading competence of parents as reading teacher at home as basis for development of school-based reading instruction capability program in the school year 2024-2025. Specifically, this has sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 age;
 - 1.2 monthly income; and
 - 1.3 educational attainment?
2. What is the level of reading competence of parents who are reading teacher at home in terms of:
 - 2.1 oral reading; and
 - 2.2 reading comprehension?
3. Is there a significant difference on the reading profile of parents based on their profile?
4. What is the level of acceptability of the developed School-based Reading Instruction Capability Building Program in terms of:
 - 4.1 rationale;
 - 4.2 articulation of objectives;
 - 4.3 session content; and
 - 4.4 program methodology?

Hypothesis

In this study, the hypothesis in null form was tested in $\alpha=0,05$ level of significance state as:

1. There is no significant difference on the reading profile of parents based on their profile.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive-inferential quantitative research design to assess the reading competence of parents and examine whether demographic variables such as age, income, and educational attainment influenced their performance. A total of 70 parent respondents from five schools in Tampakan District, South Cotabato—Bukang Liwayway ES, Maltana ES, Claudio Delos Reyes ES, Lambayong ES, and Cariaga-Mercado ES—were selected through complete enumeration due to the small and manageable population size. The study targeted biological or adoptive parents, guardians, or caregivers of Grade 1 to 3 learners aged 6–8, who regularly engaged in reading activities with their children and had sufficient proficiency in Filipino or English.

This study was conducted in Tampakan District, Schools Division of South Cotabato. The research locale was chosen for its cultural and contextual relevance to ensure accurate and meaningful data collection. In this study, two research instruments were used: a reading assessment adapted from Phil-IRI (2018) to evaluate oral reading and comprehension skills, and a survey questionnaire based on the DepEd Professional Development Program Design Quality Assurance (2024) to determine the acceptability of the school-based para-teacher reading program.

Relatively, this study utilized descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics are particularly effective in providing a clear picture of the variables under study, such as the level of reading competence and the extent of challenges encountered by parents (Fink, 2019). To determine the profile of the respondents and level of reading competence frequency distribution and percentage was used. The significant difference between the reading competence of the respondents was determined using Kruskal Wallis Test. According to (Babbie, 2021) statistical techniques like analysis of variance (ANOVA) is employed to predict outcomes. The Kruskal-Wallis test is a nonparametric (distribution free) test, which is used to compare three or more groups of sample data, it does not make any assumption on the nature of the underlying distributions (Xia, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Parents' Profile

The following tables reveal the profile of the parent respondents in terms of age, monthly income, and educational attainment.

Table 1 presents the profile of the parent respondent in terms of age, monthly income, and educational attainment.

Table 1 Profile of Parent Respondents in terms of Age

Age	f	Percentage
25-31	28	40%
32-38	17	24%
18-24	15	21%
39-45	10	14%
Monthly Income		
5000	27	39%
10000	20	29%
6000	12	17%
7000	11	15%
Educational Attainment		
High School Level	27	39%
Elementary Graduate	18	26%
High School Graduate	16	23%
Elementary Level	9	13%

The majority of parent respondents (40%) are aged 25–31, indicating that most are young parents with children in early elementary grades, while the least represented age group is 39–45 (14%), suggesting fewer older parents are involved. These findings support Genus (2020) and Pew Research Center (2023), which report that most parents have children in their late twenties to early thirties. In terms of monthly income, most parents (39%) earn ₱5,000, placing them in the lower-income bracket, while only 2% earn ₱7,000, highlighting a gap in income levels. This reflects national trends identified by the Philippine Statistics Authority (2023) and OECD (2021), showing how economic constraints can limit access to educational resources. Regarding educational attainment, 39% of parents have reached high school level, while only 13% have elementary-level education, suggesting varying capacities to support their children's learning. This aligns with UNESCO (2021) and OECD (2022), which emphasize the positive influence of higher parental education on children's academic success.

Level of Reading Competence of Parents who are Reading Teacher at Home

Table 2. Level of Parents Reading Competence

Competence	N	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Oral Reading	70	132	3.86	Independent
Reading Comprehension	70	14	1.15	Instructional

For oral reading, the respondents achieved a mean score of 132 with a standard deviation of 3.86, which falls under the "Independent" category. This implies that parents have read the text by 97-100%

accuracy. This indicates that most parents can read fluently and accurately with minimal to no assistance. Their strong oral reading skills suggest confidence in pronunciation and fluency when reading aloud.

However, in terms of reading comprehension, the respondents had a mean score of 14 with a standard deviation of 1.15, categorized as "Instructional." This suggests that parents have correctly answered 59-79% of the comprehension questions relative to the passage read. This implies that many parents require support when understanding and interpreting texts. While they may read fluently, their ability to process, analyze, and retain information from what they read is more limited.

The results supported Rasinski (2021) suggest that individuals classified as independent readers demonstrate strong pronunciation, fluency, and decoding skills, allowing them to read with minimal assistance. Relatively, this conform to Perfetti and Stafura (2022) who argue that fluency does not always equate to strong comprehension skills. While parents may read fluently, their ability to analyze and interpret texts effectively appears to require additional support. Furthermore, that comprehension involves higher-order cognitive skills, including inference-making, critical thinking, and retention, which may be underdeveloped in individuals who primarily focus on word recognition (Snow, 2023).

Testing the Significant Difference between the Reading Competence of Parents based on their profile.

Table 3. Difference of Parents' Reading Competence by Age using Kruskal-Wallis Test

	χ^2	Df	p
Oral Reading	2.63	3	0.452
Reading Comprehension	1.65	3	0.649

$\alpha=0.05$ level of significance

For oral reading, the test yielded a χ^2 value of 2.63 with 3 degrees of freedom (df) and a p-value of 0.452. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, it indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in oral reading competence among the different age groups of parents. This suggests that age does not play a major role in determining oral reading skills.

Similarly, for reading comprehension, the test resulted in a χ^2 value of 1.65, with 3 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.649. Again, since the p-value is above 0.05, it indicates that there is no significant difference in reading comprehension across the different age groups. This means that regardless of age, parents exhibit similar levels of reading comprehension.

This is consistent with research indicating that literacy development is more strongly influenced by education level, practice, and exposure to reading materials rather than age (Van der Kleij et al., 2021). While younger adults may have had more recent formal education, older adults often compensate with experience and practical reading skills acquired over time (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

Table 4. Difference of Parents' Reading Competence by Monthly Income using Kruskal-Wallis Test

	χ^2	df	p
Oral Reading	1.33	3	0.722
Reading Comprehension	0.88	3	0.83

$\alpha=0.05$ level of significance

For oral reading, the test produced a χ^2 value of 1.33 with 3 degrees of freedom (df) and a p-value of 0.722. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, this indicates that there is no statistically significant difference

in oral reading competence among parents with different income levels. This suggests that income does not have a notable impact on their ability to read fluently.

Similarly, for reading comprehension, the test resulted in a χ^2 value of 0.88, with 3 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.83. Again, the p-value exceeds 0.05, meaning there is no significant difference in reading comprehension skills across different income groups. This suggests that parents' ability to understand and interpret written material is not strongly influenced by their monthly income. The findings indicate that monthly income does not significantly affect parents' oral reading or reading comprehension competence.

This aligns with Hamilton (2021) whose studies show that while socio-economic factors can influence access to educational resources, they do not directly determine an individual's reading proficiency. In addition, literacy skills are more closely linked to educational attainment and reading habits rather than income level alone (Mamedova & Pawlowski, 2019). Even in lower-income households, parents may develop strong reading abilities through personal motivation, workplace demands, or community literacy programs (OECD, 2022).

Table 8 presents the difference of parents' reading competence by educational attainment using Kruskal-Wallis Test.

Table 8. Difference of Parents' Reading Competence by Educational Attainment using Kruskal-Wallis Test

	χ^2	df	P
Oral Reading	0.383	3	0.944
Reading Comprehension	1.216	3	0.749

$\alpha=0.05$ level of significance

For oral reading, the test yielded a χ^2 value of 0.383 with 3 degrees of freedom (df) and a p-value of 0.944. Since the p-value is much greater than 0.05, this indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in oral reading competence among parents with different levels of educational attainment. This suggests that regardless of whether a parent reached elementary or high school, their ability to read fluently remains similar.

For reading comprehension, the test produced a χ^2 value of 1.216, with 3 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.749. Again, since the p-value exceeds 0.05, this indicates no significant difference in reading comprehension skills across different educational levels. This suggests that a parent's highest level of education does not necessarily determine their ability to understand and interpret texts. The findings suggest that educational attainment does not significantly impact parents' oral reading or reading comprehension competence.

The findings negate from Van der Kleij et al. (2021) indicating that literacy development is more strongly influenced by education level, practice, and exposure to reading materials rather than age. It also negates to Mamedova and Pawlowski (2019) who found that literacy skills are more closely linked to educational attainment and reading habits rather than income level alone.

Level of Acceptability of Enhancing Reading Literacy for Young-minded Nurturers (ERLYN)

Table 10. Level of Acceptability of Enhancing Reading Literacy for Young-minded Nurturers (ERLYN)

Dimensions	Means	SD	Qualitative Description
Program Methodology	4.60	0.55	Highly acceptable
Articulation of Objectives	4.50	0.55	Highly acceptable

Session Content	4.35	0.45	Highly acceptable
Rationale	4.33	0.55	Highly acceptable
Overall Mean	4.45	0.52	Highly acceptable

Program Methodology received the highest mean score of 4.60 ($SD = 0.55$), indicating that respondents particularly valued the approaches and strategies used in implementing the program. This suggests that the methods employed were seen as practical, engaging, and effective in delivering the intended learning outcomes, especially in the context of a para-teacher initiative.

On the other hand, Rationale obtained the lowest mean score of 4.33 ($SD = 0.55$). While still within the "Highly Acceptable" range, this slightly lower rating may imply that some respondents found the explanation or justification of the program's purpose less compelling or in need of further strengthening in terms of theoretical grounding or contextual clarity.

The overall mean rating of 4.45 ($SD = 0.52$) confirms that the program is perceived as *highly acceptable* across all areas. This suggests that the School-based Para-Teacher Reading Program is well-designed, relevant, and responsive to the needs of its target users—parents serving as para-teachers in home-based or school-supported reading environments. The high level of acceptability reflects effective alignment with key principles in adult education and parental involvement in literacy development.

The findings conform with Epstein (2018) who posited that effective school programs that engage families in meaningful ways enhance student learning outcomes by fostering strong home-school partnerships. When programs are designed with clarity, relevance, and practical methodology, they are more likely to gain parental support and active participation. This is further supported by recent findings from Cabell et al. (2021), who noted that parent training programs are most effective when they are contextually relevant and presented in an engaging, user-friendly format.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn: The demographic data indicate that most parents are young (25-31 years old), belong to a lower-income bracket, and have limited educational attainment. These socioeconomic factors could influence their ability to support their children's education, highlighting the need for interventions that provide accessible learning resources for both students and parents.

The reading competence results reveal that parents demonstrate strong oral reading skills (Independent category), but their reading comprehension remains at an instructional level, suggesting a need for further support in understanding and interpreting texts.

Interestingly, statistical analysis shows that demographic factors such as age, income, and educational attainment are non-predictors of reading competence, implying that other external influences, such as exposure to reading materials or literacy support programs, may play a more critical role.

The ERLYN program's high acceptability suggests that it is well-structured, relevant, and engaging, making it a promising tool for enhancing literacy development. However, slight refinements in content credibility and theoretical support could further improve its effectiveness.

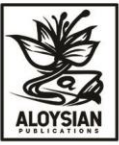
Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the facts and conclusions drawn from this study: 1. Given that most parents are young, from lower-income backgrounds, and have limited educational attainment, it is suggested that literacy support programs include parent-focused learning initiatives. These initiatives may offer reading workshops and financial literacy seminars to equip parents with skills that enhance both their own and their children's educational experiences.

2. Since parents exhibit strong oral reading skills but require support in reading comprehension, community-based/school-based reading interventions may be implemented. These interventions may focus on developing parents' analytical reading skills through guided reading sessions and comprehension exercises.
3. As demographic factors did not significantly influence reading competence, future programs may explore other factors, such as access to reading materials, home literacy environment, and parent-child reading interactions. Schools and local government units may consider providing free or subsidized reading materials for home use.
4. Since ERLYN program was highly rated, it may be use in school-based reading program for parents of early grade learners. Hence, it may be suggested to further enhance its theoretical foundation and content credibility.
5. Future research may explore the long-term impact of parental literacy programs on children's academic performance. A longitudinal study tracking students' reading progress in relation to their parents' literacy development would provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of parent-focused interventions.

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