

SCHOOL-BASED READING PROGRAMS AND LITERACY LEVELS AMONG KINDERGARTEN PUPILS IN UBAY III DISTRICT, BOHOL

CHRISTINE JANE M. MASANA 

Graduate School, University of Bohol, Tagbilaran City, Philippines

Corresponding Author: christinejane.miasco01@deped.gov.ph

ABSTRACT

Article History

Submission: May 25, 2025

Revised: September 13, 2025

Accepted: May 16, 2026

Publication: September 7, 2026

Keywords— School-based reading program, literacy level, kindergarten pupils, Ubay, Bohol

This study evaluated the effectiveness of School-Based Reading Programs (SBRP) in enhancing the literacy levels of Kindergarten pupils in Ubay III. Using a descriptive-documentary survey design, data were gathered from 162 respondents—including 15 teachers, 15 school heads, and 132 parents—through standardized tools adapted from Merto (2018) and Mendez (2019). The reading programs were assessed across five implementation domains,

while literacy levels were measured in four key areas: words and sentences, rhymes, syllables, and phonemes. Results showed that reading programs were “highly performed,” and pupil literacy levels were rated as “very good,” with no significant differences based on demographic variables or respondent type. These findings affirm the effectiveness of structured, collaborative reading interventions in supporting early literacy. The study recommends continued support, training, and evaluation of SBRPs, along with greater parental involvement and further research into additional literacy factors.



© Masana, C. J. M. (2026). Open Access. This article published by University of Bohol Multidisciplinary Research Journal is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). You are free to share (copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format) and adapt (remix, transform, and build upon the material). Under the following terms, you must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. You may not use the material for commercial purposes. To view a copy of this license, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

INTRODUCTION

Reading difficulties persist in almost every classroom worldwide. Schools have different approaches to addressing diverse learners' reading problems, including how they use various resources. Thus, the Philippine education system requires schools to implement school-based reading programs. The effect of these initiatives has not yet been observed, and thus cannot be discussed in relation to the poor literacy outcomes highlighted in the national assessment, as outlined in DepEd Memorandum No. 173, Series of 2019 (Department of Education, 2019).

In this context, the Department of Education urges and requires all educators to be reading instructors. Recognizing the essential role of reading instruction is crucial to developing students' abilities and talents. Reading is regarded as the most important skill a child must acquire at school because one must learn to read to learn. In primary grades, the major challenge for learners is acquiring reading skills, which are used most frequently to gauge learning.

DepEd Order No. 45 s. 2002, otherwise known as the Reading Literacy Program in the Elementary Schools, states DepEd's thrust to enforce the policy "Every Child A Reader" beginning the School Year 2002- 2003. No student will be promoted to the next grade without showing proficiency in the foundational literacy skills for that grade level. The policy further emphasizes supporting and fostering children's reading abilities. Consequently, schools develop a reading program that assesses children's reading proficiency, identifies areas for further reading instruction, and applies effective methods to improve reading comprehension.

Presently, the researcher works as a kindergarten teacher and faces the challenges of low reading performance. The researcher encountered struggling readers who are unable to recognize words and have poor comprehension. Some were listless and had difficulty reading based on body language and facial expressions. These scenarios were evident both in kindergarten and primary school.

As an educator, the researcher believes it is essential to conduct this study as a way to contribute to the goals and objectives of the Department of Education. By assessing the effectiveness of the reading program in the Ubay III District for the School Year 2024-2025, she can explore methods to enhance the program, ultimately improving students' reading skills.

Related Literature. Reading difficulties persist in almost every classroom worldwide. Schools have different approaches to addressing diverse learners' reading problems, including how they use various resources. Thus, the Philippine education system requires schools to implement school-based reading programs. The effect of these initiatives has not yet been observed. It thus cannot be discussed in relation to the poor literacy outcomes highlighted in the national assessment, as outlined in DepEd Memorandum No. 173,

Series of 2019 (Department of Education, 2019).

In this context, the Department of Education urges and requires all educators to be reading instructors. Recognizing the essential role of reading instruction is crucial to developing students' abilities and talents. Reading is regarded as the most important skill a child must acquire at school because one must learn to read to learn. In primary grades, the major challenge for learners is acquiring reading skills, which are used most frequently to gauge learning.

DepEd Order No. 45 s. 2002, otherwise known as the Reading Literacy Program in the Elementary Schools, states DepEd's thrust to enforce the policy "Every Child A Reader" beginning the School Year 2002- 2003. No student will be promoted to the next grade without showing proficiency in the foundational literacy skills for that grade level. The policy further emphasizes supporting and fostering children's reading abilities. Consequently, schools develop a reading program that assesses children's reading proficiency, identifies areas for further reading instruction, and applies effective methods to improve reading comprehension.

Presently, the researcher works as a kindergarten teacher and faces the challenges of low reading performance. The researcher encountered struggling readers who are unable to recognize words and have poor comprehension. Some were listless and had difficulty reading based on body language and facial expressions. These scenarios were evident both in kindergarten and primary school.

As an educator, the researcher believes it is essential to conduct this study as a way to contribute to the goals and objectives of the Department of Education. By assessing the effectiveness of the reading program in the Ubay III District for the School Year 2024-2025, she can explore methods to enhance the program, ultimately improving students' reading skills.

Related Studies. Several studies have examined factors influencing literacy and learning outcomes among young learners. Aquino (2019) found that sex does not significantly affect the competence levels of kindergarten entrants, a view supported by Adriany et al. (2019), who reported no gender differences in literacy skills, although females performed slightly better.

Regarding program implementation, Merto (2018) observed no significant difference between school heads' and teachers' evaluations of reading program components, supporting the consistency of program delivery. Salibay (2024) demonstrated that targeted reading interventions like Project B.E.A.R and Arangkada Pagbasa effectively improve learners' reading progress, with parental and local government support being crucial.

Lambonao (2023) confirmed the effectiveness of syllable-based reading materials in enhancing word recognition among kindergarten learners, emphasizing the role of well-designed instructional resources and teaching strategies. Aboejo et al. (2021) stressed the importance of aligning reading programs with learners' needs and recommended continuous teacher training,

parental involvement, and integration of digital tools to sustain reading proficiency.

Baroman et al. (2021) identified challenges in implementing the contextualized Kindergarten curriculum due to limited resources, training, and language barriers, affecting teachers' readiness. Mejala (2024) found that reading intervention strategies positively correlate with Grade 1 students' reading skills, particularly in word recognition and comprehension.

Obaob (2023) reported significant literacy improvements following the Project BRITE intervention, highlighting the effectiveness of varied teaching strategies and pupil engagement. Villena et al. (2022) noted the positive influence of literacy programs on student skills and attitudes, with no significant differences across demographic profiles.

Angligen (2023) concluded that parental involvement in literacy development is not significantly affected by parents' demographic profiles, with both mothers and fathers contributing regardless of socio-economic status. Aparicio (2023) demonstrated that supplemental intervention materials significantly enhance reading literacy and classroom confidence among Kindergarten and Grade 1 students.

Together, these studies underscore the importance of well-structured reading programs, parental involvement, teacher preparedness, and contextualized materials in supporting early literacy development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative–descriptive survey design using a questionnaire for data collection. Modified standardized instruments were used to assess the variables (i.e., level of school-based reading programs and level of literacy). To measure the level of school-based reading programs, the School-Based Reading Programs tool by Merto (2018) was used; the Kindergarten Literacy Checklist by Mendez (2019) was used to measure literacy level.

Previous reliability and validity testing confirmed the consistency, dependability, and relevance of these instruments.

The study's respondents were 15 teachers, one per school, as there is only one kindergarten for every barangay, and 15 school heads representing all elementary schools in Ubay III District, Division of Bohol, who are currently active in service for S.Y. 2024– 2025. Furthermore, the researcher randomly selected 132 parents of the Kindergarten pupils, with 8 or 10 parents per barangay, depending on the barangay's size.

The respondents were given ample time to complete the survey instruments. The study is conducted at Ubay III District, Ubay, Bohol, which comprises fifteen (15) elementary schools presently under the supervision of Dr. Marife R. Bernales for the S.Y. 2024– 2025. Ubay is a first-class municipality in the northeast part of the province. It is located 137 kilometers away from the City

of Tagbilaran.

The researcher made use of the following standardized questionnaires:

The researcher used a modified questionnaire adapted from the study by Merto (2018), entitled Implementation of School-Based Reading Program In The Division of Lucena City, which comprises 5 dimensions: objectives, instructional strategies, assessment techniques, intervention activities, and program monitoring and evaluation. This evaluation is designed for teachers and school heads to support their school-based reading practices.

The metrics and interpretation of school-based reading programs listed in Table 2.1 will be used in the analysis. The data will be subjected to a normality test to ascertain the proper statistical treatment for testing the null hypothesis.

Table 2.1. Measures and Interpretation of School-Based Reading Programs

Arbitrary Scale	Response	Weight	Interpretation
3.26- 4.00	Strongly Agree	4	Highly Performed
2.51- 3.25	Agree	3	Moderately Performed
1.76- 2.50	Disagree	2	Less Performed
1.00- 1.75	Strongly Disagree	1	Not Performed

On the other hand, Mendez’s (2019) standard tool was used to measure literacy levels among kindergarten pupils. It comprises four dimensions: words and sentences, rhymes, syllables, and phonemes. The survey tool is intended to get responses from the teachers and parents.

The metrics and interpretations of the literacy levels listed in Table 2.2 will be used in the analysis. The data will be subjected to a normality test to ascertain the proper statistical treatment for testing the null hypothesis.

Table 2.2. Measures and Interpretation of the Level of Literacy

Arbitrary Scale	Response	Weight	Interpretation
3.26- 4.00	Strongly Agree	4	Very Good
2.51- 3.25	Agree	3	Good
1.76- 2.50	Disagree	2	Fair
1.00- 1.75	Strongly Disagree	1	Poor

To ensure the study’s validity, the researcher conducted a validity test. It was undertaken by fifteen (15) teachers who were not among the study’s respondents, though they shared the same profile. Cronbach’s Alpha was used to validate the modified tool.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Teacher-Respondents. More female than male kindergarten teachers work in the Ubay III District. This reflects a broader trend of women predominating in early childhood education, which is often linked to traditional nurturing and caregiving roles.

Of the 15 teacher respondents, 9 were aged 31–40. This age group accounted for the majority, suggesting that most teachers are in their prime, which may help with classroom management and instruction. Additionally, 12 respondents had completed units in a master’s program. This shows a strong commitment to professional development. Such education may improve instructional skills and support effective literacy initiatives.

The 40% of respondents had 12–14 years of teaching experience, indicating substantial expertise. This expertise can enhance their knowledge of literacy instruction and classroom interventions.

Respondents rated program objectives as “Highly Performed” (mean: 3.89), showing strong agreement that program goals support literacy development.

2.2 Instructional Strategies

Instructional strategies were rated “Highly Performed” (mean: 3.65), indicating consistent use of learner-centered approaches to improve literacy.

2.3 Assessment Techniques

Assessment techniques received a “Highly Performed” rating, with a composite weighted mean of 3.73. Teachers and school heads view assessment practices as effective for monitoring reading progress and identifying students who need support. Effective assessment is essential for literacy goals.

Intervention activities received a composite weighted mean of 3.64 and were rated as “Highly Performed.” Schools consistently implement remedial sessions, guided reading, and enrichment activities to support struggling readers and improve literacy outcomes.

2.5 Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Program monitoring and evaluation rated “Highly Performed” (mean: 3.77), indicating regular oversight and a strong commitment to literacy development.

3. Respondents’ Assessment of the Level of Literacy

3.1 Words and Sentences

Literacy in words and sentences was rated “Very Good” (mean: 3.46).

Pupils showed satisfactory recognition and understanding for their grade level.

3.2 Rhymes

Pupils' literacy in rhymes was rated "Very Good" (mean: 3.49), indicating adequate phonological awareness and recognition of sound patterns.

3.3 Syllables

The literacy level in syllables received a composite weighted mean of 3.60 and was rated as "Very Good." Pupils were generally able to identify and manipulate syllables. They showed strong foundational decoding skills for reading proficiency, with a mean of 3.62. Pupils also demonstrated competence in recognizing and distinguishing sounds in spoken words. This is essential for early reading acquisition and language development. Kindergarten pupils in Ubay III District showed strong literacy skills in all assessed domains. This suggests that school-based reading programs positively contributed to their literacy development.

4. Relationship Between School-Based Reading Programs and Demographic Profile of Respondents

4.1 Sex

The findings showed no statistically significant relationship between school-based reading programs and respondents' sex (p-values of 0.685 and 1.000, respectively, both above 0.05). The null hypothesis was not rejected, so male and female respondents viewed program implementation similarly.

4.2 Age

No significant relationship was found for age or highest educational attainment (p-values: 0.463, 0.325, 0.749, 0.617; all > 0.05). Respondents of different ages and qualifications had similar program assessments, programs and years of teaching experience. The p-values were 0.326, 0.247, and 0.141, all above the 0.05 significance level. This shows that perceptions of program implementation were consistent across experience levels.

5. Relationship Between Literacy Level and Demographic Profile of Respondents

5.1 Sex

No statistically significant relationship was found between literacy level

and respondents' sex (p-values of 0.921 and 0.862, both > 0.05). Perceptions of pupils' literacy levels did not differ by sex.

5.2 Age

No statistically significant relationship was found between literacy level and respondents' age (p-values of 0.820, 0.691, and 1.000, all > 0.05). Respondents of different ages rated pupils' literacy levels similarly.

5.3 Highest Educational Attainment

No statistically significant relationship was found between literacy level and respondents' highest educational attainment (p-values of 0.966 and 0.915, above 0.05). Educational attainment did not influence perceptions of learners' literacy skills.

5.4 Years of Teaching Experience

Similarly, there was no statistically significant relationship between literacy level and years of teaching experience. The p-values were 0.749, 0.657, and 0.165, all above the 0.05 significance level. This indicates respondents shared similar assessments regardless of experience. The variables did not significantly affect respondents' perceptions of kindergarten pupils' literacy levels. Literacy outcomes among learners were generally consistent across respondent groups.

5. Correlation Between School-Based Reading Program and Level of Literacy.

Table 5. *Correlation Between School- Based Reading Program and Level of Literacy*

			Overall Composite Mean (School-Based Reading Program)	Overall Composite Mean (Level of Literacy)
Spearman's rho	Overall Composite Mean (School-Based Reading Program)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.458*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
		N	15	15
	Overall Composite Mean (Level of Literacy)	Correlation Coefficient	.458*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
		N	15	15

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 presents the Spearman's rho correlation between the overall composite mean of the School-Based Reading Program and the Level of Literacy among respondents. The correlation coefficient of .458 indicates a moderate positive relationship, suggesting that improvements in the

implementation of school-based reading programs are associated with higher literacy levels. This relationship is statistically significant, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.011, which is below the standard alpha level of 0.05. The data suggest that effective school-based reading initiatives play a meaningful role in enhancing literacy among participants.

A study by Arifin (2023) investigated the effectiveness of a mixed-methods-based literacy program aimed at enhancing early-grade students' reading competencies. The research demonstrated that the dialogical reading literacy program significantly improved students' reading skills and overall literacy. Notably, there was marked improvement in four key areas: receptive vocabulary, expressive vocabulary, print awareness, and taxonomy skills. These findings suggest a strong positive correlation between the implementation of structured school-based reading programs and improvements in literacy among early-grade learners. The study underscores the importance of integrating comprehensive reading strategies into school curricula to foster literacy development effectively.

6. Relationship Between School Category in Relation to the Level of School Reading Program, and School Category in Relation to the Level of Literacy

Table 6.1. *School Category in Relation to the Level of School Reading Program*

	Overall Composite Mean	Interpretation
Chi-Square	4.535	Insignificant
df	2	
Asymp. Sig.	.104	

Table 6.1 shows that the Chi-Square test yielded a value of 4.535 with 2 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.104, which is greater than the standard significance level of 0.05. This indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between the level of school reading programs and the school category. In other words, the quality or implementation of reading programs does not differ significantly across school types in the sample, suggesting a consistent approach to reading programs regardless of school classification.

A study conducted by Olabiya et al. (2025), entitled “Assessing the Influence of Class Size On Literacy Achievement In Philippine Primary Schools” (2025), examined how class size affects literacy outcomes in Philippine primary schools. The study found that smaller class sizes generally correlate with higher literacy achievement due to increased teacher-student interaction, personalized instruction, and enhanced classroom engagement. Conversely, larger class sizes were associated with challenges such as reduced individualized attention, which can negatively impact literacy development. These findings suggest that school category—specifically, the number of students per class—plays a significant role in the effectiveness of reading

programs.

Table 6.2. *School Category in Relation to the Level of Literacy*

	Overall Composite Mean	Interpretation
Chi-Square	4.308	Insignificant
df	2	
Asymp. Sig.	.116	

Table 6.2 presents the Chi-Square test results assessing the relationship between literacy level and school category. The test yielded a value of 4.308 with 2 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.116, which is above the standard significance level of 0.05. This indicates that there is no statistically significant association between literacy levels and school category. Therefore, the findings suggest that literacy levels are relatively consistent across different types of schools within the sample.

A study conducted by Ancho et al. (2024) on “Investigating the Role of Class Size and Student-Teacher Ratios in Literacy Achievement in the Philippines” highlighted that favorable student-teacher ratios contribute to improved literacy outcomes. The study recommended policies to cap class sizes, particularly in early grades, to ensure more effective teaching and learning. It also suggested developing context-specific guidelines that consider regional disparities and resource availability.

7. Relationship Between the Responses of Groups of Respondents at the Literacy Level.

Table 7. *Relationship Between the Responses of Groups of Respondents at the Literacy Level*

	Overall Composite Mean	Interpretation
Mann-Whitney U	714.500	Insignificant
Wilcoxon W	9492.500	
Z	-1.786	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.074	

The Mann-Whitney U test results indicate a value of 714.500, a Z-score of -1.786, and a p-value of 0.074, which is greater than the standard significance level of 0.05. As a result, the test shows that there is no statistically significant difference in respondents' responses by literacy level, gender, or age group. Therefore, the findings suggest that the group's responses regarding literacy levels are relatively similar across the various respondent categories in the sample.

A study by Oco et al. (2024) found that parents' involvement in their

children's education was moderate, with a stronger focus on home-based activities. Students' reading performance was found to be moderate, with better results in Filipino than in English. A significant positive correlation was observed between parental engagement and students' reading performance, indicating that increased parental involvement is associated with improved literacy outcomes. This highlights the importance of active parental participation in enhancing students' literacy development.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the school-based reading programs are effectively implemented across all domains—objectives, instructional strategies, assessment techniques, intervention activities, and program monitoring and evaluation—by both teacher and school-head respondents. Similarly, the literacy level of learners was assessed as highly commendable across all components, as perceived by both teachers and parents. Furthermore, the demographic variables showed no significant relationship with either the level of school-based reading programs or literacy levels, indicating that perceptions and outcomes were consistent regardless of respondents' backgrounds. Notably, there was a significant positive correlation between the implementation of school-based reading programs and literacy levels, underscoring the effectiveness of these programs in enhancing learners' literacy skills. However, the school category and the respondent category did not show a significant relationship with either the level of reading program implementation or literacy outcomes. These conclusions highlight the success of the school-based reading initiatives and suggest the need for their continued support and enhancement to sustain literacy development among learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Administrators. School administrators are encouraged to continue supporting and enhancing school-based reading initiatives by allocating adequate resources, providing consistent training, and ensuring regular evaluation and monitoring to sustain and improve students' literacy development.
2. Teachers. As the primary instrument in teaching students, teachers are urged to continue refining their teaching methods and assessment practices, aligning them with the reading program's objectives to effectively address students' varied learning needs and enhance literacy outcomes.
3. Parents. As the first teachers of their children, parents are encouraged to stay actively engaged in their children's literacy progress by fostering reading activities at home and working alongside teachers to reinforce the skills taught in school, thereby strengthening the

- connection between home and school in literacy education.
4. Students. As learners, students are motivated to actively participate in reading activities both inside and outside the classroom, cultivating a passion for reading and continually honing their literacy skills to improve their comprehension, fluency, and overall academic success.
 5. Future researchers are suggested to investigate additional factors that might affect the success of reading programs, such as student motivation or learning environments, and to perform longitudinal studies to evaluate long-term literacy growth and the impact of these programs.

REFERENCES CITED

- Abocejo, F. T., & Acerbo, C. T. (2021). *The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) Program: A Critical Analysis*. ResearchGate
- Adriany, V. & Anthony, L. (2019). *Preschool teachers' approaches to care and gender*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2014.951601>
- Angligen G. (2023). *Parental Involvement on Kindergarten Literacy Development in Cervantes District, Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College* <https://www.ijams-bbp.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/1-JAMS-JANUARY-2023-78-97.pdf>
- Aparicio, E. (2023). *Effectiveness of Supplemental Intervention Materials on the Reading Literacy Skills of the Kindergarten and Grade 1 Pupils, Western Leyte College* <https://www.ijams-bbp.net/archive/vol-3-issue-6june/effectiveness-of-supplemental-intervention-materials-on-the-reading-literacy-skills-of-the-kindergarten-and-grade-1-pupils/>
- Aquino, L. & Jones, F. (2019). *Levels of Competence in the Learning Domains of Kindergarten Entrants*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1239660>
- Abstract Proceedings International Scholars Conference. 7. <https://doi.org/10.35974/isc.v7i1.928>.
- Baroman, J. L. P., & Jaca, CL (2021). *Challenges and Extent of Readiness Among Teachers in Implementing the Kindergarten Curriculum in Selected Public Elementary Schools in the Philippines*. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijeduc.20211004.15>
- Department of Education. (2002). *DepEd Order No. 45, s. 2002: Reading literacy program in the elementary schools*. Department of Education, Philippines

- Department of Education. (2019). *DepEd Memorandum No. 173, s. 2019*. Department of Education, Philippines
- Lambonao, I.F.P. (2023). Effectiveness of Syllable-Based Reading Materials in Improving the Word Recognition of Kindergarten Learners. <https://www.ijams-bbp.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/1-IJAMS-JUNE-2023-256-271.pdf>
- Mejala, J.R. (2024). *Early Language Reading Interventions and Reading Skills of Elementary Grade One Pupils in Zambales, Philippines*. <https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.05.03.08>
- Merto, M. (2018). *Implementation of School-Based Reading Program In The Division Of Lucena City*. International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications ISSN: 2456-9992 <https://www.ijarp.org/published-research-papers/nov2019/Implementation-Of-School-based-Reading-Program-In-The-Division-Of-Lucena-City.pdfm>
- Obaob, LA (2023). *Effectiveness of Project Beginning Reading Intervention for Teachers and Pupils in Early Grades (BRITE) in Improving the Literacy Levels of Grade 3 Pupils* <https://www.ijams-bbp.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/1-IJAMS-JUNE-2023-243-255.pdf>
- Salibay, M.O. (2024). *Enhancing Literacy: A Comparative Analysis of the Effectiveness of Project Bear and Arangkada Pagbasa Reading Interventions in Claver National High School*. *Advances in Research* Volume 25, Issue 1, Page 54-64, Article no. AIR.111537 ISSN: 2348-0394, NLM ID: 101666096)